# "PLEIN DE FEU, PLEIN D'AUDACE, PLEIN DE CHANGE": EXAMINING THE ROLE OF THE *MÉTHODE DE VIOLON* IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FRENCH VIOLIN SCHOOL

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For Winter Scarlett Robinson,

equal parts motivation and distraction.

# ABSTRACT

In 1782, Italian violinist Giovanni Battista Viotti performed in the *Concerts spirituels* of Paris, causing a sensation with his new style of playing, deemed "plein de feu, plein d'audace," "full of fire, full of audacity." This paper discusses Viotti's style in the context of his use of the Tourte bow and "modernized" model of Stradivarius violin. Viotti's chief disciples were French violin virtuosi Rodolphe Kreutzer, Pierre Rode and Pierre Baillot. As inaugural professors of the Paris *Conservatoire,* they championed Viotti's musical aesthetic and created pedagogical materials enabling others to emulate it. In 1803, Kreutzer, Rode and Baillot collaborated to produce *Méthode de Violon*, a technique manual expounding Viotti's style and establishing a French Violin School of performance practice. This thesis identifies idiomatic signature elements of this style in the *Méthode* and comments upon the significance of the *Conservatoire's* standardization of instruction*,* both of which prove foundational to the legacy of the French Violin School.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

> "...the quality of [the violin's] tone, which combines sweetness with brilliancy, gives it the preeminence and power over all other instruments, and from its almost mysterious power of sustaining, swelling, and modifying its sounds, of expressing the language of passion, as well as of keeping pace with the emotions of the soul, it claims the honour of rivalling the human voice."
>
> -Pierre Baillot, Rodolphe Kreutzer, Pierre Rode <u>Méthode du Violon</u>

Concluding a review of the scant collection of recordings that represents the French Violin School's body of compositions, scholar Bruce Schueneman makes the bold assertion that "the French Violin School represents one of the great epochs in the history of the violin and its repertoire."[1] Although his choice of words may seem overblown, the influence of the French Violin School of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has proven to be an integral force for more than two hundred years, resulting in "a complete regeneration of...violin art." [2] Underpinning this influence, and "brought about by the flood of energy that characterized the musical world of the [French] Revolutionary period," was the creation of the *Institute National de Musique* in 1793, an organization which would subsequently become the *Conservatoire National de Musique et de Declamation* in 1795.[3] The enormous prestige achieved by Parisian violinists of the French Violin School can be viewed synonymously with the large-scale dissemination and standardization of music education at the newly founded *Conservatoire*. It is this

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[1] Bruce Schueneman, "The French Violin School: From Viotti to Beriot." *Notes* 60, no.3 (2004), 768.
[2] Boris Schwartz, "Beethoven and the French Violin School." *The Musical Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (1958), 432.
[3] David Charlton, "Kreutzer." *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online,* (Oxford University Press), http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.darius.uleth.ca/subscriber/article/grove/music/15527pg1 (accessed June 9, 2013).

combination that gives rise to a performance style with far-reaching influence and longevity.

The violinist deemed most responsible for laying the foundations of the French Violin School, and who has been called "the father of modern violin playing," is Giovanni Battista Viotti (1755 - 1824).[4] Viotti was an Italian violinist who came to Paris and dazzled the musical community with a new style of playing and exciting new models of violin and bow. His playing style was described as "plein de feu, plein d'audace, pathètique [et] sublime."[5] He had a profound and persuasive influence on the playing style and musical compositions of Rodolphe Kreutzer (1766 - 1831), Pierre Rode (1774 - 1830), and Pierre Marie François de Sales Baillot (1771 - 1842), the three founding professors of violin at the Paris *Conservatoire*. This trio of pedagogues became pillars of the French Violin School, expounding Viotti's new style to all of their students and systematizing a pedagogical approach to teach it. Of the three, only Rode studied directly with Viotti, but Kreutzer and Baillot were ardent disciples. One of their first acts at the *Conservatoire* was to collaborate in the production of a technique manual delineating the new style of playing that they so admired. This manual, titled *Méthode de Violon* (1803), was officially sanctioned by the *Conservatoire* and became the standard pedagogical text used for violin instruction there for many decades.[6]

Viotti, a prominent student of Gaetano Pugnani (1731 - 1798), had established his own unique approach to virtuosity and the production of a beautiful tone. Viotti's use of

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[4] Clive Brown, "Bowing Styles, Vibrato And Portamento In Nineteenth-Century Violin Playing." *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 113, no. 1 (1988), 102.

[5] "Full of fire, full of audacity, moving and sublime." Attributed to Pierre Baillot.

[6] Robin Stowell, "In Principle: Violin Pedagogy Through the Ages - 3: Pierre Baillot's *L'art du Violon*." *Strad*, 118, no. 1411 (2007), 74. The treatise was unchallenged as the standard text for more than 30 years.

the new Tourte bow, along with a Stradivarius violin that had been "modernized" to achieve a greater volume of sound, enabled him to produce a wider range of dynamics and a more legato bow stroke than was possible with instruments typically used by contemporary French musicians.[7] The Tourte bow, a general term encompassing the design characteristics of bows created by *archetier* François Tourte (1747 - 1835), would become the model for all future makers, a tradition continuing to the present day and making the modern violin bow functionally identical to the Tourte model. Furthermore, it is now known that Viotti not only championed the Tourte bow's usage, but actually aided Tourte in its creation.[8]

Viotti's arrival in Paris in the 1770s proved to be sensational, creating an enormous amount of excitement among musicians as well as concertgoers.[9] Surprisingly, even though Viotti exerted a significant influence on musicians of his era and was in great demand as a teacher and soloist, he did not leave behind any dedicated pedagogical materials.[10] However, it is clear that it is Viotti's technique and musical aesthetic that Kreutzer, Baillot and Rode went on to methodize in their pedagogical output, both in their individual contributions and in their collaborative effort - the *Méthode*. As evidence of the fundamental import that Viotti's choice of equipment plays in the ethos of the French Violin School, it is notable that the 1803 *Méthode de Violon* was the first

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[7] David D. Boyden, et al. "Violin." *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, (Oxford University Press). http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.darius. uleth.ca/subscriber/article/grove/music/41161, (accessed December 8, 2012).

[8] Ibid.

[9] Robin Stowell, *The Cambridge Companion to the Violin,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 146.

[10] Robin Stowell, "In Principle-3," 75. Francois-Antoine Habeneck was a pupil of Baillot, and his treatise *Méthode Theorique et Practique de Violon* (Paris, c.1840) incorporates facsimiles from a treatise that Viotti never finished.

instructional source to document and explore the capabilities of the new Tourte bow.[11] The inclusion of exercises specifically tailored for this new model of bow in the *Méthode* confirms the *Conservatoire's* role in the promotion and dissemination of Viotti's playing style.

Notwithstanding the significance of Viotti's influence on the early development of violin pedagogy at the *Conservatoire*, it is remarkable how few scholarly works examine the 1803 *Méthode*. Indeed, it has reached such a measure of obscurity as to appear only as a passing reference in most discussions on the period. This seems especially odd when these references typically use phrases such as "the famous *Méthode,"* as though there was such a level of familiarity with the text by a modern reader as to make further discussion unnecessary.[12] Although the publication seems relegated to the footnotes of French Violin School history, it nevertheless played a crucial role, for it is the first physical artifact to document the symbiotic relationships between the various elements involved in the School's creation, providing the link between Viotti, Kreutzer, Rode, Baillot, the *Conservatoire* and technological developments in the violin and Tourte bow.

In addition to using the *Méthode* as the vehicle by which to discuss the aforementioned elements, it is the goal of this thesis to define musical characteristics of the French Violin School by identifying these novel features in the *Méthode*. By doing so, the publication can be shown to be foundational in the systemization and dispersal of

[11]Robin Stowell, "Violin Bowing in Transition: A Survey of Technique as Related in Instruction Books c. 1760- c.1830." *Early Music* 12, no. 3 (1984), 322.
[12] Stowell, "Violin Bowing in Transition," 322.

Viotti's new style, not only in France but throughout Europe and America.[13] Hence, this thesis will examine the *Méthode de Violon,* and identify within it selected instructions that show the discrimination of this new style of playing from existing eighteenth-century performance practices. The thesis organizes signature characteristics of the style into three broad categories: 1) the presence of rhythm and bowing devices idiomatic to the French Violin School, 2) characteristics that develop due to the capabilities of the Tourte bow and the nineteenth-century manner of violin construction, and 3) a shift in aesthetics designed to imitate a singing, vocal quality in violin performance. Collectively, these result in the creation of new performance techniques for violinists. They exploit new technical capabilities and/or reject previous musical aesthetics to achieve a new sonic language. For the purpose of analysis, these characteristics will be classified in one of two ways: 1) those that are "innovative" techniques presenting new equipment-driven capabilities, and 2) those that reinforce aesthetics of the new playing style by "correcting" practices of the old one. Both achieve a similar end, the creation of a new "modern" style of playing for the nineteenth century.

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[13] Alexandra M. Eddy, "American Violin Method-Books and European Teachers, Geminiani to Spohr," *American Music* 8, no. 2 (1990), http://0-www.jstor.org.darius.uleth.ca/stable/3051948, (accessed June 26, 2013), 178. An English translation was published in London before 1820. Its influence soon spread to the United States, for the publishing firms Firth and Hall and George E. Blake put out editions not long after the London one.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Much has changed since the sixteenth century when Michael Praetorius wrote: “Since everyone knows about the violin family, it is unnecessary to indicate or write anything further about it.”[14] Changes in musical style, repertoire, contemporaneous developments in multiple geographical centres, and the passage of hundreds of years have given rise to a diverse catalogue of writings about violin performance and violin music. Along with discussions regarding subtleties of performance technique and practice, historical developments in the physical form of the violin and bow produce a topic that is at once specialized and vast. To that end, this literature review identifies a selection of sources particularly pertinent to the rise of both the *Conservatoire National de Musique et de Declamation* and the French Violin School.

A large number of primary sources regarding violin performance exist in the form of instruction manuals, pedagogical treatises and collections of *études*, or studies. The sources most relevant to this thesis include the pedagogical works of Baillot, Rode, Kreutzer, and, most critically, their *Méthode de Violon*.[15] Predating the *Méthode* by eight years, Kreutzer’s *Quarante-Deux Études*, published in 1795, contains many of the same types of exercises found in the later collaboration. Rode’s *Vingt-Quatre Caprices* (1813) contain music most closely resembling Viotti’s musical compositions, but with a degree

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[14] Robert E. Seletsky, “New Light on the Old Bow-1,” *Early Music* 32, no. 2 (May 2004), 286.
[15] Pierre Marie François de Sales Baillot, *The Art of the Violin (L’art du Violon)*, Paris, 1831, Reprint, edited and translated by Louise Goldberg, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991); Pierre Rode, *Vingt-quatre Caprices en Forme d’Études dans les 24 Tons de la Gamme pour Violon Seul*, Paris, 1813, Reprint edited by A. Blumenstenge, (Braunschweig: Henry Litolff’s Verlag, n.d.); Rodolphe Kreutzer, *42 Études for Violin*, Paris, 1795, Reprint edited by Ivan Galamian, (New York: International Music Co., 1963); Pierre Baillot, Rodolphe Kreutzer and Pierre Rode, *Méthode de Violon*, Paris, 1803, (Reprint, Geneva: Minkoff, 1974).

of articulatory specificity not contained in Viotti's concerti.[16] Pierre Baillot's *L'art du Violon* (1831) is an exhaustive treatise on violin playing. Written thirty-one years after the publication of the original *Méthode,* Baillot asserted that his *L'art du Violon* was partially intended to cover omissions from the original collaboration.[17] In its almost five hundred and fifty pages it includes musical examples as well as significant quantities of discussion and instructional text on various aspects of technique and on the consequences of technological developments in violin and bow design. Baillot also pays detailed attention to issues such as general posture and how to hold the violin and bow, which is significant because of the multiple and often conflicting instructions given on these topics in earlier treatises. Thus *L'art du Violon* is a doubly important source; in addition to reiterating large quantities of unchanged material from the *Méthode* it includes new explicative material.[18] Lastly, Viotti's concerti provide an important source for understanding performance style in the late eighteenth century. The concerti were not primarily pedagogical in intent since Viotti did not include any bowings in his scores, relying instead on traditions and practices that would have been expected from a competent performer. However, they may be used as a stylistic control by which the pedagogical materials of the French Violin School teachers may be considered.

Selected sources from before Viotti's arrival in Paris also prove important to this thesis as they can be used to illustrate changes in pedagogical style in France just prior to the establishment of the Paris *Conservatoire*. *Principes du Violon* (1761),[19] written by

[16] Boris Schwarz and Clive Brown, "Rode, Pierre," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online,* (Oxford University Press), http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.darius.uleth.ca/subscriber/article/grove/music/23636 (accessed November 13, 2013).
[17] Baillot, *L'art du Violon,* iii.
[18] Baillot reprints all of Part 2 of the *Méthode de Violon* verbatim.
[19] L'abbé le fils, *Principes du Violon*. Paris, 1761, (Reprint, Genève: Minkoff, 1976).

L'abbé le fils (1727-1803) and the later *Vingt-Quatre Matinées* (1795)[20] by Pierre Gaviniès (1728-1800) are representative French sources from this period. As well, Leopold Mozart's (1719-87) *A Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing (Violinschule)* (1756, second edition 1769-70), Francesco Geminani's (1687-1762) *The Art of Playing the Violin* (1751) and Giuseppe Tartini's (1692-1770) various letters and writings on violin pedagogy provide valuable perspective pertaining to violin performance in the eighteenth century.[21]

Regarding secondary and tertiary sources, academic interest in this topic is small enough that a handful of scholars have produced most of the credible published material. One such scholar is David Boyden, whose article on the violin in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* is a fundamentally important source.[22] Boyden's article is extremely detailed. It is not only a comprehensive source for information on physical and design changes to the violin and bow but contains extensive information on many other subjects such as its history, technique, repertory, dissemination, performing practice and biographical details about famous violinists. A second important scholar in this field is Robin Stowell. Stowell has written extensively on areas pertaining to the history of the violin and other stringed instruments and his writings comprise the most significant contribution to research on the violin. They are comprehensive while remaining concise and eminently readable sources for scholars, performers and general

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[20] Pierre Gaviniès, *Vingt-Quatre Matinées,* 1794. (Reprint, New York: C. F. Peters, 1958).
[21] Leopold Mozart, *A Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing (Violinschule*), 1755, 2nd edition 1769-70 (Reprint Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948); Francesco Geminiani, *The Art of Playing on the Violin*, (London: Printed for the author by J. Johnson opposite Bow Church in Cheapside, 1751); Giuseppe Tartini, *Regole per Arrivare a Saper Ben Suonare il Violino,* (Bologna, 1751); Tartini "Lettera [dated 1760] del defonto Sig. Giuseppe Tartini alla Signora Maddalena Lombardini", L'Europa Letteraria, vol. 2. (Venice, 1770).
[22] Boyden, "Violin."

interest readers alike. Of specific importance to this thesis are Stowell's edited collections *The Cambridge Companion to the Violin* and *Violin Technique and Performance Practice in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*. The former provides succinct and thorough information on the subjects of violin pedagogy and the French Violin School, while the latter contributes large excerpts devoted to its pedagogical materials. Stowell also wrote a useful series of informal articles for *Strad* magazine. These trace the history of violin pedagogy and, surprisingly for a trade publication, contain some of the most in-depth discussion of the *Méthode* in the literature. With regard to many of the other sources used in this thesis, they often contain derivative information on the topic, usually based on comments originating with Stowell. However, each of these other sources contains details not found in any of the others. An exception is *The Amadeus Book of the Violin* by Walter Kolneder.[23] Kolneder rivals Stowell for the amount of information contained in his book; *The Amadeus Book of the Violin* contains a wealth of useful facts and details.

Finally, the scholar whose research primarily concentrates on the French Violin School is Bruce R. Schueneman. He has written several books and articles on the individual members of the school, with a musical focus on the concerto genre. His research, though thorough, at times contains sweeping statements devoid of evidentiary substantiation. Ultimately, what seems to be lacking in the literature, and what this thesis will begin to rectify, is a discussion of the *Méthode de Violon* that goes beyond the

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[23] Walter Kolneder, *The Amadeus Book of the Violin: Construction, History and Music,* translated by Reinhard G. Pauly. (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1998).

cursory and places the work in the context of the confluence of events that led to its creation, demonstrating its significance for later generations of violinists.

**Method**

An examination of changes in musical style and performance practice cannot be conducted without including biographical, historical, technological and musical dimensions in the discussion. To accomplish this, chapter three contextualizes musical change by including a discussion of important musical figures and their works in France prior to the arrival of Viotti in Paris, biographical background on Viotti, and a discussion of concurrent technological developments in violin and bow design; chapter four focusses on the French Violin School proper, providing historical background on the creation of the Paris *Conservatoire* and biographical information on its founding violin teachers (Kreutzer, Baillot and Rode) and defining musical characteristics and violinistic performance techniques that can be said to typify the French Violin School; chapter five assesses the *Méthode de Violon* as a primary source representative of pedagogy in the French Violin School by relaying a historical account of the creation of the *Méthode* and examining thirteen selected examples from the work for markers that amount to technical and musical signatures of the School's style.

(N.B. examples from the *Méthode* used in this thesis are from an Italian translation of the work, *Metodo di Violino*.[24] The examples are identical to those in the original *Méthode*. The Italian version is used for its greater legibility in reproduction.)

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[24] Pierre Baillot, Pierre Rode and Rodolphe Kreutzer. *Metodo di Violino delli Signori Baillot, Rode e Kreutzer*, (Paris, 1803. Translated and reprinted by Fratelli Reycend & co., n.d.).

## CHAPTER 3: INGREDIENTS FOR CHANGE IN VIOLIN PERFORMANCE PRACTICE

> "...it was to be reserved for Viotti to eclipse the glory of his predecessors and to become...the leader and model of a new school."
>
> -Michel Woldemar Méthode de Violon par L. Mozart redigée par Woldemar, éleve de Lolli: Nouvelle édition (1801)

Studying shifts in musical performance and style often results in assessments that tend toward the teleological. In the case of the French Violin School it might appear convenient to extrapolate from late nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century recordings of performers such as Joseph Joachim (1831 - 1907), Pablo de Sarasate (1844 - 1908) and Eugene Ysaÿe (1858 - 1931), and trace these performers' lineage back to one or more of the founding members of the School to underpin arguments about early-nineteenth-century performance style. It would be equally convenient to engage in a discussion of technological developments in violin and bow design as justifying these same arguments. However, changes in artistic motivation seldom occur in a tidy succession of events. With regard to the French Violin School there are symbiotic relationships between the tools of the artist, the social politics that spawned the creation of the *Conservatoire*, and the shifts in aesthetic that are typically categorized as changes in performance practice. That said, it would be irresponsible to fail to recognize the visionary efforts of those individuals who created and systemated French violin pedagogy with the express purpose of influencing future generations. Certainly, they could have neither anticipated the eventual achievements of a Wieniawski or an Ysaÿe, nor these violinists' influence on twentieth- and twenty-first-century violin performance. Nevertheless, to understand the relationships between the tools of the artist, shifts in aesthetic and changes in performance practice associated with the French Violin School, it is appropriate to approach these subjects in a roughly chronological narrative. This thesis does so with the understanding that it is not really a single story, reminding the reader that each of the elements discussed occurred without the various “protagonists’” foreknowledge of circumstances that would follow. Thus, this chapter begins with a discussion of important mid-eighteenth-century French violinists and pedagogues as well as Viotti, followed by a discourse on technological developments of the violin and bow occurring during this time. This background provides context to the *Méthode* and assists analysis of the innovative and corrective techniques and signature characteristics it embedded within its examples.

**Violin Playing in France before Viotti**

Violin pedagogy and performance style in France was well established before both the arrival of Viotti and the founding of the French Violin School. Since this thesis focusses on stylistic change occurring at the end of the eighteenth century, discussion is limited to those violinists and teachers who made their most important contributions in the latter half of the century. In this regard, the treatises of L'abbé le fils (1727 - 1803), Francesco Geminiani (1687 - 1762) and Leopold Mozart (1719 - 1787) are most significant, appearing in the ten-year span between 1751 and 1761.

L'abbé le fils was a student of Baroque master violinist Jean-Marie Leclair (1697 - 1764) and one of the most important French virtuosos of the first half of the eighteenth century. His treatise on violin playing, *Principes du Violon* (1761) is regarded as one of the most important sources of information on mid-eighteenth-century violin playing, second only to those of L. Mozart and Geminiani.[25] Published in 1761, *Principes* was the first French method to treat the violin as an instrument rather than as an "adjunct to the dance," amalgamating French dance traditions and Italian sonata practices.[26] In *Principes,* musical examples dominate the text, with much of the material comprised of performance pieces including duets, operatic arias and *air variées*. Although le fils' method is forward-thinking in spirit, it is nevertheless a technique book owing allegiance to the old style of French violin pedagogy. Instruction on bow hold and violin position as well as postural directives are more closely linked to modern practice than Baroque but the musical material and stylistic instructions are firmly pre-Classical in origin.

A second important violinist of this era, Pierre Gaviniés (1728-1800), bridges the pedagogical gap between le fils' *Principes* and the *Conservatoire'*s *Méthode de Violon*. Gaviniés made his Parisian debut at age thirteen playing a Leclair duet with L'abbé le fils in 1741. Although there is no indication Gaviniés studied with Leclair, his major contribution to violin pedagogy, the *Vingt-Quatre Matinées* (1794), like *Principes*, also acknowledges French Baroque traditions. According to Cooper and Ginter, "the *études* in the *Vingt-Quatre Matinées* represent the acme of eighteenth-century violin technique."[27] They vary in style from Baroque to Classical, while containing a different technical problem in each. This was in direct contrast to works produced by other violin teachers of the time, and would indicate the very beginnings of a pedagogical shift towards using solely didactic teaching materials. Gaviniés' playing was especially admired by Viotti,

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[25] Albert Mell, "*Principes du Violon* (1761) by L'abbé le fils; Aristide Wirsta." *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 16, no. 3 (1963), 410.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Jeffrey Cooper and Anthony Ginter, "Gaviniés, Pierre." *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online,* (Oxford University Press), http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.darius.uleth.ca/subscriber/article/grove/music/10773 (accessed March 9, 2014).

who dubbed him “the French Tartini.”[28] Gaviniés was appointed as one of the first violin professors at the *Institute National de Musique* in 1793, then later at the *Conservatoire* where he taught until his death in 1800. His pedagogical output, like L'abbé le fils, is still rooted in the Baroque style, but his playing and teaching foreshadow a nineteenth-century emphasis on technical skill and virtuosity.[29] Therefore, Gaviniés represents eighteenth-century violin pedagogy in transition. As such, his *Matinées* provide an excellent example of violin pedagogical materials before the arrival and influence of Viotti and the systemization of the French Violin School.

Gaviniés, L. Mozart, Geminiani and many other violinists all made specific contributions to eighteenth-century violin pedagogy through their writings, musical exercises and *études*. However, the argument can be made that it was L’abbé le fils, though writing in Baroque style, who initiated the shift toward the new style of playing. In *Principes du Violon,* le fils uses the expression “filer un son” (to spin the sound), writing that the bow is the “soul” of the instrument.[30] In doing so, le fils was the first to anthropomorphize the violin and bow, paving the way for more romanticized discussions of relationship between performer and instrument and starkly contrasting the directive-oriented philosophy found in most Baroque treatises. Thirty-one years later, the culmination of this shift in philosophy would arrive in Paris in the form of Giovanni Battista Viotti.

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[28] Bruce R. Schueneman, *The French Violin School: Viotti, Rode, Kreutzer, Baillot, and their contemporaries.* Edited by William E. Studwell. (Kingsville, Texas: Lyre of Orpheus Press, 2002), 15.
[29] Cooper, “Pierre Gaviniés.”
[30] Mell, “*Principes,”* 412.

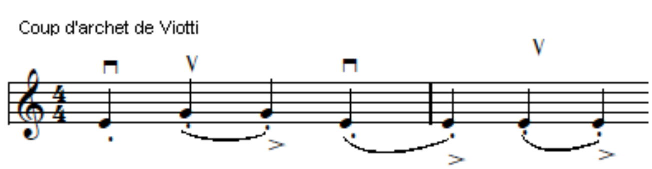
**Giovanni Battista Viotti**

In his extensive *L' Ecole Francaise de Violon de Lully À Viotti,* scholar Lionel de la Laurencie identifies Viotti's debut in Paris at the *Concert spirituel* on 17 March 1782 to have been "a turning point in the history of the violin."[31] In the late eighteenth century, Paris was the natural destination for violinists of all nationalities for "[it] not only succumbed to the soloistic idiom, but became a cosmopolitan centre for violin playing in the second half of the century."[32] Viotti became an instant sensation, and his new style of playing was immediately adopted by other musicians. No other violinist of the time sounded like Viotti; scholar Paul Gelrud writes that between Viotti and his teacher Gaetano Pugnani (1731 - 1798) there was "an unbridgeable gap" and goes on to state that Viotti may have sounded more similar to Yehudi Menuin (1916 - 1999), a violinist appearing one hundred and fifty years later, than Pugnani.[33] This is obviously speculative, but what is certain is that Viotti was the first significant proponent of the new Tourte bow, and his influence became part of an invisible pedagogical subculture via the materials being produced for and taught to *Conservatoire* students. As for Viotti himself, he remained wildly popular with the public following his 1782 debut, but suddenly and mysteriously withdrew from public performance in 1783 to focus on teaching and to take an official position in the court of Marie Antoinette in 1784. He spent the remainder of his years as a musical and social coordinator, organizing concerts and entertaining and composing for the great musicians of Europe.[34] Sadly, the French Revolution was not

[31] Lionel de Laurencie *L'école Française de Violon, de Lully à Viotti: Études, d'histoire et d'esthétique* (Paris: Delagrave,1924) Volume I, 6.
[32] Stowell, *Cambridge Companion to the Violin,* 46.
[33] Paul Geoffrey Gelrud, "A Critical Study of the French Violin School." (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1941), 4.
[34] Schueneman, *The French Violin School,* 24.

kind to Viotti. The collapse of the French aristocracy eliminated his source of income - his patrons - forcing him to leave France in 1792 for London. Unfortunately, due to political tensions between Britain and France, foreigners such as Viotti were treated with suspicion and, ultimately, he was deported from England in 1795. Although he eventually returned in 1802, he never regained his former prestige. Viotti died in England in 1824, disappointed and frustrated after several failed projects.[35]

Although Viotti did not compose any pedagogical material per se, many of the technical and expressive elements that typify the French Violin School style are embedded in his concerti. However, not all of these elements are expressly marked in Viotti's scores. An excellent example of this is the so-called "Viotti stroke," a bowing made famous by Viotti in his playing and compositions (Ex. 1).[36]

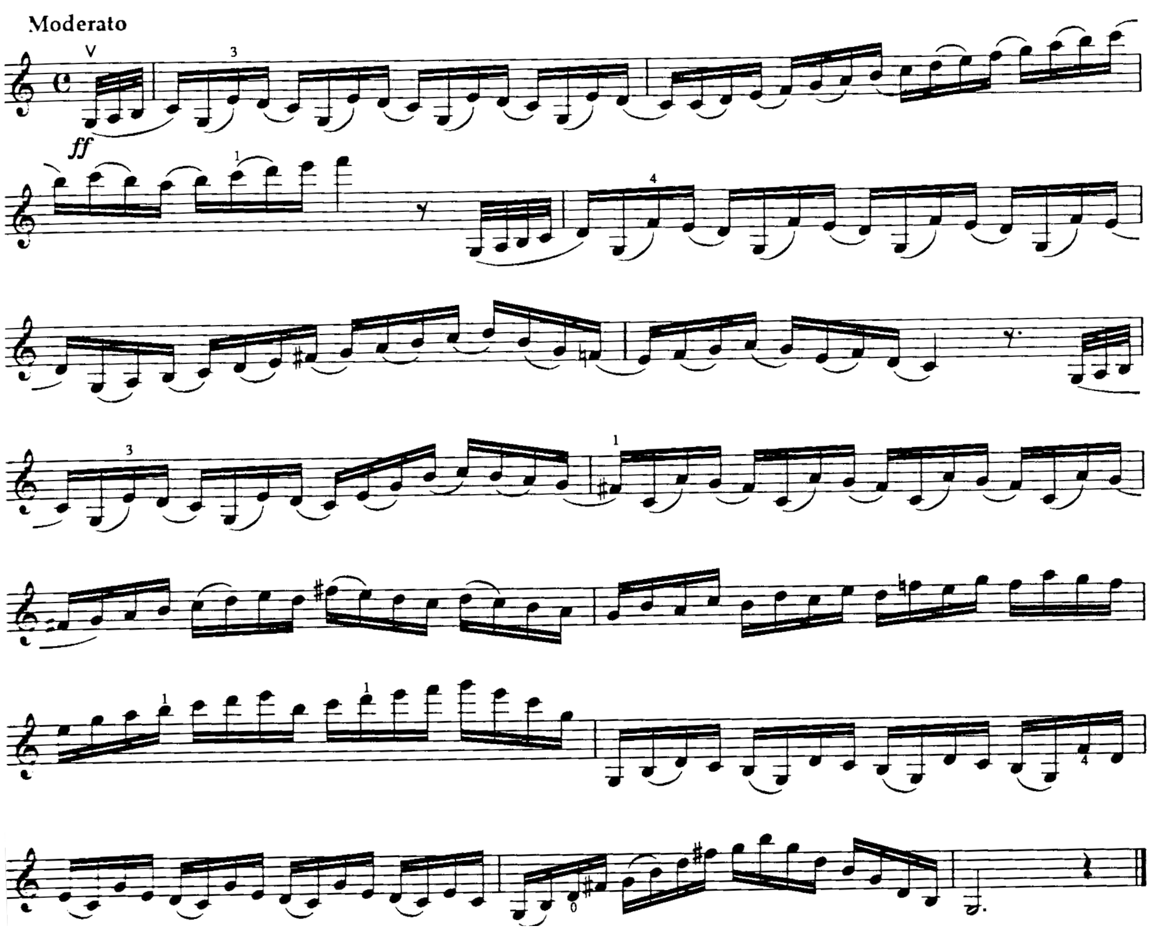
Example 1. The "Viotti stroke"


The bowing consists of a series of two slurred staccato bow strokes. The first of the two slurred articulations occurs on a rhythmically weaker portion of the beat, the second on a stronger portion of the beat. The first of the two notes receives very little (a very small portion of the bow's length) bow and is unaccentuated. The second receives much more bow and is accentuated. However, no such articulatory markings occur in Viotti's scores, placing the burden of correct performance practice on the performer's knowledge of

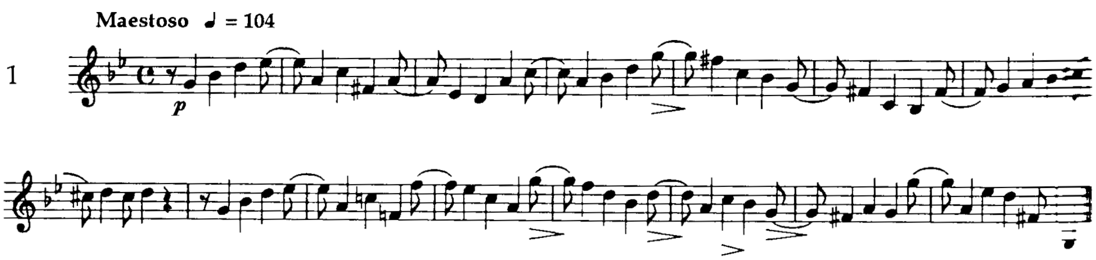
[35] Schueneman, *The French Violin School*, 27.
[36] Robin Stowell, *Violin Technique and Performance Practice in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 76.

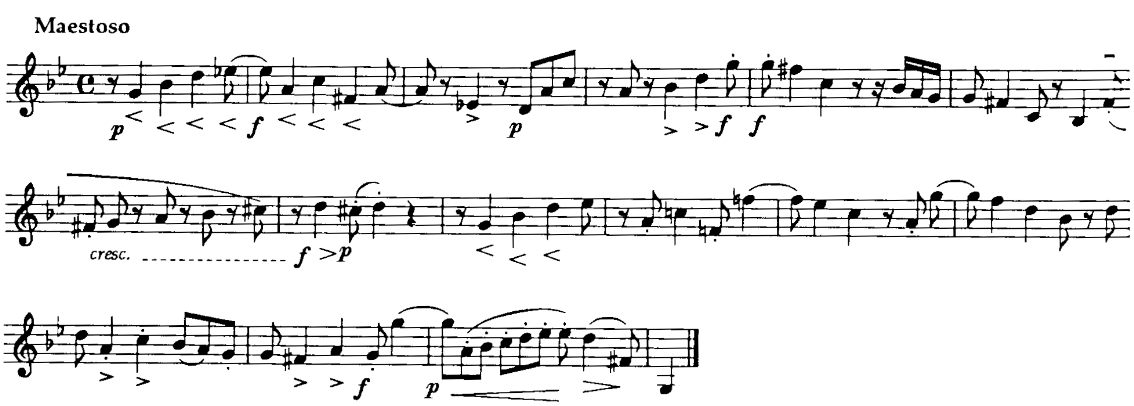
traditions arising from those who saw Viotti play. This knowledge is documented in the *Méthode* and other pedagogical materials produced by Kreutzer, Rode and Baillot. In *L'art du Violon* Baillot quotes entire passages of Viotti's works, adding instructive editorial markings to ensure students practiced and performed the material in the style Viotti intended (Exx. 2, 3). As such, researchers can rely on the works of Viotti's disciples for insight into his style as well as  the manner in which it was appropriated and disseminated.

Example 2: Giovanni Viotti, Violin Concerto No. 28 in A Minor. G. 143.
1st  movement, mm. 96-110. As annotated in Pierre Baillot, *L'art du Violon,* (Paris, 1831), p. 193.

In the middle of the bow, firmly, and with a full tone.

Baillot notes of the above passage, an example of how the "Viotti stroke" appears when annotated: "The character reveals in a general way the composer's style, and contains one of the principal secrets of genius that distinguishes him. The violinist must therefore try to perform the passage with all the composer's intentions down to the smallest detail."[37]

Example 3a,b. Giovanni Viotti, Violin Concerto No. 19 in G minor, G. 91.
1st movement, mm. 384-99. As annotated in Pierre Baillot, *L'art du Violon,*
(Paris, 1831), p. 238.

a. Passage as notated by the composer.


b. An indication of the manner in which the passage can be played.


Example 3 in particular illustrates not only the sparsity of performance directions in the original score (Ex. 3a), but also the sheer number of nuances that a performer of Viotti's time would have been expected to include (Ex. 3b). Additional bowings, articulations,

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[37]Baillot, *L'art du Violon,* 193.

dynamics, and even changes to the timing demonstrate the necessity that a performer be intimately acquainted with Viotti's style. Baillot, along with Kreutzer and Rode, made it their life's work to identify those style markers and pass them on via their pedagogical materials.

Finally and most importantly, in addition to his expansion of techniques made possible by the Tourte bow, Viotti above all championed the singing style of playing.[38] This style, imitating vocal inflections of singing in instrumental performance, went hand in hand with the nineteenth century's greater romantic sensibility of placing beauty and nature (as exemplified by the human voice) above all else. The greatest push towards the eventual dominance of the singing voice ideal can be attributed to the pedagogy of the French Violin School as well as Viotti's championing of the Tourte bow and his preference for Stradivari violins.[39] This made these instruments incredibly desirable, leading to these models becoming the idealized tools of the Romantic performer.

**Technological change**

The final ingredients in the recipe for stylistic change at the end of the eighteenth century are the violin and bow proper. First, it is important to differentiate between developments in violin and in bow construction. The Tourte bow was a revolutionary new design, breaking from the traditions of earlier *gamba*-based models. In contrast, most changes to the violin occurred as alterations to preexisting instruments. The following discussion summarizes the most relevant technological developments in these regards;

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[38] Chappell White, "Viotti, Giovanni Battista." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online,* (Oxford University Press), http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.darius.uleth.ca/subscriber/article/grove/music/29483, (accessed March 9, 2014).
[39] Ibid.

ones that the teachers of the *Conservatoire* exploited while striving toward their new musical ideals.

Alterations to the Violin

While an amateur observer may observe little difference between violins made in different centuries and countries, to a connoisseur, the greatest value in a violin is found in the subtle individuality and evidence of original thinking imbued by the maker's hand.

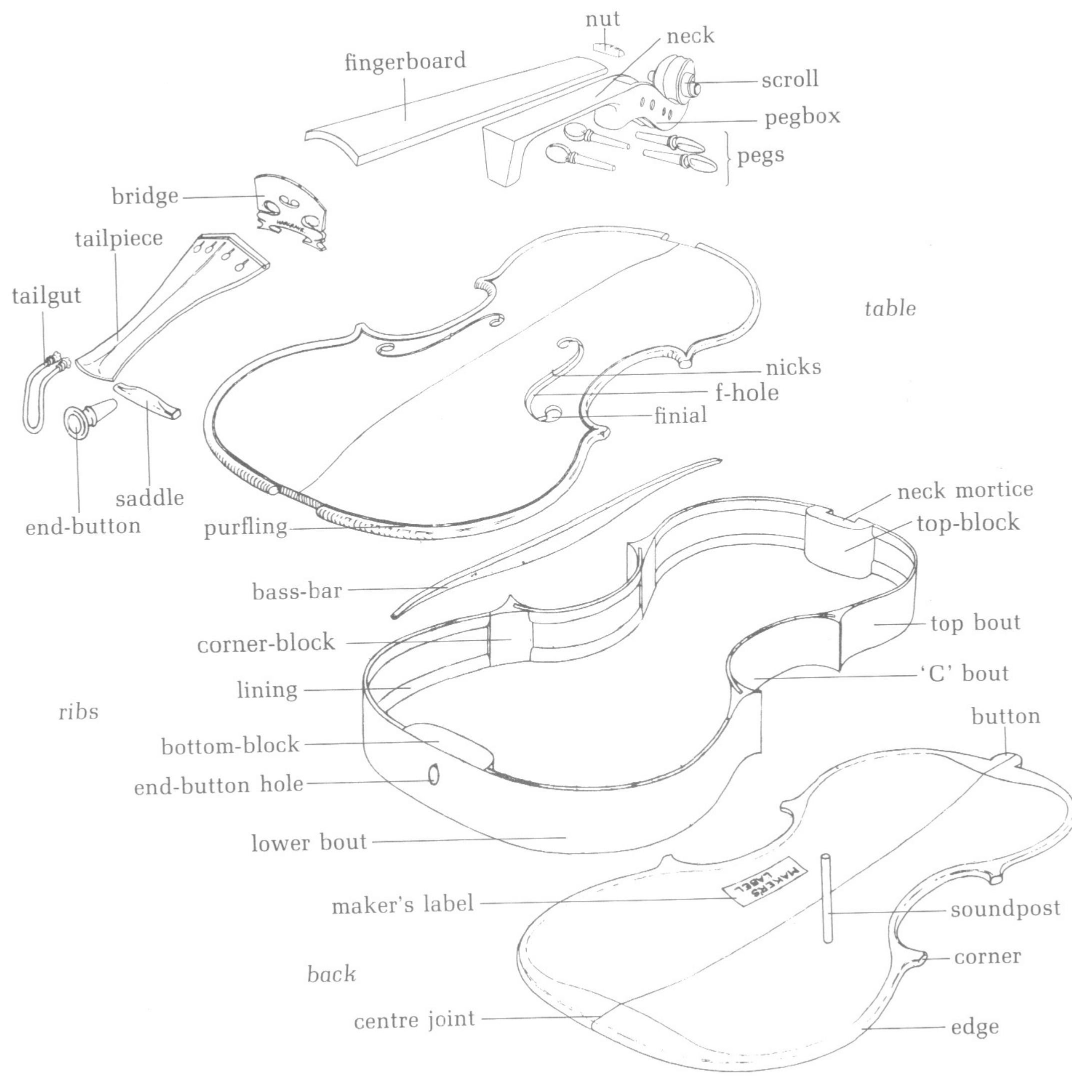


Figure 1. Anatomy of the Violin[40]

[40] Stowell, *Cambridge Companion to the Violin, 2*.

The form and structure of a violin is understood to be intrinsically linked to its tonal potential as well as any collectibility that might be subsequently arise from a maker's reputation. By the nineteenth century, and continuing into the present, the most sought-after violins have been Cremonese instruments dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, virtually all violins made in these centuries have undergone alterations to bring them into line with more contemporary ideas about tone quality and sound projection.[41] Critically, structural alterations performed on violins in the early nineteenth century must not be seen as the cause of changes to musical ideals or aesthetics. Rather they are a response to them.[42] These alterations, a large part of the eighteenth-century luthier's craft, attempted to preserve the formal quality of the original instruments while giving them the capacity to match a new *voce humana,* or human voiced, tonal ideal. As such, the older model Stainer and Amati violins, with their *voce argentina*, or silvery voiced, tone and high arches lost popularity, while the violins made by Stradivari, flatter-bellied, with broader proportions of back and top (and, as a result, greater in interior acoustical volume) flourished as concert instruments. In 1782, violin maker Antonio Bagatella published a violinmaking treatise - *Regole per la Costruzione de' Violini* - where he gave detailed and technical instructions on how to obtain these "silvery" or "human" voiced qualities.[43] Consequently, and before the eventual dominance of the "*voce humana*" sound ideal, the last half of the eighteenth century saw players using both types of instruments. In a letter written to his father Leopold on 6

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[41] Boyden, "Violin."
[42] Antonio Bagatella, *Regole per la Costruzione de' Violini, Viole, Violoncelli e Violoni,* (Padua, 1786/R; Eng. trans., 1995).
[43] Ibid.

October 1777, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart acknowledged the simultaneous existence of these two different kinds of violins, and judged them to be suited for different performance contexts. He wrote "…when they [Dubreill - pupil of Tartini, and Carl - Dubreill's youngest son] began to discuss violins for concerts and violins for orchestras, they reasoned very well, and they were always of the same opinion as I."[44] Historian Pietro Lichtenthal, in his *Dictionary of Music* (1826) identifies these two sound ideals as prominent in Mozart's time.[45]

Indeed, the process of alteration was a gradual one. In *Regole per la Costruzione de' Violini,* Bagatella describes a tool that he had invented for ensuring the correct alignment of the neck, but from this it is clear that he was still using a traditional way of fixing the neck to the body, employing nails through the top-block.[46] Eventually, this procedure proved too weak for the nineteenth-century combination of a more acute neck angle and a longer length of neck (approximately 14 mm longer).[47] Both of these factors have the effect of increasing string tension, the upward pull on the neck and, consequently, the downward pressure on the table of the violin. The process of replacing violin necks was in full swing by the end of the eighteenth century and probably started in Paris (Fig. 2): "About 1800 the Brothers Mantegazza were restorers of instruments who were often entrusted by French and Italian artists to lengthen the necks of their

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[44] Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Leopold Mozart, *The Letters of Mozart and His Family,* edited by Emily Anderson, A. Hyatt King, and Monica Carolan (London: Macmillan, 1966).
[45] Pietro Lichtenthal, *Dizionario e Bibliografia della Musica,* (Milano: Per Antonio Fontana, 1826).
[46] Bagatella, *Regole.*
[47] Andrea Mosconi, *Simone Fernando Sacconi: Centenary Celebration = Nel Centenario della Nascita,* (Cremona: Turris, 1996), 43.

violins, after the Paris fashion, an example which was followed by amateurs and professionals all over North Italy."[48]

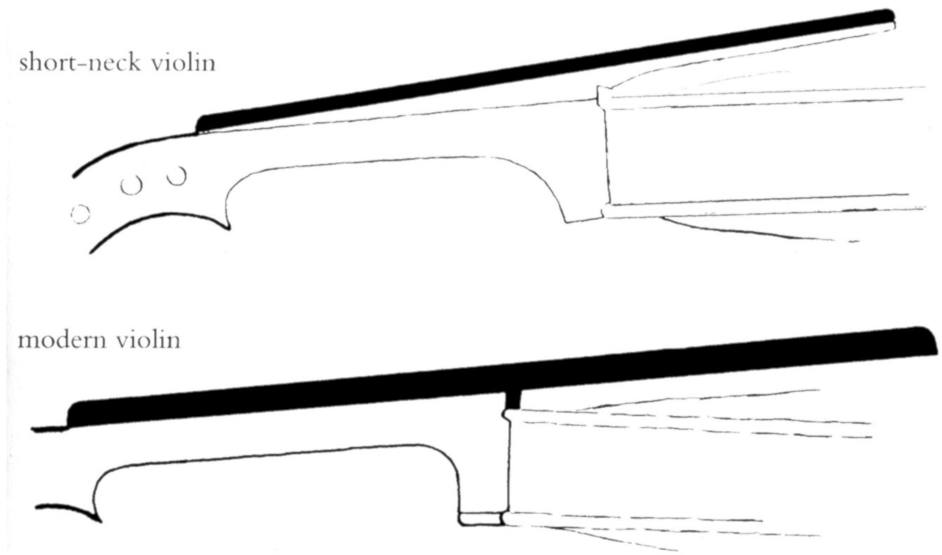



Figure 2. Differences in Violin Necks[49]

One of the most succinct descriptions of a violin "re-fit" comes from the maker Abbé Sibire who, in 1806, wrote about his experiences in the publication *La Chélonomie*.

> "I shall confine myself hereafter to a daily occurrence …. It is a kind of restoration (loosely called) which is purely accessory and yet at the same time crucial. This is a process which does not imply the slightest deterioration and yet which virtually every old violin, no matter how well preserved it is in other ways, could not avoid: rebarring. The revolution which music has experienced needs to be replicated in instrument making; when the first has set the style, the other must follow. … Formerly it was the fashion to have necks well elevated, bridges and fingerboards extremely low, fine strings, and a moderate tone. Then the bass bar, that necessary evil in the instrument, could be short and thin because it was sufficient for it to have enough strength to sustain the weight of five to six pounds which the strings exerted on it. But since then music, in becoming perfect, has placed a demand on violin making. The tilting back of the neck, the raising of the bridge, of the fingerboard, and the amplification in sound, necessitate increasing by a full third the resistant force. Repairers have only one choice: strengthening the old bar, or replacing it with a new one."[50]

[48] Boyden, "Violin."
[49] Stowell, *Violin Technique and Performance Practice,* 25.
[50] Boyden, "Violin."

Cumulatively, the effect of these structural design elements can be summarized in terms of the pressures and tensions on the body, or resonant chamber, of the violin. The Baroque and early Classic models of violin provided, like engineering used in bridge construction, a high top (table) arch with some structural strength by virtue of its form. Therefore, less internal support was needed to offset string tensions on the instrument and a thinner bass bar and sound post combination provided suitable strength to support the arch while simultaneously facilitating an easily resonant sound quality, albeit one without great carrying power.[51] As neck angles became more acute (in order to increase tension on the belly) and arching became flatter (in order to increase sound projection) greater internal support was needed to counterbalance higher string tensions in the models of violin so valued by performers of the French Violin School.

| | *length* | *height* | *width* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1650 Nicolò Amati | 219.08 | 6.35 | 4.76 |
| 1716 Antonio Stradavari | 254 | 7.94 | 4.76 |
| Since 1859 | 266.7 | 11.11 | 6.35 |
| 1997 | 270-280 | approx. 12.5 | 5-6 |

Figure 3. Changes in Bass Bar Thickness (in mm.)[52]

Tartini stated in 1734 that the tension of the four strings on a violin was sixty-three pounds; when this figure is contrasted with an estimation from 1875 that puts the tension

[51] Boyden, "Violin." Michel Woldemar expressed a preference for Stradivari and Guarneri over Amati and Stainer because of their more vigorous sound but also because he considered the less pronounced arching more convenient for holding the violin when playing virtuoso music.
[52] Modified from: Kolneder, *Amadeus Book of the Violin,* 34. The chart appearing in Kolneder's book had a glaring inaccuracy which, based on an interview with expert luthier Dennis McCaigue has been corrected.

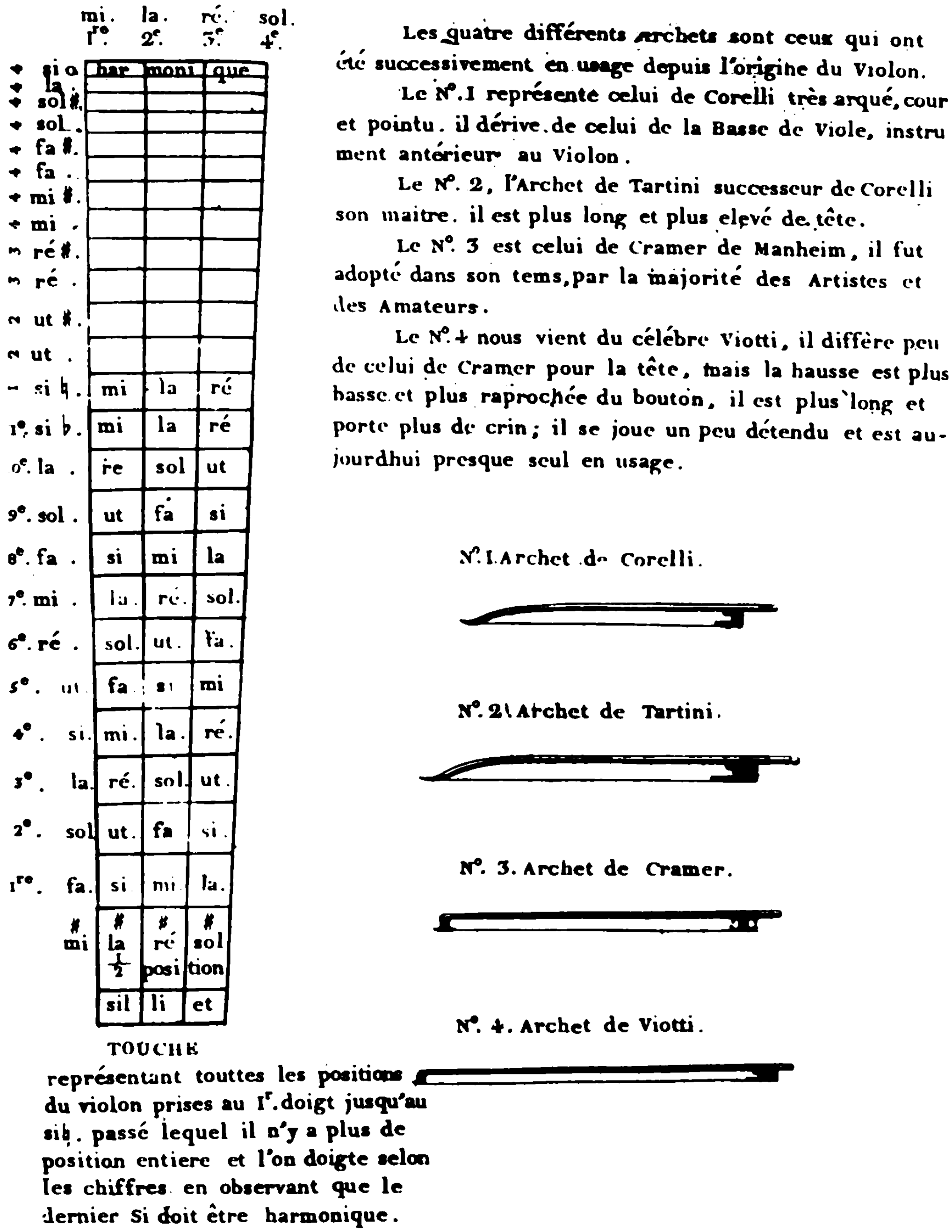
of violin strings at ninety pounds, the effects of these alterations become apparent.[53] Hence, greater structural support was achieved by use of larger bass bars, sound posts, and having thicker table and back plates (and more wood in the instrument in general) (Fig. 3). Thinking in terms of inertial forces can provide a compelling analogy; the modified instruments required more energy from the bow to initiate resonance and overcome the inertia of a larger, more heavily tensioned instrument. Concomitantly, in these higher tension instruments, the momentum of the sound is realized in a more powerful tone, one better suited for the large concert halls and soloistic role the violin was to fill during the nineteenth century.

The Tourte Bow

The evolution of the bow, in contrast to that of the violin, is immediately obvious to even the untrained eye. Prior to the Tourte bow many different models of bows existed concurrently. Michel Woldemar's *Grande Méthode de Violon,* a treatise first published in Paris in 1798 (reprinted c.1805) states on its title page a special concern for "tous les coups d'archet anciens et modernes" (Fig. 4).[54] Woldemar includes images of four historical bows which are identified not by their makers but by the famous violinists whose style of performance and composition was dependent on them: Corelli, Tartini, Cramer and Viotti. These illustrations demonstrate a gradual increase in the length of the bow, a change from a convex stick to a concave stick, and a redesign of the tip of the bow from a 'pike's' head to 'hatchet' and finally to the Tourte 'battle-axe' shape (Fig. 5). In this treatise, Woldemar claims that by 1798, the Viotti bow, the direct ancestor to the

[53] "Strings." *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* (London, 1899).
[54] Michel Woldemar, *Grande Méthode ou Étude Élémentaire pour le Violon*, (Paris, c. 1800, 2nd edn. ca. 1800), 3. "all the bows from ancient to modern"

ultimate form of the Tourte bow, had become almost exclusively adopted. This claim is borne out by the *Conservatoire* treatise of 1803.[55]




**3 Woldemar,** Grande méthode, **p.3**

Figure 4. Title page of Michel Woldemar's *Grande Méthode,* 3.

[55] Owen Jander, "The 'Kreutzer' Sonata as Dialogue." *Early Music* 16, no. 1 (1988), 36.

Figure 5. Changes in Bow Design[56]

The vast majority of the older models of bow were shorter than that Tourte, with a thin and narrow band of hair. The stick arched outward with little or no *camber* added by the maker. Arching of the stick was a result of the tension exerted by the hair and, the frog, having an open channel with no mechanism to spread the hair (unlike the Tourte model), could only accept a limited amount of hair. Since there were fewer hairs among which to disperse tension, each individual hair necessarily supported a higher tension. From a player's standpoint, the feel is one of the hair having relatively little "give." In his entry on bowing in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* Bachmann states "there are two features common to all bows from this [pre-Tourte] period which have a direct affect the way they are used and consequently on the sounds they produce."[57] These are identified as the lack of a *ferrule*, or hair spreading device, and a smaller distance between the bow hair and the stick at the tip of the bow (compared to the distance at the heel). The Tourte bow has an almost identical hair to stick height at both

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[56] These three bows by maker Peter Visentin show historical changes in bow design. The top Baroque model has a pike's head shape, the middle transitional bow a hatchet head, with both bows lacking a ferrule at the frog. The bottom bow is a Tourte model, containing a battle-axe tip design and modern frog.
[57] Bachmann, "Bow."

the frog and the tip.[58] Compared to models from the late eighteenth century, the lower tip and shorter overall length resulted in bows with a lighter feeling at the tip, a convex stick and a balance point closer to the player's hand. These features are a causal factor in the tendency for up-bows to be lighter than down-bows, a phenomenon that is considerably more marked in early bows than with a Tourte-style bow.  The other feature Bachmann identifies, the absence of a *ferrule*, meant that there was nothing to hold the ribbon of hair flat as pressure was placed on the hair. This makes it unsuitable for modern-style *martelé*, a fundamental bow stroke of the French Violin School.

By contrast to the older models of bow, the new Tourte bow was longer, with a length of about 71.5-72 cm, with today's bows tending to be even longer at 73 cm.[59] The wood of an inward-*cambered* bow (Tourte) must be heated and bent to achieve its shape. As a result, when the bow is tightened, the stick stays in closer proximity to the hair than with an older model. For a player, this results in a feel of stability in the lateral flexion of the bow wood and is a factor in the development of new bowing techniques. Lastly, notwithstanding the many different woods used in bow construction, all of them have the characteristics of being both dense and strong. Usually, bows were made from exotic hard woods from South America or Africa. The eventual bow wood choice for Tourte - pernumbuco (*echinata caesalpina*) - was strong, but slightly less dense (thus less heavy) than snakewood, amorette or other wood choices. The addition of a silver or gold *ferrules*, buttons and other decorative metal work provide a counterbalance to the increased length, akin to the function of the pommel of a long sword. These features

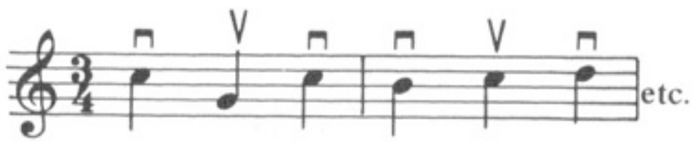
[58] Bachmann, "Bow."
[59] Ibid.

allowed longer bows to be made; ones that retained a feeling of balance and agility in a player's hand.

The widespread use of Tourte model bows was accompanied by a changing ethos regarding basic bowing and an expansion in the number of special strokes, known as "bow *variées*."[60] Conceptually, each bow stroke has a beginning, middle and end. A movement away from an articulatory expression primarily derived from the subtle accents at the beginnings of each bow stroke (and exploiting the natural decay of sound as the bow approaches the tip) towards one that pays greater attention to the middle of the stroke (while focussing on equality of legato changes in bow direction at the distal ends of the bow), is identified. This can be likened to changing concepts in the 'ordinary' touch for keyboard players.[61] The degree to which the Tourte model bow motivates this new ideal is hinted at by violinist Francesco Galeazzi (1758-1819) at the end of the eighteenth century: "in playing...the aim above all is to produce evenness, not just in the left hand but also in bowing, joining everything even more than seems possible … [with the new bow] changing the bow as imperceptibly as possible demands considerable little skill."[62] Ultimately, one of the largest consequences of using the new Tourte model of bow was an elimination of what Geminiani so despised in violin performance: "that wretched Rule of drawing the Bow down at the first Note of every Bar."[63] This "Rule of the Down Bow" was a vital constituent of Baroque bowing and, in particular, seventeenth-century French Baroque Dance. In *Florelegium Secundum* (1698), Georg Muffat (1653-1704) discusses the older style bowing principles demanded by Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687) in which

[60] Jander, "'Kreutzer' Sonata," 36.
[61] Bachmann, "Bow."
[62] Ibid.
[63] Geminiani, *The Art of the Violin,* 4.

down-bows occur on the first and most highly stressed beats of every bar (Ex. 4).[64] Not incidentally, these are where a dancer in the French Baroque manner would transfer weight from one foot to the other by means of the *mouvement*.

Example 4. George Muffat, *Florilegium Secundum,* (Passau,1698).


With Baroque-style bows, the light tip made up-bows naturally weaker in volume and articulatory strength than down-bows.  Although Geminiani and Tartini state their preference for more equitable accents from both down- and up-bows, the Rule of the Down Bow nevertheless guides instructions in Leopold Mozart's *Violonschule*. Mozart identifies "good" and "bad" notes according to their metrical stress hierarchy and assigns them down- and up-bows respectively.[65] It is one of the achievements of late eighteenth-century Tourte bow design that it becomes a relatively simple matter for players to both disguise the difference between down- and up-bows and enhance the middle of the bow stroke. The consequential exploration of new potentials inherent in this design become the primary focus for violin teachers at the *Conservatoire.*

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[64] Georg Muffat, *Florilegium Secundum,* (Passau 1698).
[65] Stowell, *Cambridge Companion to the Violin,* 139-140.

## CHAPTER 4: CREATION OF THE FRENCH VIOLIN SCHOOL

> "The new social independence gained by the middle classes as a direct result of the events of the French Revolution (1789) intensified interest [in musical education and pedagogy] and prompted the gradual acceptance of state control of education, together with the need for free instruction, irrespective of social status. Consequently a *Conservatoire* was founded in Paris...to provide free musical tuition to all who merited it."
>
> -Robin Stowell Violin Technique and Performance Practice in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries

### The Paris *Conservatoire*

Two integral components of the French Violin School's creation and subsequent longevity of its influence were the overall systemization of education that took place in France at the beginning of the nineteenth century and the founding of the Paris *Conservatoire National de Musique et de Declamation* in 1795. "Broad public education was one of the tenets of the French revolution," with government legislation designed to achieve the dream of egalitarian access to learning.[66] This was also a shrewd political move by the new government for, by renaming and reorganizing institutions that were previously symbols of nobility and privilege, ties to the French aristocracy were visibly severed. The *Conservatoire* began its metamorphosis on 3 December 1783 when Papillon de la Ferté, *Intendant* of the *Menus-Plaisirs du Roi*, the organization responsible for providing entertainment for the king, proposed the creation of a future *École Royale de Chant.* The school was instituted by Decree on 3 January 1784 and opened its doors on 1 April 1784. In June of the same year, reflecting the addition of instruction in declamation, its name was modified to *École Royale de Chant et de Déclamation*. In 1792 Bernard

[66] Kolneder, *Amadeus Book of the Violin,* 378.

Sarrette created the *École Gratuite de la Garde Nationale*, by 1793 this had evolved into the *Institute National de Musique.* This organization was responsible for training musicians to play in the national guard bands, groups that were in great demand for the large-scale and incredibly popular outdoor gatherings held by the revolutionary government after the Reign of Terror. Faculty appointed to the *Institute* included Kreutzer, Baillot and Rode. In another canny political move, instruments and sheet music "confiscated" during the revolution were "stored" at the school, never to be returned to their original owners.[67] This collection would become one of the most comprehensive music libraries and instrument repositories in Europe, the *Bibliotheque Nationale*.[68] The founding of a state publishing house, *Le Magasin de Musique à l'Usage des Fêtes Nationales,* also occurred concurrently (1793). By 1795, plans by the French government for combining the *École Royal* and the *Institute de Musique* into what would become the *Conservatoire National de Musique et de Déclamation* were completed. The *Conservatoire* officially opened on the 22 of October 1796, with Sarrette in the position of director. The inaugural class was comprised of 351 students, with plans for this number to grow to 600 students and 115 teachers.[69] Four of these were professors of violin. Throughout the nineteenth century, most distinguished French violinists attended the *Conservatoire* as pupils, and some returned to teach as professors.[70] This ensured a consistency of pedagogical approach, which was further promoted by the institution's

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[67] Kolneder, *Amadeus Book of the Violin,*379.
[68] Stowell, *Cambridge Companion the the VIolin,* 2.
[69] Kolneder, *Amadeus Book of the Violin,* 379.
[70] Stowell, "In Principle- 3," 74.

publication of instrumental treatises.[71] It was these two factors, pedagogy and publication that were so critical in ensuring the legacy of the French Violin School.

One of the *Conservatoire*'s main goals was to produce orchestral musicians who could both sight-read and achieve a homogeneous sound through uniform performance practices (a result of the standardized approach to pedagogy by its violin teachers and the use of identical equipment - the Tourte model bow and new models of violins).[72] This brought the *Conservatoire's* orchestra to a superlative standard, an accomplishment that was no small feat considering the fact that the *Conservatoire* orchestra was initially a student ensemble aided by a few alumni. Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827), remarked to Baron de Trimont in 1809, "I should like to hear Mozart's symphonies in Paris; I am told that they are played better at the *Conservatoire* than anywhere else."[73] This same orchestra performed Beethoven's First Symphony in 1807 and 1808, the premier Parisian performances of any of his orchestral works. In 1810, a review of a *Conservatoire* orchestra performance asserted "the student violinists, trained individually by different professors who nevertheless had drawn inspiration from a common source (Viotti), played in a much more polished and unified manner that the violinists formerly of the *Concerts Cléry,* who subscribed to different bowing schools and hence adopted different approaches to bowing techniques."[74]

A steady expansion of the European music publishing industry fulfilled the demands created by the standardization of pedagogical practices.[75] A large volume of

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[71] Stowell, "In Principle- 3," 74.
[72] Schwartz, "Beethoven and the French Violin School," 433.
[73] Ibid., 436.
[74] Stowell, *Violin Technique and Performance Practice,* 31.
[75] Ibid., 2-3.

didactic material in the form of studies, exercises and tutors was published in the nineteenth century. These catered to students of all levels. Foremost in this endeavour was the *Conservatoire's* publishing house, *Le Magasin de Musique a L'usage des Fêtes Nationales,* which encouraged the publication of its own courses of instruction, thereby helping to solidify its status as the centre of musical instruction in France. The very first of these official publications was the 1803 treatise, *Méthode du Violon*.[76]

Accordingly, the establishment of the *Conservatoire National Superieur de Musique* in Paris in 1795 led to the city becoming one of the most important European centres of violin playing and teaching. The *Conservatoire's* acknowledged excellence attracted violinists throughout Europe. A standardized approach to pedagogy and the first instructional materials dedicated to the exploration of techniques made possible by the new models of violin and bow ensured a Viotti-inspired performance practice lineage. Although the fundamental characteristics of the French Violin School originate with Viotti, it was the trio of *Conservatoire* pedagogues, Rodolphe Kreutzer, Pierre Rode and Pierre Baillot, who were responsible for the School's lasting influence. Consequently, it is important to examine their lives and teaching materials to gain a deeper understanding of their playing styles and pedagogical approaches. Such an examination will permit definition of French Violin School characteristics, identifiers that can consequently be assessed in the context of the *Méthode de Violon*.

**Rodolphe Kreutzer (1766-1831)**

Rodolphe Kreutzer was born in 1766 in Versailles. His first violin teacher was his father. In 1778 he became the student of Anton Stamitz (1750 - c.1798 - 1809), who

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[76] Stowell, *Violin Technique and Performance Practice,* 2-3.

taught him both violin and composition. 1780 was a pivotal year for Kreutzer, as he debuted at the *Concert spirituel* in Paris. His performance was received positively by the public and he was labelled a prodigy, establishing the beginnings of his performing career. In a life-changing event, Kreutzer heard Viotti perform in Paris in 1782. He was deeply affected, calling Viotti a "revelation," and was inspired to imitate Viotti's style of playing in his own compositions.[77] As a teenager Kreutzer worked as one of the first violins in the *chapelle du roi* with Viotti while continuing to perform publicly and compose concerti and other works. In 1790, Kreutzer premiered his first opera, a genre that would remain close to his heart for the rest of his life.[78] In 1797, Kreutzer embarked on a tour of Germany and the Netherlands. It was during this tour that he met Ludwig van Beethoven and developed a friendship with the composer, resulting in Beethoven dedicating a violin sonata to him. Kreutzer also taught violin during these years, publishing his seminal book of pedagogical etudes in 1795. After his appointment to the *Conservatoire* in 1795, Kreutzer served as professor of violin until 1826. His performing career was cut short in 1810 when he broke his arm. Further injury to the arm occurred in 1825, completely ending his playing and teaching activities. As a consequence, he focussed his attention on conducting, both as a *Mâitre de la chapelle du roi* and also at the Opera, where he became music director in 1824. Kreutzer died in Geneva in 1831.

In his article for *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, David Charlton identifies Kreuzter's *Quarante-Deux Études* as "[occupying] an almost unique position in the literature of violin studies."[79] This position is due to the unparalleled

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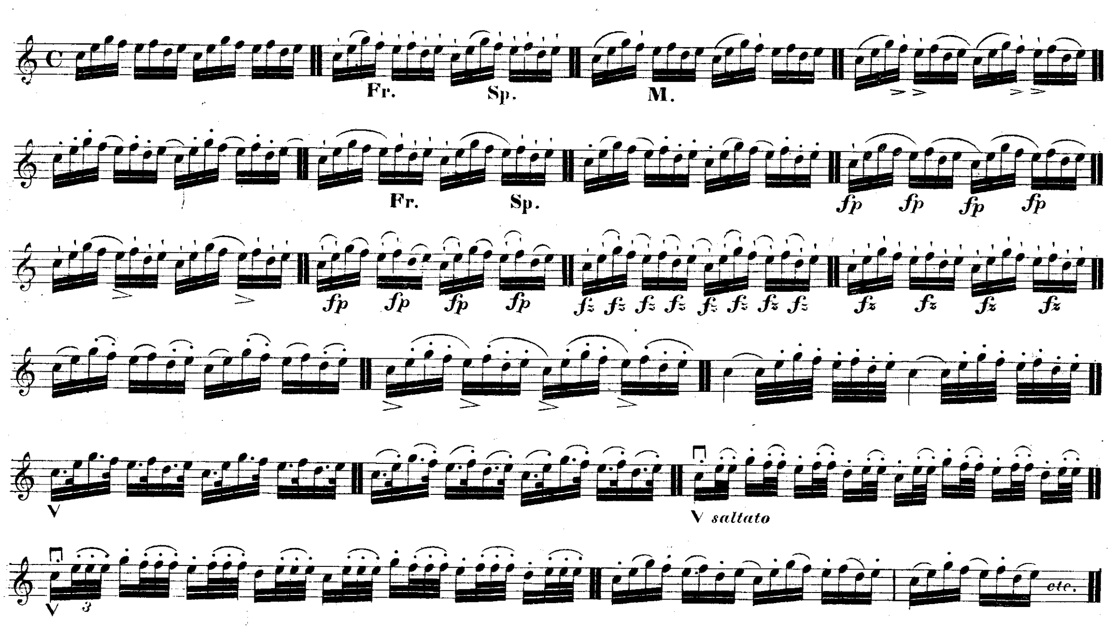
[77] Schueneman, *The French Violin School,* 68.
[78] Ibid., 68. In total Kreutzer wrote thirty-nine operas and ballets.
[79] Charlton, "Kreutzer."

staying power of the work as a pedagogical resource. Students today are as familiar with it as were students of the nineteenth century. This is in part because of Kreutzer's attention to the idea of "opening up the hand" by means of creating studies that focussed on extensions and contractions of the left hand.[80] Because earlier model violins had shorter necks, it was a simpler task to reach larger intervals; however, the longer modern neck required new thinking to accomplish the same ends. In the work, Kreutzer is unwavering in his attention to detail regarding nuances of bow technique. At the same time the *Études* allow a degree of customization in left-hand fingering choices to accommodate differences in hand size and/or musically motivated shifting preferences. Further, the *Études* lend themselves easily to pedagogy because Kreutzer provides numerous alternative bowing patterns for many of the individual *études*. In the following example taken from Kreutzer's famous second *Étude* a large number of bowing variations, each with their own special challenges, are included (Ex 5). As a testament to Kreutzer's skill, articulatory and accentuation patterns of the bowing may be shifted on demand and in interplay with the metrical and harmonic frameworks. In this way the player may learn the fingering patterns of left-hand independently of the bowing, allowing it to remain consistent while bow-strokes are varied. It is a testament to Kreutzer's abilities that no other pedagogical work for the violin has achieved the lasting legacy of the *Quarante-Deux Études*.

[80] Charlton, "Kreutzer."

Example 5. Rodolphe Kreutzer. *42 Études.* Bowing variations from No. 2, p. 3.


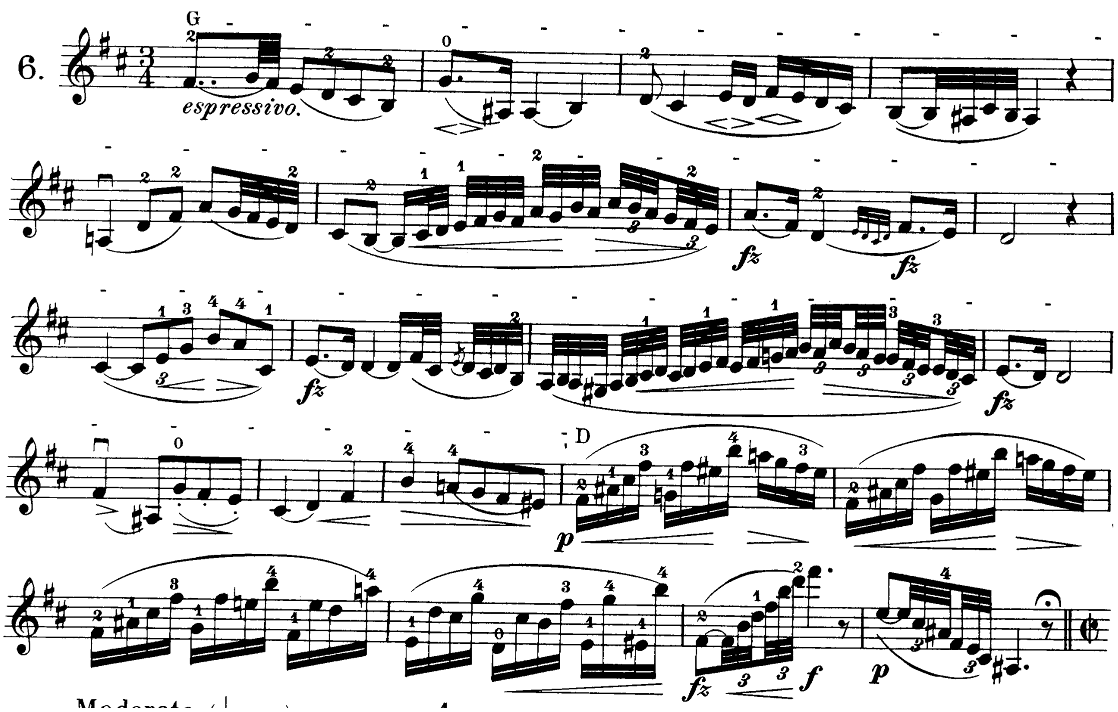
**Pierre Rode (1774-1830)**

Pierre Rode holds the distinction of being the only member of the *Conservatoire's* trio of violin professors to have formally studied with Viotti. Born in 1774 to a middle class family, his earliest teachers are unknown until his studies began with André Joseph Fauvel (1756 - ?). Recognizing Rode's talent, Fauvel brought him to Paris in 1788 to hear a *Concert spirituel*. Rode quickly became a student of Viotti, but it was not until 1790 that he made his solo debut between acts at the Opera. His performance career in this decade was unparalleled. He regularly performed Viotti's concerti as well as his own. As well, he became involved in the *Theatre Feydeau*, though he later resigned in 1792 along with Pierre Baillot, whom he had met there, and who would remain his life-long friend. Rode was only twenty-one years of age when he was appointed to the *Conservatoire's* faculty, joining Kreutzer and Baillot. However, unlike the others, Rode appears to have been infected with a more severe case of wanderlust. He travelled extensively, first to Germany and Prussia in the 1790s, and then to Russia in 1804. From 1804 until 1808 he took the position of solo violinist to the Tsar in St. Petersburg, securing his financial fortune for later in life. However, when Rode returned to Paris, his popularity had waned, and his performances drew criticism from musicians such as Louis Spohr (1784 - 1859), who deemed his playing "cold, and full of mannerism."[81] The concert Spohr was referring to in his assessment was deemed a "fiasco" and consequently Rode vowed never to play in public in Paris again.[82] He left France in 1811, eventually settling in Germany in 1814. While living in Germany, Rode met Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn and became a "very welcome guest in their house."[83] Here he also wrote his best known work, the *Vingt-Quatre Caprices* (1813), which were not matched in their complexity until Paganini published his own *Twenty-Four Caprices*.[84] Rode returned to France in 1821, with his activities focussed on teaching. He made one last return to the Parisian stage in 1828, but the concert was so disastrous, marked by "violent shaking" on Rode's part, that some historians have suggested the stress of it brought on his premature death in 1830.[85]

Rode's *Vingt-Quatre Caprices*, though overshadowed as concert repertoire by those of Paganini, nevertheless hold an established position in the pedagogical canon of violin literature. Seen as the true follower of Viotti in his compositional style, Rode's works unequivocally embody the essence of the French Violin School. The *Caprices* thus

81 Schueneman, *The French Violin School,* 48.
82 Ibid., 48.
83 Arthur Pougin, *The life and music of Pierre Rode, containing an account of Rode, French violinist,* Translated and foreword by Bruce Schueneman, (Kingsville, Texas: Lyre of Orpheus Press, 1994), 67.
84 Schueneman, *The French Violin School,* 51.
85 Ibid., 53.

have stood the test of time due to Rode's ability to “invent graceful, immediately singable tunes,” exploring not only the twenty-four keys, but also a variety of moods.[86]

Example 6.Pierre Rode, *Vingt-Quatre Caprices.* Caprice 6, p. 12.


The attention to articulatory detail is evident in the score, with markings indicating string choice, bowings, types of strokes, dynamics and fingerings. This is very different than the scores produced by Viotti and the high degree of articulatory specificity demonstrates Rode’s stylistic intentions even within his concert repertoire.

**Pierre Marie François de Sales Baillot (1771-1842)**

Baillot was born in 1771 at Passy and first studied with the Italian violinist Polidori (n.d.) until 1780, when his parents relocated to Paris and Baillot began studies with the violinist Saint-Marie (n.d.), who imbued in Baillot a “wise severity” that shaped

[86] Schueneman, *The French Violin School,* 65.

his characteristic “exactitude and neatness of style.”[87] In 1782, Baillot, like Kreutzer, was “profoundly impressed” by Viotti's performance at the *Concert spirituel*. However, Baillot was unable to fulfill his violinistic dreams of studying with Viotti as he was required to return to Italy after his father's death in 1793. There he studied with the somewhat obscure violinist Pollani (n.d.) and perhaps even with Viotti's old teacher Pugnani.[88] Notwithstanding his passion for the violin, Baillot’s main occupation in Italy was working as a private secretary. In 1791, Baillot returned to Paris and, after playing for Viotti, joined the musicians of the *Theatre Feydeau* in what would be a five-month engagement. Following his resignation from the *Theatre Feydeau* Baillot served in the Ministry of Finance. In 1795, he resolved again to try and realize his dream of being a full-time musician, and finally made his successful Parisian debut, playing Viotti's Concerto No. 14. In 1795, Baillot was appointed as a violin professor to the *Conservatoire*, a position he would occupy for the next forty-seven years. Baillot achieved acclaim as a concert violinist across Europe, with tours to Russia (1805 - 1808), England and the Netherlands (1816) among others. An astute politician, Baillot served in various official capacities for both Napoleon and the restoration monarchy. In 1814 he founded a chamber music series that was very well received.[89] Teaching numerous students during his long career, two of his notable pupils, Jacques Fereol Mazas (1782 - 1849) and Jean Baptiste Charles Dancla (1817 - 1907), both authored their own respected pedagogical works. [90] Baillot produced his seminal *L’art du Violon* in 1831. The

[87] Schueneman, *The French Violin School,* 231-32.
[88] Ibid., 76.
[89] Ibid., 77.
[90] Jacques Fereol Mazas, *Seventy-Five Melodious and Progressive Studies For the Violin*, (New York: G. Schirmer, 1898); Jean Baptiste Charles Dancla, *Elementary and Progressive Method for Violin: Opus 52.* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1980).

expanded and refined successor to the *Méthode,* this treatise is viewed as one of the fundamental pedagogical works of the French Violin School. Unlike Rode and Kreutzer, Baillot maintained a concert career until his death in 1842.

Baillot's musical compositions were generally not as well-received as those of his colleagues. However, his pedagogical treatise, *L'art du Violon,* is considered to be the "great summing up of the French [Violin] School."[91] Extensive and much more philosophical than the *Méthode*, Baillot's magnum opus introduces material not discussed in the earlier work.[92] He also discusses contemporary performance practices by noted violinists, including his colleagues. In a particularly useful section for ensuring correct performance, Baillot defines three kinds of left hand shifts of position and fingering choices. He classifies them as 1) the most secure; 2) the easiest for small hands; and 3) expressive fingerings characteristic of particular violinist-composers. This last category is illustrated below, where Baillot discusses Viotti's string-crossing and general avoidance of shifts, Kreutzer's frequent shifts on all strings for brilliance of effect and Rode's more uniform timbral goals, which incorporates the use of *portamento*.[93]

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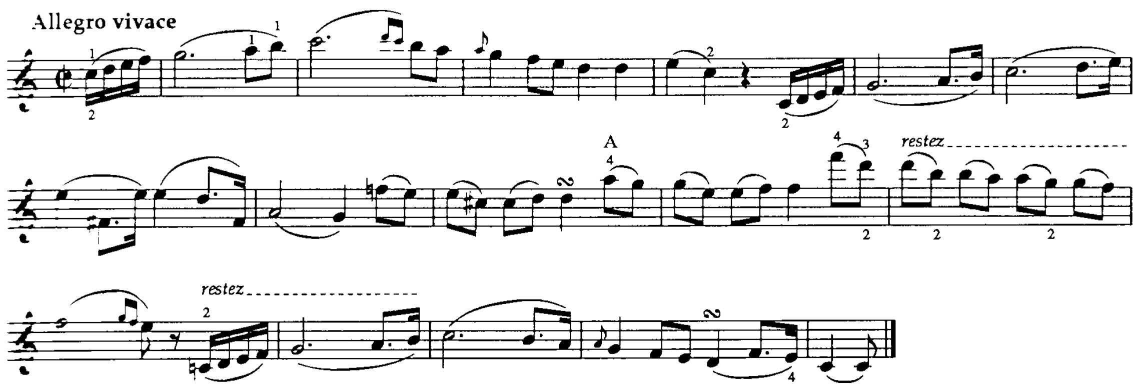
[91] Schueneman*, The French Violin School,* 5.

[92] Brown, "Bowing Styles, Vibrato and Portamento," 102. Baillot, in response to the use of spicatto bow strokes by violinists in the 1820's, added discussion on the stroke in his 1834 *L'Art du Violon.*

[93] Stowell, "In Principle - 3," 77.

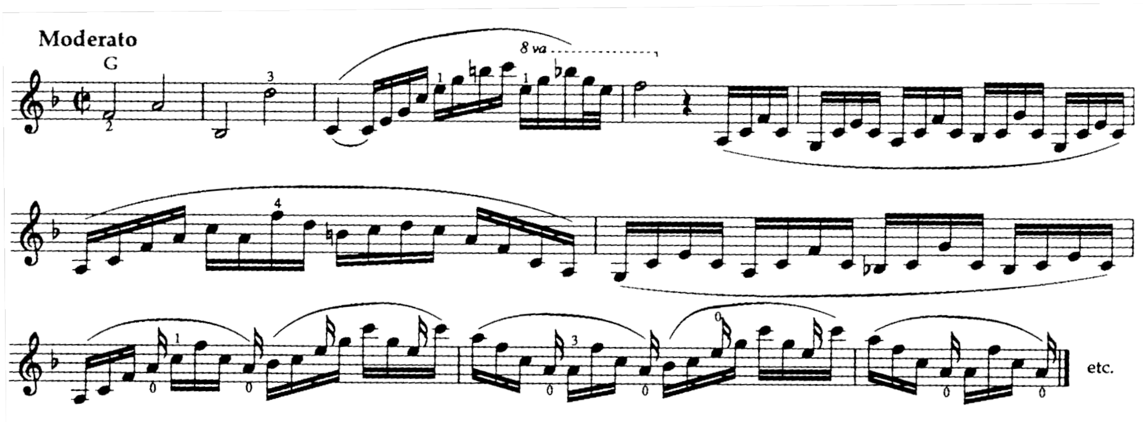
Example 7. Giovanni Viotti, Violin Concerto No. 27 in C major. G. 142. 1st movement, mm. 102-116. Annotated by Pierre Baillot, *L'art du Violon,* p. 268.

VIOTTI'S FINGERING. We have stated that Viotti almost always remained in the same position, that is, he avoided shifts; this style obliged him to cross strings. Both simple melodies and passage-work receive from his style an expression which comes from the character of each string as well as from the different timbre of each string in the different positions. This character, hardly noticeable in the first position, changes as the player moves into higher positions; there is something about this style that is full and round, favourable to the composer's style of expression.


The fingering marked *above* the notes is the one we have seen the composer use. By trying the fingering marked *below* the notes, the violinist will immediately feel the disadvantage, and will be struck by the character given to the melody by the first fingering.[94]

Example 8. Rodolphe Kreutzer, Violin Concerto No. 19 in D Minor. 1st movement, mm. 210-219. As annotated in Pierre Baillot, *L'art du Violon,* p. 262.

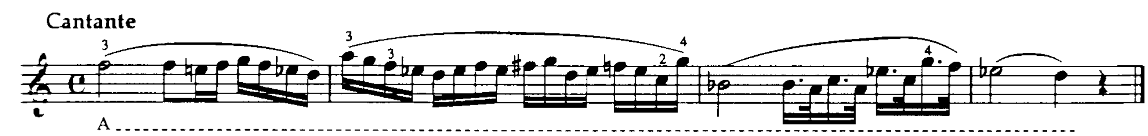
(RODOLPHE) KREUTZER'S FINGERING. Kreutzer shifted frequently on all strings. This style is appropriate for brilliant melodies and bold passage-work.[95]



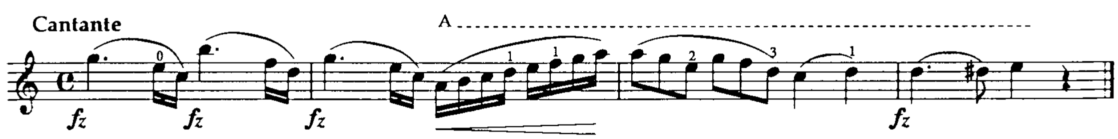

[94] Baillot, *L'art du Violon,* 261.
[95] Ibid., 262.

Example 9. Pierre Rode, Sonata No. 1 in C Major for Violin and Piano, Op. 24 No. 1, 2nd movement, mm. 9-12. In Pierre Baillot, *L'art du Violon,* p. 263.

RODE"S FINGERING. Rode shifted on the same string, this style favours *port de voix* in graceful melodies, and gives these melodies a certain unity of expression which comes from the homogeneity of sound of the single string.[96]




Fingered by the composer.

Example 10. Pierre Rode, Sonata No. 1 in C major, Op. 24, No.1. 2nd movement, mm. 78-81. Annotated in Pierre Baillot, *L'art du Violon,* p. 263.


It is by observing in the music of each composer the differences which result from the choice of position, of string, and of fingering, that violinists can finger their own music so much better, depending on the type of expression they would like to give it.[97]

Although *L'art du Violon* is arguably one of the most important eighteenth-century pedagogical sources for the violin, it has not achieved the same lasting popularity of either Kreutzer *Études* or Rode's *Caprices*. In fact, until a recent republication, it has languished in relative obscurity, at least in a practical sense for those applying the techniques in performance.

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[96] Baillot, *L'art du Violon,* 263.
[97] Ibid.

**Characteristics of the French Violin School**

The French Violin School has many characteristic elements, some undoubtably lost in the transmission of aural music instructions. The following analysis will focus on those features that are most identifiable and idiomatic to the School and that can be traced to the *Méthode*. Though none of these elements can be identified as the sole provenance of the French Violin School, it is their appearance in combination that makes them characteristic of the style. Most important among these is the constant pursuit of a 'singing' sound, or as close to an imitation of the human singing voice as possible. This made the new Tourte bow indispensable, for it facilitated longer melodic lines and a closer imitation of a vocal singing style where it was not possible before.[98]

Schueneman states "the typical characteristics of the French style are...: an heroic conception of the soloist that makes good use of the new Tourte bow...[and] the typical dotted-rhythm themes."[99] Characteristics pertaining to the bow included in the *Méthode* also include a lack of off-string bow strokes, a greater variety of different, specialized bow strokes than the Baroque style of playing (bows *variées*), and a capacity for seamless legato playing. Nowhere in the *Méthode* is any mention made of springing bow-strokes. Instead, another of the bows *variées*, and the fundamental bow-stroke of the French Violin School, was employed. This was the *martelé,* a stroke whereby passages of detached (staccato) notes were played on the string, in the upper half, with as long a bow as possible. This technique was a complete departure from previous Baroque and

98 Stowell, *Cambridge Companion to the Violin,* 46.
99 Schueneman, "The French Violin School," 760.

Classical styles of bowing where a lighter and shorter bow would make such a stroke impractical.

Characteristics of the French Violin School style pertaining to left-hand technique include the use of *portamento*, highlighting the lower strings, especially the G, and a general lack of double stoppings (playing two strings simultaneously). French Violin School compositions also featured dotted and triplet rhythms, often with a military character, along with brilliant runs and flashy virtuoso passages made up of mostly scalar and arpeggiated patterns. All of these characteristics find their origin in Viotti's celebrated *cantabile* sound, which was based on Tartini's maxim "per ben suonare, bi sogna ben cantare,"[100] Viotti was one of the first to explore the "specific beauties" and extended capabilities of the G string, and his concertos unite the singing style, the brilliance of passage-work, and specialized bowings such as the "Viotti stroke."[101]

Finally and most important from a pedagogical standpoint, is that both the noble sound ideal of the French Violin School and the location of its most crucial signifiers, arise from the bow, the "filer du son." The "grand and forceful manner of…bowing and rich expressive sound"[102] were aspects of Viotti's performance most highly cherished by Rode, Baillot, and Kreutzer, the "founding trinity of the French Violin School."[103]

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[100] Boyden, "Violin." "to play well, one must sing well"
[101]Ibid.
[102] Stowell, *Cambridge Companion to the Violin,* 46.
[103] Charlton, "Kreutzer."

## CHAPTER 5: MÉTHODE DE VIOLON

> "'Le nouvel art de l'archet' was to become canonized in the *Méthode de Violon*."[104]
>
> - Owen Jander *The 'Kreutzer' Sonata as Dialogue*

### Creation and Content

Stowell remarks "certainly the principles of [Viotti's] performing style were embodied in [*Méthode,* a]…major treatise of the early nineteenth century."[105] By decree, one of the major tasks of the *Conservatoire* was to prepare and publish officially sanctioned teaching materials. As a consequence, plans for the *Méthode de Violon* were initiated by a Commission of eleven faculty members and administrators of the *Conservatoire*, which convened 2 April 1801. The violinists charged with its creation were Pierre Baillot, Pierre Rode and Rodolphe Kreutzer. These three pedagogues were assigned the task of documenting the *Conservatoire's* approach to basic principles and ideas regarding violin performance practice. Baillot acted as editor and supplied most of the written material. On 25 February 1802 the completed work was submitted for the Commission's approval, appearing in print in 1803. It was recommended in the journal *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* on 24 August 1803 as "by far the most concise and the best of all works that deal with this subject."[106] By 1820, an English translation had been published in London and, not long thereafter, the publishing firms Firth & Hall and George E. Blake issued American editions.[107]

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[104] Jander, "'Kreutzer' Sonata," 36.
[105] Stowell, *Cambridge Companion the the Violin,* 63.
[106] Jander, "'Kreutzer' Sonata," 36.
[107] Alexandra M. Eddy, "American Violin Method-Books," 178.

The *Méthode de Violon* is in two parts. Part One contains information regarding the violin's origins and history, along with ideas about playing in good taste. This is followed by more specific instructions such as how to hold the violin and bow, finger action, posture, bow management, ornamentation, bowing principles, and execution of dynamics. The instructions on how to hold the violin, with the chin to the left of the tailpiece and the instrument horizontal indicate a forward-thinking postural ethic. The Baroque and Classic manner placed the chin on the right side of the tail piece, as can be seen in the wear patterns in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century violins' varnish, as well as in the treatises of the eighteenth century. Furthermore, the *Méthode's* directive that the left hand should be held away from the neck so that the hand has greater freedom is evidence of a performance practice more suited to a newer, altered model of violin and for musical passages that employ greater amounts of shifting. Surprisingly, there is no mention of vibrato (which earlier treatises identify as an ornament), harmonics (which were explored b many eighteenth-century composers), or left-hand pizzicato (which would become a hallmark technique of the nineteenth-century virtuosi). Scale and arpeggio exercises composed in seven positions with three-octave chromatic scales using the sliding fingers first advocated by Marin Mersenne (1588 - 1648) (the third octave is fingered 1212121223344), as well as scales in thirds, double trills in thirds, and sixths with alternative fingerings are included. Part Two of the *Méthode* concerns itself with matters of style and expression. These are discussed under the headings of tone, tempo, style, taste, aplomb and genius of execution.

The *Méthode* was the first treatise to promote the use of the Tourte bow, and as such contains exercises designed to create a rich beautiful tone quality by using the longer bow “d'un bout a l’autre,” (from one end to the other).[108] Asserting that the bow is naturally weaker at the tip, there are instructions to the violinist on how to press harder on the stick when playing at the tip, and how to shift the angle of the bow-stroke to achieve “plus de force” when playing at the tip.[109] One of the most characteristic bow-strokes created by this new manner of bowing is the *martelé,* a sharp, “hammered” stroke. This stroke seems to have been a speciality of Rodolphe Kreutzer for much of the following description regarding the *martelé* in the *Méthode* is derived from material in Kreutzer's *Quarante-Deux Études* (1795): “This bow-stroke should be performed at the tip, and should be firmly articulated. It serves to contrast with sustained melodies, and is of great effect when used appropriately.[One should use] stronger pressure on the notes taken with up-bow, since these are naturally more difficult to emphasize than those with down-bow.”[110]

**Analysis of examples**

By embedding musical and stylistic challenges into the techniques of execution in order to allow for a concentration on the mechanics of the right and left hands, Rode, Kreutzer and Baillot challenged the eighteenth-century instructional paradigm. Moving from a pedagogy that was mostly repertoire-driven to one solely didactic in nature, their newly-composed materials specifically for the acquisition of Viotti-inspired techniques defined violinistic excellence. In this thesis, an examination of the systemization of instruction evident in their collaboration, the *Méthode de Violon,* will identify signifiers of the *Conservatoire's* pedagogical ethic and Viotti’s performance practice.

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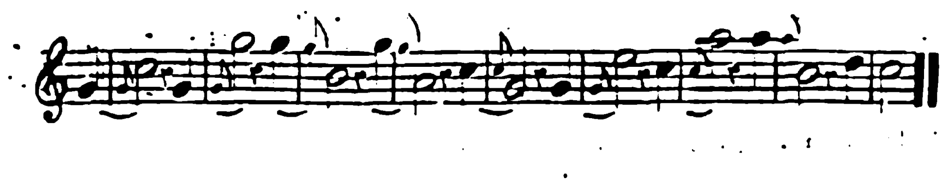
[108] Baillot, Rode and Kreutzer, *Méthode de Violon,*129.
[109] Ibid., 135, 6.
[110] Kreutzer, *42 Études,* 6.

The first selected excerpt, Example 11, illustrates the application of *portamento* when shifting in the style of the French Violin School. Baillot especially approved of tasteful *portamentos*, especially in slow movements and sustained melodies.[111]

Example 11. Pierre Baillot, Rodolphe Kreutzer and Pierre Rode, *Metodo di Violino*, p. 126.

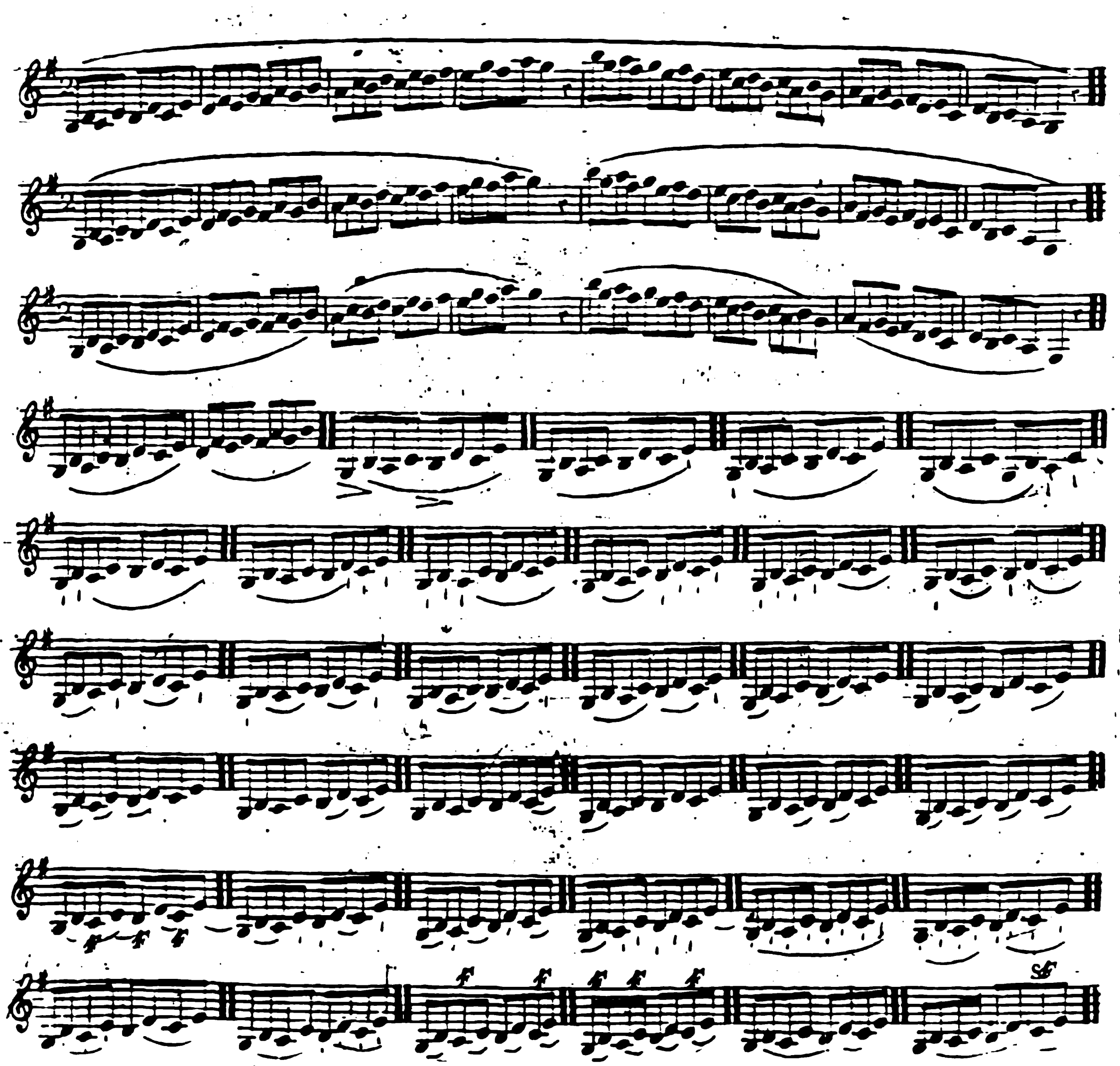


Grace notes dictate not only that it is expected that there will be an audible pitch occurring in between the two notes, but also indicate which audible pitch(es). This indicates a method of shifting, with the stopped finger sliding forwards (or backwards) to be substituted by another finger. As, in an older style, shifts were encouraged to be performed silently, this expectation of *portamento* can be deemed corrective in nature, a new sonic expression for a newer stylistic aesthetic.

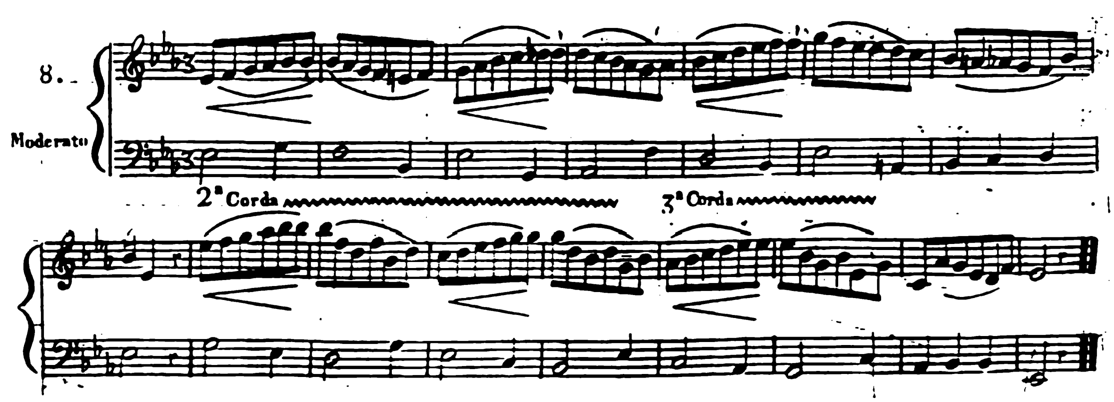
Examples 12 illustrates how closely the *Méthode* mirrors parts of Kreutzer's *Quarante-Deux Études* (Ex. 5). The stylistic quality of varied bowing is represented in these examples. It is a combination of both teaching new bowing techniques to students using the new Tourte bow and also enjoying the new bow's capabilities. Like tongue-twisters for the bow, these variations challenge bowing patterns independently of the harmonic structure of the exercise. Thus, at times, notes that would never normally receive hierarchical accents have articulatory prominence, forcing the player to focus attention on the effects of the motor rhythm and subordinate the outcome to muscle

[111] Stowell, "In Principle:- 3," 77.

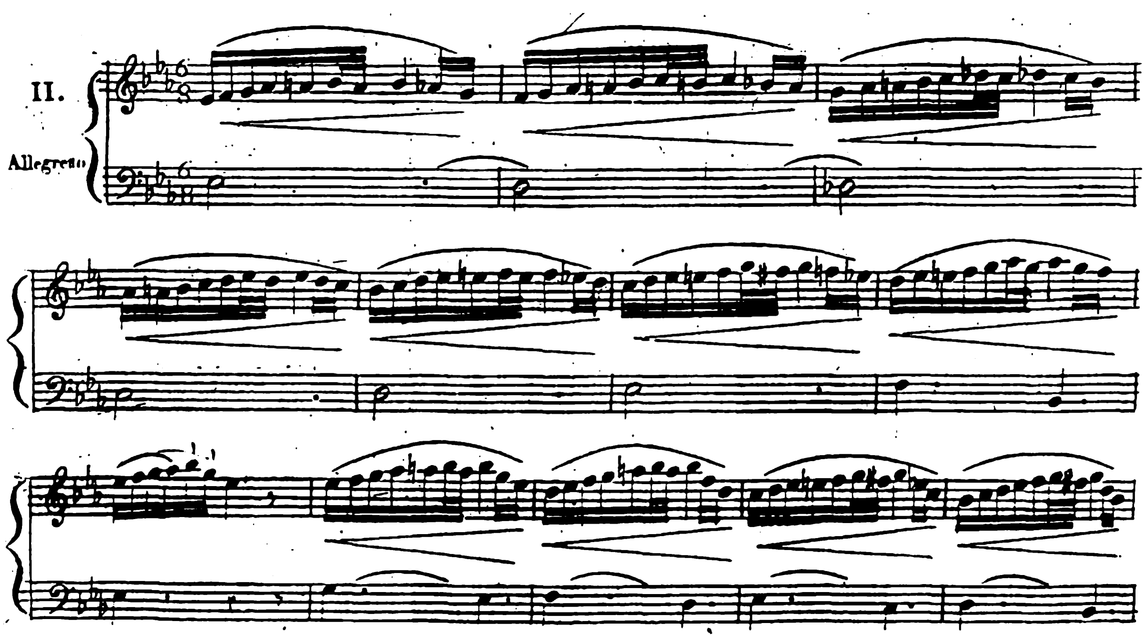
memory and motor training. Idiomatic French Violin School characteristics such as the "Viotti" bow stroke and the emphasis on dotted and triplet rhythms can thus be the means by which a player shows his aplomb.

Example 12. Pierre Baillot, Rodolphe Kreutzer and Pierre Rode. *Metodo di Violino*, p. 132.

Example 13 contains both corrective and aesthetic indications. The crescendo markings in mm. 1, 3, 5 etc., correspond with the occurrence of down-bows, in which the bow is drawn from the frog to the tip. The tip was traditionally weak in pre-Tourte bow models, unable to produce a strong sound. By indicating that not only maintenance, but an increase of volume is required, the player is instructed to resist the urge to allow a decay in sound production. Without the use of a Tourte bow this exercise would be almost impossible to execute. Thus, the cresendi can be viewed as corrective instructions to the player.

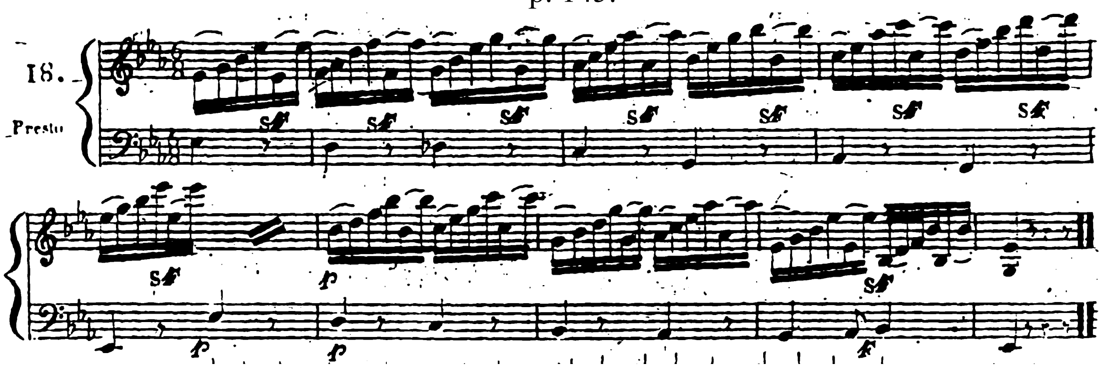
Concerning aesthetic notations, in mm. 9 and 13, markings indicating specific string usage are present (2 corda~~~~~ for A string, 3 corda~~~~~~ for D, respectively). These require the use of uncommon fingering practices, since, were no markings present, first position would be used. Thus these can be considered instructive, corrective indications. These fingering choices, along with the legato slur markings that span the entirety of the bar, are included to create a warm vocal quality by shifting up to higher positions on identified strings and maintain timbral homogeneity.

Example 13. Pierre Baillot, Rodolphe Kreutzer and Pierre Rode. *Metodo di Violino*, p. 141.


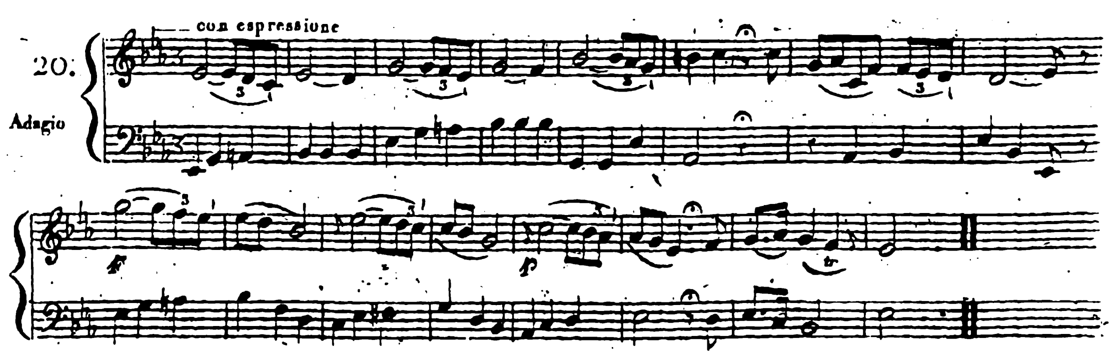
Example 14 combines the exploitation of the Tourte bow capabilities with an operatic aria aesthetic so integral to the French Violin School style. The crescendi in each bar instruct the player to make every measure sound the same, with no differentiation of volume regardless of bow direction. This is a capacity that a pre-Tourte bow did not possess naturally. In order to execute a similar effect an awkward "retaking" of the bow would be necessary. Since the crescendi occur in every bar, it is not a corrective marking to offset a natural decay of sound, but rather an innovative exercise written to enjoy and master the new capabilities afforded by the Tourte bow. Aesthetically, the scalar, sequential passages mimic the qualities of an aria, with very fast notes presented in a slurred, vocal manner. As an example of the close connection the French Violin School's founding members had to the opera genre, Angelica Catalina, the foremost soprano of the time, regularly sang some of Pierre Rode's variations as *vocalises*.

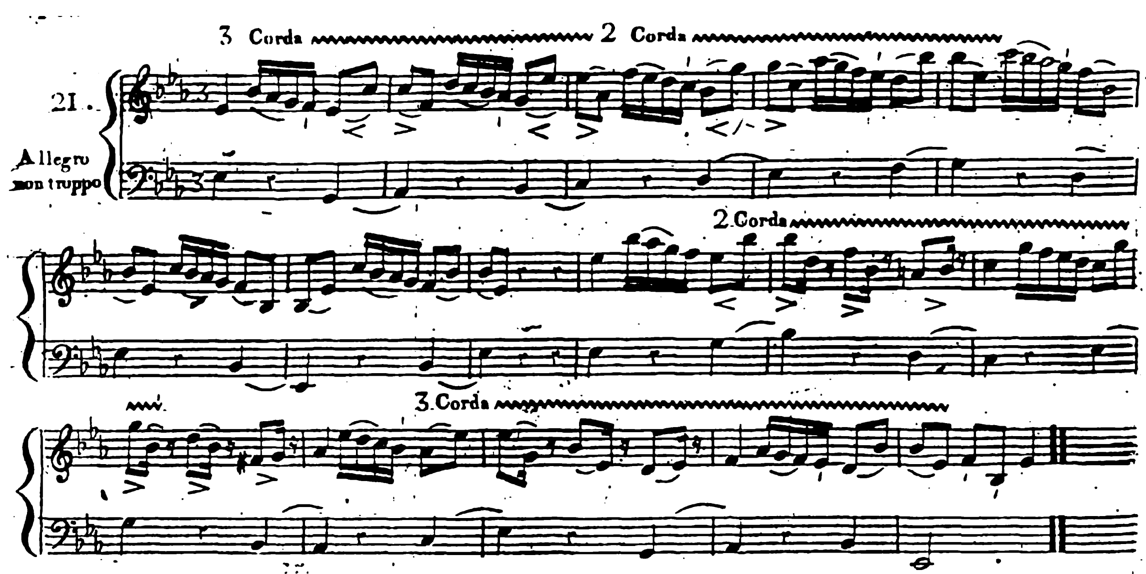
Example 14. Pierre Baillot, Rodolphe Kreutzer and Pierre Rode. *Metodo di Violino*, p. 142.


Example 15 is made up of several idiomatic characteristics of the French Violin School style. Firstly, the *sfz* that appear on the last two sixteenth-notes of each group are corrective, purposely thwarting the natural tendency to play beat divisions three and six lightly.

Example 15. Pierre Baillot, Rodolphe Kreutzer and Pierre Rode. *Metodo di Violino*, p. 145.


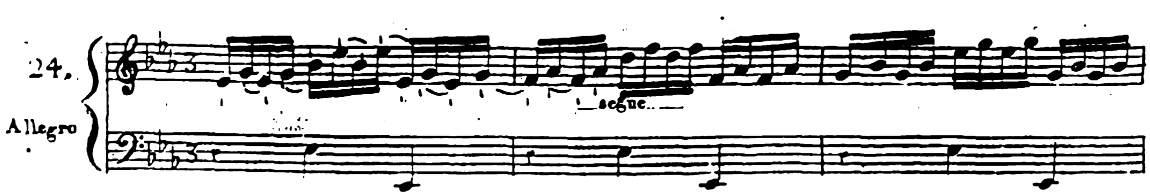
Especially characteristic of the French Violin School is the innovative bowing pattern of two slurred, two separate, two slurred etc. that is one of the "bows *variées*" discussed in the *Méthode,* a stylistic device in keeping with others that contravene the "traditional" beat hierarchy. Rather, they exist for their own sake. It is important to note that the exercise would be played in an entirely legato manner, with no off-string strokes. Another aspect of the exercise that presents French Violin School characteristics is the arpeggiated quality of the motive appearing in the first measure, subsequently sequenced. Outlining the harmony in this manner allows for composition of a fast virtuosic passage and maintenance of a *arioso* quality along with legato string crossings in each part of the bow.

Example 16. Pierre Baillot, Rodolphe Kreutzer and Pierre Rode. *Metodo di Violino*, p. 145.

Example 16 is less obviously representative of the French Violin School, but completely in keeping with its aesthetic ideals. A simple melody is presented, to be played in an legatissimo manner, capturing not only the vocal quality of the exercise but also the natural and innocent quality of the music. This fulfills the French Violin School's aesthetic quest for beautiful tone. Much like the slow movements of French Violin School concerti, this exercise portrays an *arioso* quality. A singable melody combined with slow note values and stepwise motion enhances this effect. Compared to earlier models of bow, the *Adagio* tempo would be most enhanced by the longer Tourte bow and its greater sustaining power at the tip.

Example 17. Pierre Baillot, Rodolphe Kreutzer and Pierre Rode. *Metodo di Violino*, p. 146.


Example 17 further illustrates the use of non-standard fingering choices in the instructions to play in the upper positions on the D and A strings (notated by 3 corda ~~~~~~, 2 corda ~~~~~~~ respectively). This instruction requires careful fingering choices and permits greater use of *portamento* since the number of shifts required increases dramatically. For example, in mm. 1-3, were a player was to employ string crossings (as typical of the fingering instructions found in treatises in the mid-eighteenth century) no shifts would be required. Honouring the instruction to remain on the D string as printed in the exercise requires a violinist to make at least eight shifts. For a violinist, the process of shifting is accompanied by a subtle nuance of tone and pitch in between notes. In an earlier style excess shifting was avoided, and choice of fingering in the left hand was a matter of utility demanded by the passage, minimizing these audible affects. Further in an older style many of the shifts would be placed between the end of a gestural grouping and the beginning of another one (e.g. at the moment where the bow changes direction). Conversely, the point of this passage from the *Méthode* is precisely the shifts and their audible effect. The instruction of specific string designation is an idiomatic characteristic of French Violin School left-hand violin technique, one that is corrective of an older style.

Example 18. Pierre Baillot, Rodolphe Kreutzer and Pierre Rode. *Metodo di Violino*, p. 146.




Example 18 is an excellent example of one of the most recognizable bowing patterns of the French Violin School, the "Viotti stroke." The bowing consists of a series of two slurred staccato bow strokes. After a single initial note, the first of the two slurred articulations occurs on a rhythmically weaker division of the beat with the second on a stronger one. The first of the slurred notes receives very little bow and is unaccentuated, while the second receives much more bow and is the focus of the accentuation pattern. This pattern creates slurs over division groupings and bar lines. This technique juxtaposes the bowing with the metrical hierarchy of the "terrible Rule of the Down Bow." An allusion to poetic iambs can be made; a two-note slur starting on the down beat would have a trochaic stress (Strong-weak, Strong-weak, etc.), however, in the above example, the emphasis is shifted to an iambic stress pattern (Strong, weak-Strong, weak-Strong, etc.). This bowing is a hallmark of the French Violin School style and was, in fact, so intrinsic to Viotti's playing that he felt it unnecessary to notate it in his concerti scores. However, within the pedagogical materials that expound Viotti's style this bowing pattern is marked on many sixteenth-note passages of this type in order to clearly direct the player. Lastly, the presence of instructive staccato markings on each note correspond with the *Méthode's* written directives to use a *martelé,* or stopped, bow-stroke.[112] The frequency with which the *martelé* is specified in the *Méthode* makes it a signature element of the School's style.

Example 19 contains the same instructive bowing technique of slurring across the beat, however, here it is used with a triplet pattern. In this example the slurs are without articulations. Nonetheless, in a "Viotti" style, the integrity of the beat accentuation must be maintained by employing small amounts of bow on the first two notes and emphasizing the last note of every bow. The bowing introduces a contradictory element between the natural articulation at the onset of a bow stroke and the need to emphasize the metrical hierarchy at the end of each stroke.

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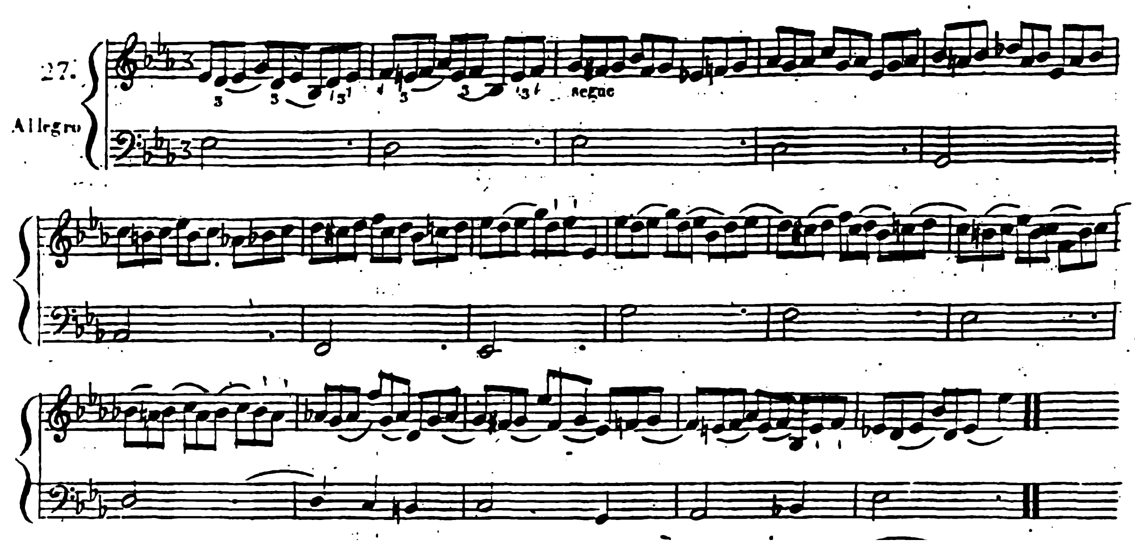
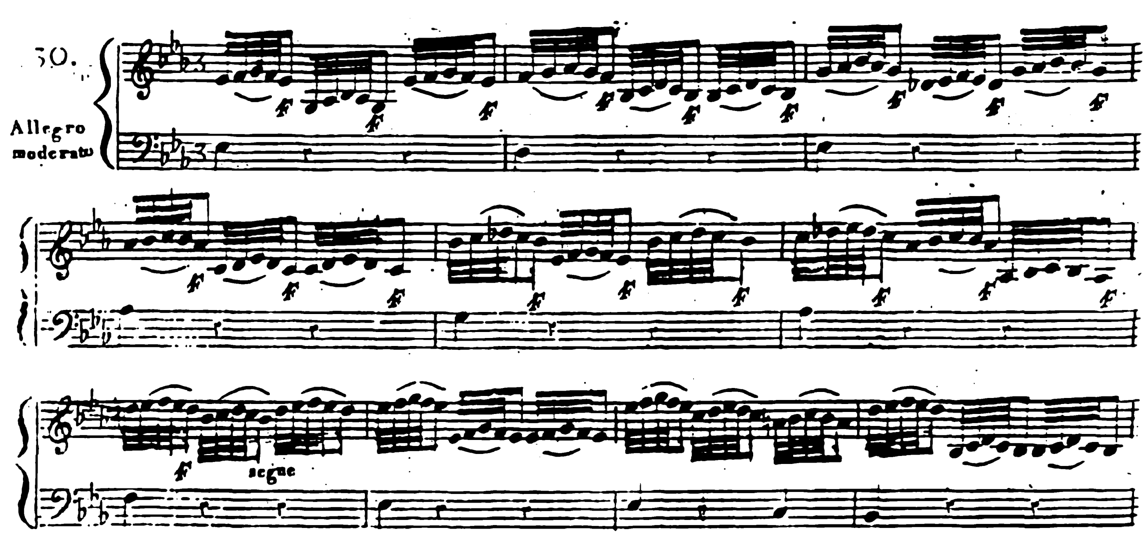
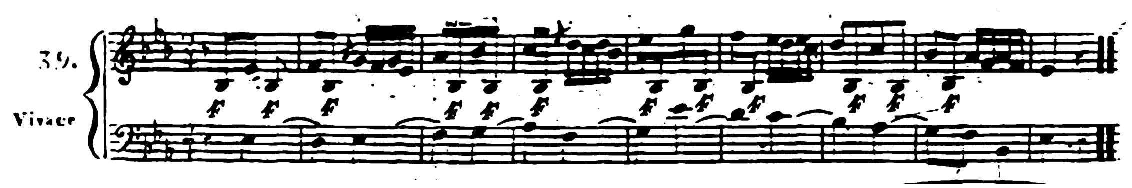
112 Baillot, Rode and Kreutzer, *Méthode de Violon,* 20.

Example 19. Pierre Baillot, Rodolphe Kreutzer and Pierre Rode. *Metodo di violino*, p. 148.


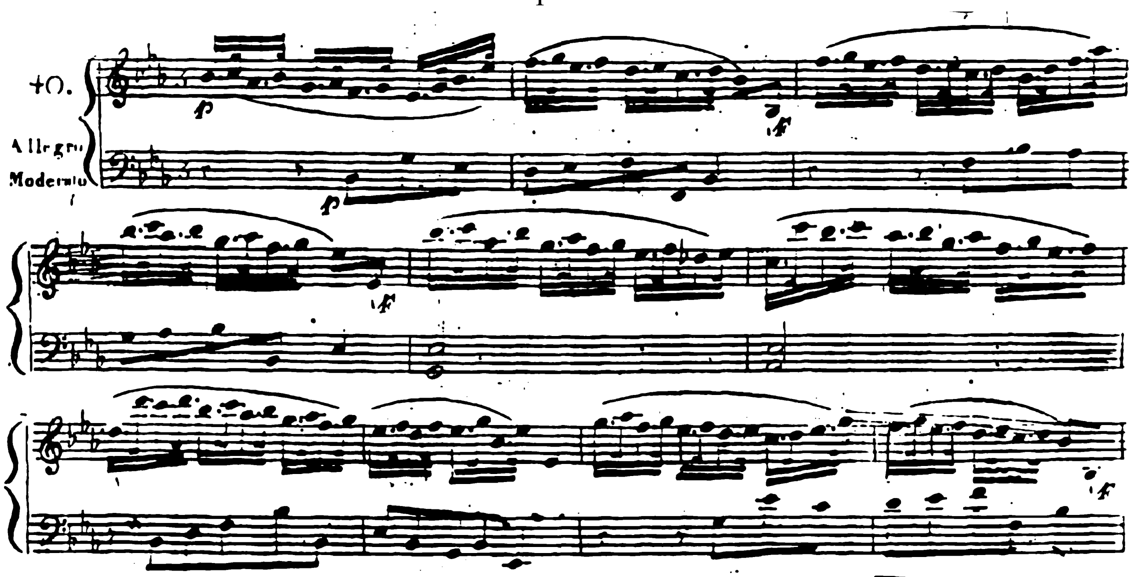
Triplets, along with dotted eighth- and sixteenth-note rhythms were especially favoured by the French Violin School of composers. The *Méthode* introduces them as idioms in multiple exercises. Thus they become one of the characteristic types of figuration so valued by performers in the style of the French Violin School.

Example 20. Pierre Baillot, Rodolphe Kreutzer and Pierre Rode. *Metodo di violino*, p. 149.

Example 20 contains forte markings on the up-bow eighth notes of each beamed group of the exercise, utilizing the Tourte bow's ability to generate power at the tip of the bow. The markings are corrective in nature, reminding the player to avoid playing in the older Baroque style where up-bows on weak metrical divisions of a beat would be played with less force, while also embodying an innovative character, inviting performers to play at the tip of the bow in an entirely new way.

Example 21. Pierre Baillot, Rodolphe Kreutzer and Pierre Rode. *Metodo di violino*, p.153.

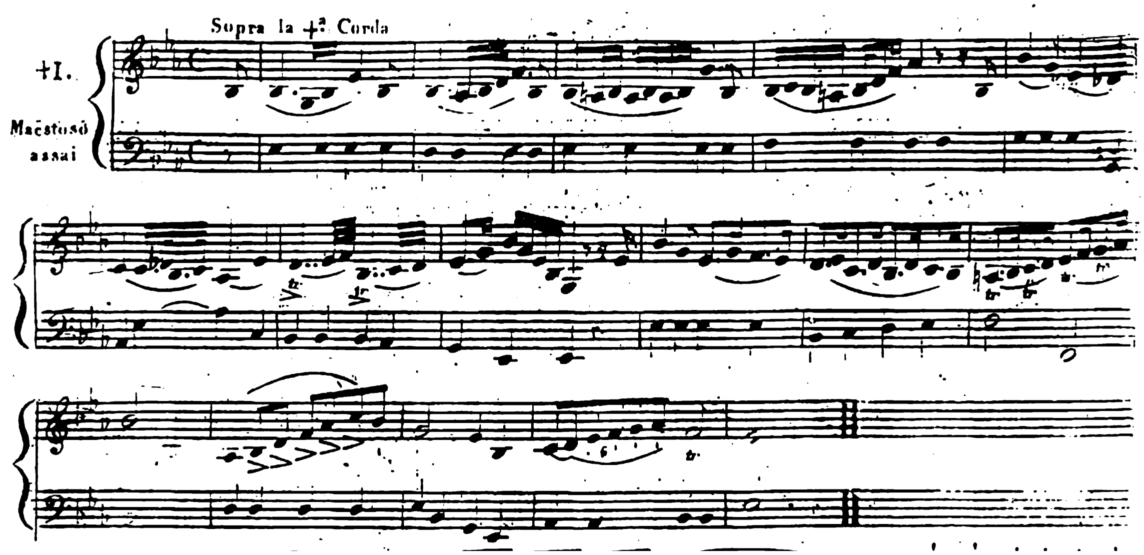



Example 21 again combines the corrective off-beat forte markings with innovative exploitations of Tourte-bow capabilities. The large intervallic jumps in mm. 3-4, 5-6, and 7-8 are to be played in an on-string manner, with the bow maintaining constant contact with the string while silently navigating crossings of multiple strings. With the new bow this is easily done in the upper half of the bow. Without the Tourte bow's added power and *ferrule*-spread horse hair, maintaining not only good contact but the capacity for a forte dynamic at the tip would be practicably beyond the reach of a Baroque model of bow. The stroke can also be accomplished at the heel of the bow but it requires a totally different motor control mechanism, one that primarily involves the wrist and fingers of the bow hand. Both of these options would require the same quality of tone and articulation, notwithstanding the part of the bow being used. This also relates to the pursuit of an aesthetic quality of evenness of tone, an aesthetic further facilitated by the Tourte bow.

Example 22. Pierre Baillot, Rodolphe Kreutzer and Pierre Rode. *Metodo di Violino*, p. 153.


Example 22 demonstrates another idiomatic French Violin School rhythm; a dotted sixteenth and thirty-second note rhythm played in a legato manner. A singing aesthetic is present in the long slur indications, and in the melody's descending broken third contour. The seamless legato of the Tourte bow is vital here, making the transition from the down-bow to the up-bow as imperceptible as possible. This legato quality would be impossible with the Baroque model of bow; rather than the phrasing being a slave to the technique of bowing, the bowing can accommodate the phrasing.

Example 23 looks more like an excerpt from one of the concerti of the French Violin School than an technical drill. Here several different characteristic signature elements of the School coexist in much the same way they might appear in a work intended for performing. The indication in m. 1, *Sempre la 4e Corda,* directs that the entire exercise be played on the G string. This requires an extensive shifting and *portamento* technique.  In m. 13, the violinist must play in seventh position, a phenomenon that was common on the E-string but very unusual for the lower stings in an eighteenth-century style

Example 23. Pierre Baillot, Rodolphe Kreutzer and Pierre Rode. *Metodo di violino*, p. 154.


The ascending, ornamented, scalar phrase of mm. 1-4 embodies the singing style, while the dotted rhythms of mm. 7, 11 and 12 also place this in the characteristic French Violin School style. The addition of a rhythmic shift to sextuplet rhythm in the second to last bar is not in itself a signifier of the School; but, coupled with the other characteristics, it can be identified as being part of them. Composers of this era were very fond of metrical mixture, often filling their concerti with abrupt shifts between dotted and triplet rhythms to add to the virtuosic flair of the soloist's part.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

> "Here, as nowhere else, is art brought to life through the power of the arm; indeed, it is astonishing what the Viotti school has achieved and continues to achieve in this field; the way in which the string player here raises himself triumphantly over a whole world of sound is the most remarkable feature in the history of individualization in art (*der Individulalisirungsgeschichte der Kunst)*."
>
> - Hans Georg Nägeli Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung (1811)

The French Violin School has exerted an tremendous influence on violin performance, beginning in the nineteenth century and continuing to the present. Contemporary violinists owe a debt to the French Violin School; indeed, the pedagogical materials created by the teachers of the Paris *Conservatoire* feature prominently in the acquisition of technical and musical skills for nearly all violinists, not only in Europe and North America, but worldwide. Joseph Szigeti, one of the foremost violinists of the twentieth century, writes that these pedagogical works "were a key influence in the formation of my [technique]" and Kato Havas, a contemporary of Szegeti, refers to the Kreutzer *Études* as "the violinist's bible." [113] Even if specific French Violin School works are not used in a violinist's training, it is almost impossible to escape their subliminal cultural influence on violin performance and pedagogy. In the preface to *The Art of Violin Playing*, a work that would go on to become one of the most widely used method books ever written for the violin, Carl Flesch states that he wrote his *Scale Studies* so that his students would be mindful of "the fluent methods of the classic[al] French School of

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[113] Joseph Szigeti, *Szigeti on the Violin,* (Toronto, Ontario: General Publishing Company, 1969), 7; Kato Havas, *A New Approach to Violin Playing*, (London: Bosworth, 1961), 64.

violin playing."[114] Furthermore, if one considers in the rise of national schools of violin playing in Europe (e.g. French, Russian, German, Franco-Belgian, etc.) in the latter half of the nineteenth century it can be proven that the pedagogical lineage of the French Violin School holds considerable sway in each via the pupils of Kreutzer, Rode, and Baillot. No other system of violin instruction can claim as much.[115]

However, as so often happens, fundamental motivations of style and pedagogy can become lost during the passage of time. This is partially due to the necessary presence of a strong oral tradition in music pedagogy, one in which information is passed down from generation to generation in an educational model that is apprenticeship based. In this reality French Violin School style has become "background radiation," information that is understood in some manner by most violinists, but consciously explored by very few. Thus, the French Violin School itself has become more a mythic construct than definable entity to most violinists. This thesis deliberately eschews focus on twentieth-century violinistic traditions in its offer of the following definition of the French Violin School: the French Violin School is a retrospective label applied to a group of *Conservatoire* teachers who achieved great influence through their pedagogical methods and materials as well as their intentions to both disseminate the performance style of Viotti and explore the sonic capabilities of the new models of violin and bow developed during their lifetimes.

As such, this thesis asserts that it is critically important to re-examine pedagogical works of the French Violin School in their own musico-cultural context. In the case of the

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114 Carl Flesch, *The Art of Violin Playing,* Book I (New York: Carl Fischer, 1930), preface.
115 Christian M. Baker, "The Influence of Violin Schools on Prominent Violinists/Teachers in the United States." (PhD dissertation, Florida State University College of Music, 2005), 4.

French Violin School, that context is one of post-Revolutionary aesthetic change. De facto, this thesis argues that it is not enough for a violinist to play through the technical exercises of the French Violin School's pedagogical works while catering to twenty-first-century musical aesthetics; there is a need to understand the motivations and processes that went into their creation. It is this kind of contextualization that shows the *Méthode de Violon* to be both valuable and worthy of continued study.

The *Méthode's* role as the earliest historical artifact linking together the elements necessary for the creation of a French Violin School of playing makes it an important primary source in this endeavor. The *Méthode* was the first to bring together the style of Viotti, the collaboration of Kreutzer, Rode and Baillot, official state sanction of music pedagogy via the mechanism of the *Conservatoire*, and advocacy of the "modernized" violin and Tourte bow. In the absence of even one of these elements, it is difficult to say whether the French Violin School would have achieved its lasting legacy. Most importantly, relationships between these elements are symbiotic and not consequential. For example, with regard to the Tourte bow, the model that has become synonymous with the modern violin bow, Robert Seletsky concludes that "although Tourte's work is brilliant, its lasting success is doubtless partly the result of the nationalist consolidation of French arts and commerce after the Revolution that established the *Conservatoire*, as well as the position of Paris as perhaps the longest-lived artistic centre in Europe."[116] Certainly, the *Méthode's* endorsement of the Tourte bow was a factor in its rise to

[116] Seletsky, "New Light on the Old Bow," 424.

popularity. Concomitantly, the Viotti style, endorsed by the *Méthode,* is intrinsically linked to his usage of the Tourte bow.

As the official pedagogical text of the *Conservatoire*, the *Méthode* championed the dissemination of Viotti's musical legacy by systematizing an approach to pedagogy inspired by Viotti's unique approach to virtuosity and tone production. In doing so, the *Conservatoire* forwarded the notion of virtuosity as a model for all violinists and it came to be widely viewed as the paradigm of nineteenth-century pedagogy.[117] A consistently high level of violin instruction and an adherence to the same performance practices from all students regardless of teacher was seen as one of its greatest achievements. This can, in great part, be attributed to the use of the *Méthode* as the standard instruction manual at the *Conservatoire* for over thirty years. The *Méthode's* widespread dissemination in both its original form and in multiple translations carried Viotti's new style of playing throughout Europe. Furthermore, Baillot, Kreutzer and Rode travelled widely, spreading the seeds of a French Violin School through their teaching.

Finally, the *Méthode de Violon* is important because of its place on a stylistic continuum that considers the role of the violinist. A shift in performance practice from adherence to stylistic archetypes to the individualization of performance style is mirrored by the development of pedagogical materials from those containing a style-based approach to those focussed on the acquisition of technique. By consciously promoting and standardizing the acquisition of technique as a primary goal of pedagogy, the *Méthode* can be seen as a marker for the changing relationship from the Baroque and

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[117] Mark Lindley et al., "Fingering." *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online,* (Oxford University Press), http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.darius.uleth.ca/subscriber/article/grove/music/40049, (accessed November 12, 2012).

Classical view of the role of the violinist (to marry their performance style with the musical archetypes of the period) towards the Romantic "cult of virtuosity" (where artistry becomes the sum of a violinist's technical mastery and their own artistic personality).

In summary, this thesis has two major objectives: 1) to collate existing information needed for the reader to gain a full understanding of the confluence of elements that came together to create the French Violin School, and 2) to assess representative pedagogical works of the French Violin School using a perspective that adds to the discussion of the topic. In choosing to analyze the *Méthode de Violon's* pedagogical exercises within the context of its own time, this thesis discovered the presence of both "corrective" and "innovative" instructions arching over ascribed categories of exercises pertaining to: 1) idiomatic rhythmic and bowing devices, 2) techniques that developed due to the capabilities of the Tourte bow, and 3) an adherence to an aesthetic that valued the imitation of the human singing voice. These "corrective" and "innovative" identifiers have significant repercussions for today's performer because, when compositions are viewed in their historical context, musical notation can be understood as a means to tell a performer both what to do and what not to do.
In producing the *Méthode,* Kretuzer, Rode and Baillot promoted technique as the application of intent to a musical process. By understanding this intent and the foundational motivations behind the French Violin School, the manner in which modern performers approach compositions from the nineteenth century will be fundamentally altered.

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## APPENDIX 1: GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS

Bass Bar: a thin, curved strip of spruce set lengthwise down on the inside of the bass side of the instrument by the left foot of the bridge opposite the soundpost.

Belly: the table, or top of a stringed instrument; it is normally arched and has two f-holes cut into it on either side of where the bridge is positioned.

Bridge: a thin piece of wood (usually maple) which supports the strings at the appropriate height above the table and fingerboard. The table acts as a soundboard and in turn transmits the vibrations through the soundpost to the back of the violin and to the column of air within.

Détaché: literally, a 'detached', broad and vigorous bowstroke; in the eighteenth century the *détaché* was synonymous with stacatto.

Double-stopping: playing two strings simultaneously.

Down bow: drawing the bow so that its point of contact with the string moves from the frog end to the tip.

Ferrule: the metal (commonly silver) band around the lower front of the frog which spreads the hair into a uniform ribbon.

Frog: the heel of the bow where the tension of the bow hair is adjusted.

Martelé: literally 'hammered'. A type of percussive bowstroke characterised by its sharp initial accent and post-stroke articulation.

Portamento: a continuous slide between pitches which does not distinguish the intermediate semitones

Port de voix: see Portamento.

Position: refers to the 'position' taken by the left hand along the fingerboard. In 'first position', the first (index) finger stops the note a tone above the open string; in 'second position' it stops the note previously stopped by the second finger in 'first position'; in 'third position in stops the note previously stopped by the third finger, and so on.

Off-string stroke: any number of specific bowstrokes in which the bow rebounds lightly off the string.

On-string stroke: any number of specific bowstrokes in which the bow maintains contact with the string the entire time, including during bow changes.

Shifting: the act of moving from one left hand finger-position to another

Soundpost: a small piece of wood (generally pine or spruce), which sits vertically between the table and the back of the instrument, directly in line with and slightly below the right-hand foot of the bridge.

Spicatto: a short, rapid off-string stroke taken around the balance point of the bow so that the bow rebounds lightly off the string

Stacatto: a detached, well-articulated stroke, normally indicated by a dot (or stroke) over a note.

Sul G, D etc.: literally ‘on the G, D etc. string’. Employed when a composer/performer wishes to exploit the uniformity of timbre offered by the execution of a particular passage on one string. Also notated 3me, 4me corde, or simply by E,A,D or G or I, II, III, or IV over a passage.

Table: see Belly.

Top block: a piece of softwood glued inside the violin against the ribs where the ends meet to support them and hold them in shape. The top block also strengthens the neck fitting.

Up bow: ‘pushing’ the bow so that its point of contact with string moves from the tip towards the frog.