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STRING PLAYING PRACTICES IN THE CLASSICAL ORCHESTRA

by Clive Brown

In his *Anweisung zum Violinspielen* of 1774 George Simon Löhlein was at pains to point out that the difference between solo and orchestral playing was more than merely a matter of technical skill. One aspect of this difference is brought out in his discussion of bowing, where he remarked:

In triple time, in any case, one can only stick to the rule of up- and down-bow to a small extent or, indeed, not at all, for otherwise one would not get on well with it. In orchestral playing, therefore, it is almost impossible for a large ensemble to play with uniform bowstrokes in this metre; but in even meters it is easier. On the other hand solo and concerto players are never satisfied with the normal types of bowing; rather, they always want to have something special. For that reason they are seldom good orchestral players, because like a trained horse they always cut capers on all sides, although in normal performance, as in moving a waggon, the whole team must pull together.

Im Trippeltakte kann man sich ohnehin wenig oder gar nicht an die Regel des Auf- und Nieder-Striches binden, denn sonst würde man nicht gut darinnen fortkommen. Beym Ripienspielen ist es also bey nahe nicht möglich, daß viele mit einem und denselben Striche in dieser Tacktart solten spielen können; aber bey den geraden Tacktartarten geht es leichter an. Hingegen sind die Solo und Concert-Spieler niemals mit der gewöhnlichen Strichart zufrieden; sondern sie wollen immer was besonders haben. Daher sind sie selten gute Ripienisten, weil sie immer gleich einem Schulpferde allerhand Capriolen schneiden, da doch bey der allgemeinen Ausführung, so wie bey der Bewegung eines Lastwagens, das ganze Gespanne einmüthiglich an einem Strange ziehen muß.¹

Löhlein further observed that: „good orchestral players are rarer than concerto or solo players; even though the former are more indispensable to the good performance of a piece than the latter“ [„die guten Ripienisten seltener sind, als Concert und Solo-Spieler; ob gleich jene zur guten Ausführung eines Stückes unentbehrlicher sind, als diese“]². The avowed intention of Löhlein's *Anweisung* was to deal primarily with the techniques and disciplines required of Ripienists; as he observed after his 24 practice pieces: „I believe that, through the present practice pieces, I will have paved the way to orchestral playing just up to the borders of solo and concert playing“; and his next sentence suggests that he aimed to include everything of importance to the orchestral player, for he wrote: „I have especially taken care to bring in all the features that appear singly or dispersed in many pieces of music“ [„Ich glaube daß ich den Weg zum Rippien-Spielen, bis an die Grenzen des Solo und Concerts, durch die gegebenen Uebungsstücke werde gebahnt haben. Ich habe vorzüglich darauf gesehen, alle Stellen darinnen anzubringen, die in vielen musikalischen

¹ George Simon Löhlein, *Anweisung zum Violinspielen* (Leipzig & Züllichau 1774) p.113.

² *ibid* p.114.

Stücken einzeln und zerstreut vorkommen“³. Löhlein's consideration of skills specific to solo playing is contained in only 8 pages of his 136 page treatise.

The conflicting requirements of solo and ensemble playing had been discussed or touched on by earlier writers, most notably by Quantz,⁴ but also by less well-known authors such as Joseph Riepel⁵. With the growing perception of the orchestra as a distinct entity with its own discrete repertoire (especially of symphonies) it is scarcely surprising that disciplines appropriate to such a body should have exercised the minds of a number of late eighteenth-century writers. Löhlein's informative treatise is complemented by Johann Friedrich Reichardt's even more specific monograph *Über die Pflichten des Ripien-Violinisten* (*On the Duties of the Orchestral Violinist*), published in the year he was appointed Royal Kapellmeister in Berlin, which provides an invaluable compendium of the abilities expected of an orchestral player. In addition to these two major instruction manuals many other writers of the period offer insights into the subject and much, too, can be gleaned from considering their remarks in conjunction with the internal evidence of the music itself.

Despite regional differences and stylistic development during the later eighteenth century, there was general agreement that some techniques expected of or allowed to solo players were neither necessary nor, in some cases, desirable in orchestral playing.

Most prominent among the techniques that were not required was the ability to play in high positions. Although soloists might explore the extreme limits of the fingerboard, the late eighteenth-century orchestral violinist was seldom required to go more than an octave above the E string. By the end of the century orchestral violin parts occasionally contained an F, but as late as 1816 Antoine Reicha could recommend composers not to write anything higher than this for the violins because he considered that it should be possible to sight-read orchestral music.⁶

The introduction of extemporary ornamentation or elaboration of the melodic line, common, indeed expected in solo playing, was among the practices most strictly forbidden to orchestral players. Yet there is considerable evidence that many musicians disobeyed this ban and in some places, especially Italy, the abuse continued well into the nineteenth century. In 1817, Spohr notated an example of the cacophonous anarchy

³ *ibid* p.100.

⁴ Johann Joachim Quantz, *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* (Berlin 1752).

⁵ Joseph Riepel, *Gründliche Erklärung der Tonordnung [...]* (Frankfurt & Leipzig 1757).

⁶ Antoine Reicha, *Cours de composition musicale*, (Paris 1816?-18) I,iii, 303.

that reigned at cadences in Italian orchestras and Mendelssohn observed much the same thing in 1831.⁷

Another form of improvised embellishment acknowledged as a legitimate expressive device in solo playing but strongly discouraged in the orchestra was portamento. Reichardt observed:

Sliding with a finger through different positions is absolutely forbidden to the orchestral player, although it is occasionally permissible for the soloist. A great deal of delicacy is required in this to make it bearable to a refined ear; as most violinists do it, it sounds exactly like the sighs of a desperate tom cat on the doorstep of his half deaf beloved. But even if it is done in the best possible manner, one could not tolerate it from two together, it is therefore doubly disallowed to the orchestral player.

Das Rücken mit einem Finger durch verschiedene Applicaturen ist dem Ripienisten schlechterdings zu verbieten, obgleich es dem Solospieler zuweilen erlaubt ist. Es gehört sehr viel Delicatesse dazu, um es einem feinen Ohr erträglich zu machen; wie es die mehresten Violinisten machen, drückt es die Seufzer eines verzweifelnden Katers unter der Thürschwelle seiner harthörigen Geliebten, vollkommen aus. Aber auch auf die allerbeste Weise könnte man es nicht von zweyen zugleich vertragen, es ist also für den Ripienisten aus doppelten Ursachen unerlaubt.⁸

Here, too, however, there is evidence that the prohibition was widely disregarded towards the end of the eighteenth century. The author of a report on the state of music in Magdeburg in 1798 observed:

The theatre here employs 10 of its own musicians who all individually play really well, but who, on account of the lack of uniformity in their performance styles, do not make a good ensemble. This observation is particularly applicable to the violinists. – Thus, for instance, I heard how in a symphony one of these players played the third, D to F sharp, with a slide from the D to the F sharp instead of playing it as two separate crotchets one after the other. Certainly the higher note is easier to find in this manner, but do such aids, which are used to a disgusting extent by the majority of violinists, belong in a piece where 3 or 4 players are on the same part? I have actually now noticed this so disfiguring embellishment in the orchestras of many places.

Das hiesige Theater unterhält 10 eigene Musiker, die alle einzeln recht brav spielen, wegen ihres ungleichen Vortrags aber kein gutes Ensemble bilden. Diese Bemerkung betrifft vorzüglich die Violinspieler. – So hörte ich z.B. wie einer dieser Spieler bey einer Sinfonie die Terz d-fis, statt sie als zwey nach einander anzuschlagende Viertel zu spielen, von d zu fis fortgleitete. Freilich ist der höhere Ton auf diese Art leichter zu finden, aber, gehören solche von den mehrsten Violinspielern bis zum Ekel abgenutzte Behelfe in ein Tonstück, wo noch dazu 3 oder 4 Spieler an einer Stimme stehen? Ich habe überhaupt diese im Tutti so entstellende Verziehrung jetzt in den Orchestern vieler Orte bemerkt.⁹

⁷ Louis Spohr, *Lebenserinnerungen* 1, pp.296–297; Mendelssohn letter of 17 May 1831 given in *Letters from Italy and Switzerland*, trans. Lady Wallace (London 2nd ed., 1862), pp.149–150.

⁸ Johann Friedrich Reichardt, *Über die Pflichten des Ripien-Violinisten*, (Berlin and Leipzig, 1776) p.35.

⁹ *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 1 (1798–99), p. 461.

Despite the reiterated condemnation of this practice by such respected authorities as Salieri¹⁰ and Spohr¹¹ in the early nineteenth century it seems likely that it continued to feature in orchestral performance until it was finally accepted as a legitimate orchestral device (executed by the section in unison) later in the century.

Whether left-hand vibrato was sometimes expected to be employed in the orchestra is a more difficult point to determine; Erich Schenck has argued that some of Gluck's markings specifically demand its use,¹² but a distinction between bow vibrato and left-hand vibrato is difficult to extrapolate from the notation, and his conclusions seem questionable. Reichardt's failure to mention vibrato at all in his treatises suggests that he did not regard it as an attribute of the Ripienist. The most explicit indictment of vibrato in late eighteenth-century orchestral playing had been made by Robert Bremner in 1777 (translated and commented upon six years later in Cramer's *Magazin der Musik*, where the author, despite finding Bremner's strictures against vibrato in solo playing too strong, raised no objections to his total condemnation of its use in orchestral playing).¹³ It seems probable that Reichardt would have been in sympathy with this viewpoint; his failure to mention vibrato may indicate that it was less of a problem among professional German orchestral players than among the gentleman amateurs of London at whom Bremner's admonitions seem primarily to have been directed.

Löhlein, despite severe warnings against using vibrato too often, suggested several places in his practice pieces where it might be introduced; in a polonaise, for instance, he instructed that „the long notes which stand between the short ones are played with an increasing pressure of the bow, well sustained, with an appropriate vibrato“ [„die langen Noten, die zwischen kurzen stehen, werden mit zunehmendem Drucke des Bogens, wohl unterhalten, mit einer angemessenen Bebung gespielt“].¹⁴ (Ex.1) He recommended vibrato similarly in the performance of slow dotted figures (see Ex.6) and once on a long-held note, where he marked it with dots and a slur. (Ex.2) The introduction of vibrato in these places may, perhaps, only

¹⁰ See Clive Brown „The Orchestra in Beethoven's Vienna“, *Early Music* 15 (1988) 19 and „Bowing Styles, Vibrato and Portamento in Nineteenth-Century Violin Playing“, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 113 (1988) 122–123.

¹¹ Louis Spohr, *Violinschule*, (Vienna, 1832) p.249.

¹² Erich Schenck „Zur Aufführungspraxis des Tremolo bei Gluck“, *Anthony van Hoboken: Festschrift zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. Joseph Schmidt-Görg (Mainz, 1962) 137–145.

¹³ Robert Bremner *Some Thoughts on the Performance of Concert Music*, (London, 1777); translated and commented upon in Cramer's *Magazin der Musik*; both publications reproduced with translation and commentary by Neal Zaslaw in *Early Music* 7 (1979) 46ff and 8 (1980) 71ff.

¹⁴ Löhlein op. cit. p.74.

be envisaged where there is one player to a part, though in view of Löhlein's later remarks about having paved the way just up to the borderline between orchestral and solo playing it may be that he did not consider the use of vibrato, if limited to such places, as inappropriate in orchestral playing.

The question of where and when it was permissible or desirable to use open strings in orchestral playing was discussed at some length by Reichardt. His rule was simple and logical. In slurred figures the priority was to avoid string crossing. He observed: „If, for example, in a single bowstroke the E comes together with a note that should also be taken on the E string, the open E must be used, if, however, it comes together with a note that should be taken on the A string, it must be stopped“. [„Wenn das e z.B. mit einer Note auf einen Strich kommen soll, die auch auf der e Seite gegriffen wird, so muß das e bloß genommen, gehört es aber zu einer Note, die auf der a Seite gegriffen wird, so muß es verdeckt genommen werden“.] Where notes were bowed separately he advised: „If it is a short note and should be sharply staccatoed, one uses the open string; if, however, it is a long note, or also if it only comes in a series of gentle notes, it must be stopped“. [„Ist es eine kurze Note und soll sie scharf gestoßen werden, so nimmt man sie bloß; ist es aber ein langer Ton, oder steht er auch nur in einer Folge sanfter Töne, so muß er verdeckt genommen werden“.]¹⁵ For Reichardt, much depended on speed and in slower tempi he recommended the avoidance of open strings. The fingerings in Löhlein's exercises accord fairly well with Reichardt's instructions, though a number of fairly long notes are given as open strings. The trend in the late eighteenth century may have been towards a somewhat freer use of open strings, even in solo playing. Abundant evidence from the first half of the nineteenth century certainly indicates a greater tendency to use open strings and also natural harmonics on prominent long notes and in lyrical contexts than might be inferred from many mid eighteenth-century treatises; how early this practice may have begun remains uncertain.¹⁶

Among the most important positive attributes required of the orchestral player were uniformity of tempo and dynamic nuance, though the latter was regarded even by Reichardt as difficult to achieve. He observed:

The majority of orchestras only recognize and practise forte and piano without bothering about the finer degrees or the shading of the whole. That is to say they paint the wall black and white: it's all very well if it is beautiful white and beautiful black, but what does it say? It is difficult, extraordinarily difficult, to get a whole orchestra to do that which

¹⁵ Reichardt op. cit. p.31.

¹⁶ Clive Brown „Bowling Styles, Vibrato and Portamento in Nineteenth-Century Violin Playing“, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 113 (1988) 117ff. and „Ferdinand David's Editions of Beethoven“, in: *Performing Beethoven's Instrumental Music*, ed. Robin Stowell (Cambridge University Press) (forthcoming).

already gives a single virtuoso much trouble. But it is certainly possible: one hears this in Mannheim, one has heard it in Stuttgart.

Die mehresten Orchester kennen und üben nur das forte und piano aus, ohne sich um die feineren Grade, um die ganze Schattierung zu bekümmern. Das heißt die Wand schwarz und weiß angestrichen; wenns schönes Weiß und schönes Schwarz ist, lästs auch gut, aber was sagts?

Schwer ists, ungeheuer schwer, mit einem ganzen Orchester das zu thun, was einem einzelnen Virtuosen schon viele Mühe macht. Aber möglich ists doch: das hört man in Mannheim, das hat man in Stuttgart gehört.¹⁷

He also acknowledged that many composers were themselves to blame for a lack of light and shade in the performance of their orchestral music since they failed to mark their scores in a sufficiently detailed manner, and he described how they should give minute instructions for dynamic levels. In his own scores, however, he does not seem to have specified dynamics with such thoroughness.

The desirability of orchestral string players adhering to similar principles of bowing is also implicit or explicit in the comments of various writers. Yet absolute conformity of up and down bows was rarely implied and, to judge from a mass of evidence, even more rarely achieved. The passage from Löhlein's treatise quoted above (ref.1) argues a relatively laissez faire attitude, and the total absence of bowing marks in eighteenth-century orchestral parts (as far as the present writer has been able to discover) is scarcely compatible with uniformity of bowing. In 1832 Spohr could still assert that there were very few orchestras in which this discipline was practised or even in which a similar bowing style obtained (he singled out the orchestras of the Conservatoires of Naples, Paris and Prague as notable exceptions).¹⁸ The most that seems to have been expected in the majority of orchestras was a fair degree of concurrence of up and down bows, at least at the most important points, resulting from observation of the principle of down bows on strong beats and up bows on weak beats. But, as Reichardt observed, an overzealous application of this rule was undesirable; he stressed that the rule should apply rather to the beginning of each main phrase than to each bar. He gave the following example in which, contrary to what might be expected, the triplet scale in the third bar begins up bow. (Ex.3)¹⁹ A similar attitude is apparent in Löhlein's *Anweisung*; the practice pieces in which he indicated up and down bows, reveal a tendency to bow the music out regardless of whether down bows always occur on strong beats. Taken as a whole Löhlein's and Reichardt's examples suggest a more flexible approach to this aspect of bowing than, for instance, Leopold Mozart's, or indeed than is adopted by many modern players on period instruments.

¹⁷ Reichardt op. cit. p.59.

¹⁸ Spohr, *Violinschule*, p.248 (footnote).

¹⁹ Reichardt, op. cit p.11.

Since bowing was regarded as the primary means of imparting expression to the performance, evidence of the Classical orchestral player's view of this matter is of particular significance for understanding eighteenth-century performance style. Much can be learned by identifying the bowing techniques that were regarded as appropriate or necessary in orchestral playing, by considering where and how these might have been used, and by investigating what the notation of the music of the period, together with composers' performance directions, can reveal about the types of bowing envisaged in particular passages.

A variety of bow designs developed during the period under discussion, but there were two principal categories: the pike-head type similar to that illustrated in Leopold Mozart's *Violinschule* and the Carmontelle portrait of the Mozart family in 1766, and the hatchet-head type associated variously with Cramer, Fränzl, Mestrino and other players prominent in the last decades of the eighteenth century. Michel Woldemar, writing in about 1798, asserted that the so-called Cramer bow „was adopted during his [Cramer's] time by the majority of artists and amateurs“ [„fut adopté dans son [Cramer's] temps, par la majorité des Artistes et des Amateurs“],²⁰ however, writing in Paris, he may well have underestimated the conservatism of players elsewhere. François Tourte probably developed the prototype of the modern bow in the 1780s, but it is unlikely to have been used by orchestral players before the turn of the century, although in 1798 Woldemar could maintain that it was „almost exclusively in use nowadays“ [„aujourd'hui presque seul en usage“],²¹ and by 1801 that it was „exclusively in use“ [„seul en usage“].²²

At the time of Löhlein's and Reichardt's treatises the pike-head bow was probably still used by most players, but by the time Reichardt came to edit Löhlein's *Anweisung* in the 1790s the hatchet-head had almost certainly replaced it in most places. Nevertheless, Reichardt made no significant additions to the range of bowings discussed by Löhlein, and there is little to suggest that developments in bow design led to any significant expansion of the late eighteenth-century orchestral player's repertoire of bowstrokes.

In *Über die Pflichten des Ripien-Violinisten* Reichardt began his examination of bowing by describing separate bowstrokes in which, first, the whole length of the bow is employed smoothly for semibreves, then the bow is used faster throughout its whole length for crotchets (probably with somewhat greater separation), then half the bow from the middle to point

²⁰ Michel Woldemar, *Grande Méthode*, (Paris, 1798) p.3.

²¹ *ibid.*

²² *Méthode de violon par L. Mozart*, revised by Woldemar (Paris n.d. [c.1801]) p.5.

is used for similar length notes and finally short bows in the upper quarter of the bow are employed for quavers and triplet quavers with staccato marks. (Ex.4) All these strokes can be paralleled in Löhlein's examples and are similarly catalogued in other treatises. Reichardt also described two rather different styles of separate bowstrokes for repeated accompaniment notes. He instructed that those without any form of staccato mark should „be played short but not sharp, that is to say, the bow remains resting on the string after the note has received a short stroke“ [„kurz aber nicht scharf gespielt werden, das heißt, der Bogen bleibt, nachdem die Note kurz angestrichen ist, auf der Saite ruhen“].²³ Perhaps this was intended to convey the same as Joseph Riepel's description of accompaniment notes in his *Gründliche Erklärung der Tonordnung* of 1757 where „the bow hair should only make a stroke of a hair's breadth on the string“ [„die Haare des Violin Bogens nur einen halben Messer-Rücken breit auf die Saiten stossen müssen“].²⁴ Those accompaniment notes, on the other hand, which had staccato marks were, according to Reichardt, to be played so that between each note the bow was „lifted completely from the string“ [„ganz von der Saiten abgehoben“].²⁵ They are written as quavers but no tempo is specified. However, it seems unlikely that, in this instance, Reichardt's association of notation and performance style can, in practice, be relied on. Few eighteenth-century composers were consistent or careful in the matter of staccato marks, especially with respect to a distinction between strokes and dots; as Riepel said of the notational distinctions in his own treatise: „I have only put the strokes and dots over the notes for the purpose of explanation, for in pieces one does not see them, except if it is sometimes perhaps necessary on account of clarity“ [„Ich habe die Striche und Punkten nur um der Erklärung wegen wiederum drüber gesetzt; denn in Musicalien sieht man sie nicht; ausser, wenn es um der Deutlichkeit wegen manchmal vielleicht notwendig ist“].²⁶

Löhlein did not specifically describe any strokes where the bow should be raised from the string between notes, except when rests separate the notes. In such instances he suggested that it was best to take them all on up bows whether or not they were on or off the beat. His employment of these bowstrokes in an Andante shows both uses. (Ex.5) Though the quavers followed by quaver rests theoretically represented the same amount of note and rest as crotchets played staccato, Löhlein made an important distinction with respect to performance. He wrote: „The crotchets over which strokes stand will indeed be played as short as quavers, but with a

²³ Reichardt, op. cit. p. 23–24.

²⁴ Riepel, op. cit. p. 22.

²⁵ Reichardt, op. cit. p. 24.

²⁶ Riepel, op. cit. p. 16.

gentle bow, sustained somewhat longer than if they were quavers with quaver rests“ [„Die Viertelnoten worüber Striche stehen, werden zwar so kurz als Achtel angegeben, aber mit einem gelinden Bogen etwas länger unterhalten, als wenn es Achtelnoten mit Achtelpausen wären“].²⁷

In their discussion of bowing for dotted figures Reichardt's and Löhlein's treatises provide evidence of two significantly different approaches which were current at that time. Reichardt, rather conservatively, made no reference to anything but separate bows for each note; Löhlein, however, preferred the method, which later became the norm, of tucking the short note into the same bow as the long note. He observed:

One can certainly perform each of these figures with a separate bowstroke, but they sound somewhat lame and limping; even if one sustains the bow very much. Therefore it is better if one here takes a pair of notes in each bowstroke. The first note with the dot must be played with a long powerful stroke where one strengthens the tone in the middle and makes a little vibrato with the finger; for the following short note the bow, which is almost at its end on the long note, will be lifted, so that the sound disappears just until one plays the short note shortly and clearly with the end of the bow.

Man kann zwar diese Figuren jede mit einem besondern Bogenstriche ausführen, sie klingen aber etwas lahm und holpericht; wenn man auch den Bogen noch so sehr anhält. Daher ist es besser, man nimmt hier zwey und zwey Noten in einem Bogenstriche. Die erste Note mit dem Punkte muß mit einem langen kräftigen Zuge, da man den Ton in der Mitte verstärkt, und eine kleine Bebung mit dem Finger macht, vorgetragen werden; bey der darauf folgenden kurzen Note wird der Bogen, welcher nun bald auf der vorgehenden langen zu Ende war, ein klein wenig gehoben, so, daß nur der Ton so lange verschwindet, bis man die kurze Note noch mit dem Ende des Bogens ganz kurz und deutlich abfertigt.²⁸

This is in an Adagio, but he later recommended the same bowing in faster music.²⁹ (Ex.6)

Riepel and Löhlein both discussed the possibility of using two cleanly detached up bows in figures of three notes (down-up-up), or alternatively retaking the down bow (down down-up). Despite the well-established tradition of craquer bowing, Riepel described the former as the „new manner“ [„neue Art“] of executing these sorts of figures, and the latter as the „old manner“ [„alte Art“].³⁰ Löhlein contented himself with describing Riepel's „old manner“ as „good“ and his „new manner“ as „better“.³¹ (Ex.7) Reichardt unlike these and other older contemporaries (such as Leopold Mozart) scarcely considered retaking the down bow, except in the context of slow figures and after chords; he regarded the use of two up bows in such figures as an indispensable technique for the orchestral player and his description provides valuable information about the way this was to be

²⁷ Löhlein, op. cit. p.72.

²⁸ ibid p.80.

²⁹ ibid p.85.

³⁰ Riepel, op. cit p.17.

³¹ Löhlein, op. cit. p.113.

executed. It was not, as might be thought (since this is how such figures are usually played by modern players), to be performed with a lifted or thrown stroke in the lower half of the bow, but evidently with an on-the-string stroke in the upper half. Reichardt explained: „For this bowstroke one must, however, use little bow, at most an eight part of the total length of the bow, and it should be in the region of the third quarter of the bow, reckoning from the hand“ [„Zu diesem Bogenstrich muß man aber wenig Bogen nehmen, höchstens den achten Theil der ganzen Länge des Bogens, und zwar in der Gegend des dritten Viertheils des Bogens von der Hand gerechnet“].³²

Reichardt regarded a succession of such strokes as a useful substitute for the soloist's staccato in a single bowstroke „which is far more difficult and detrimental to the hand, since it requires a somewhat stiff hand and therefore takes away its suppleness“ [„welches weit schwerer und der Hand nachtheilig ist, indem dieses eine etwas steife Hand erfordert, und ihr dadurch die Gelenkigkeit benimmt“].³³ There was general agreement that the slurred staccato was not normally a Ripienist's stroke. Christoph Heinrich Koch observed: „One leaves the execution of running notes in fast tempo in this type of stroke to concerto players who have particularly practised it; however, on notes which are repeated on the same degree of the scale and are to be performed in a moderate tempo, one uses this type of stroke also in orchestral parts“ [„Die Ausführung laufender Noten in geschwinder Bewegung in dieser Art des Striches überläßt man den Concertspielern, die sich darinnen besonders geübt haben; bey Noten aber, die auf eben derselben Stufe wiederholt, und in einer mäßiger Bewegung vorgetragen werden bedient man sich dieser Art des Striches auch in den Ripien Stimmen“].³⁴ Koch's examples (Ex.8), though confined to repetitions of the same note and containing up to three notes in a bow, seem close to the stroke described by Reichardt.

Portato, also notated with dots under slurs, was usually used on notes repeated at the same pitch, and was much less separated. Reichardt described it as „the softest“ [„die sanfteste“]³⁵ manner of executing repeated notes. Löhlein explained their performance thus: „one presses and then releases the bow on such notes so that the notes are separated from each other, yet so that through the gentle sustaining of the bow they acquire a connection“ [„man gibt solchen Noten einen Druck und läßt den Bogen wieder nach, damit sich die Töne von einander unterscheiden, aber doch durch das gelinde Anhalten des Bogens einen Zusammenhang bekommen“].³⁶

³² Reichardt, op. cit. pp.16–17.

³³ *ibid* p.17.

³⁴ Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon* (Frankfurt am Main, 1802) art. „Piquiren“.

³⁵ Reichardt, op. cit. p.24.

³⁶ Löhlein, op. cit. p.64.

But as his description of the execution of similarly marked notes elsewhere indicates, the degree of separation was entirely dependent on the musical context.³⁷

Among the strokes that seem seldom if ever to have been required in eighteenth-century orchestral playing is martelé; this is generally recognised by modern performers on period instruments. The matter of whether springing bowstrokes are stylistically anachronistic in eighteenth-century music, however, has generated a certain amount of controversy among players of period instruments, many of whom use springing strokes extensively and are sometimes reluctant to consider an alternative approach.

There are good grounds for thinking that most of the passages in this repertoire which are commonly played with such strokes in the lower half or middle of the bow would have been played by an eighteenth-century orchestral player with a more or less detached stroke, according to context, in the upper half of the bow. The springing bowstroke is unlikely to have been employed in orchestral playing except, possibly, to a limited extent, at the end of the century when this type of stroke was certainly popular with many soloists in particular musical contexts. There is little doubt that the development and exploitation of this technique was associated with the celebrated Mannheim trained violinist Wilhelm Cramer (1746–1799). Schubart, in his *Ideen zu einer Ästhetik der Tonkunst*, posthumously published in 1806 but written in 1784–5, observed of Cramer: „His bowstroke is completely original: he does not make it straight down like other violinists but up and away, he takes it short and extremely precisely. No-one staccatos the notes with such uncommon precision as Cramer“ [„Sein Strich ist ganz original: er führt ihn nicht wie andere Geiger gerade herunter, sondern oben hinweg, er nimmt ihn kurz und äusserst fein. Niemand stakirt die Noten mit so ungemeiner Präcision wie Cramer“].³⁸ During the last two decades of the century Cramer's bowstroke seems to have been widely imitated and Woldemar's *Grande Méthode* (1798) identified this technique as the coup d'archet à la Cramer [Ex.9], saying that it was played with „one bowstroke per note, the bow straight [upright?] on the string about the middle of the stick“ [„chaque coup d'archet chaque note, l'archet droit sur la corde vers le milieu de la baguette“].³⁹ In connection with another illustration of Cramer's style [Ex.10] he gives the instruction: „This genre requires a lot of neatness, of precision, of exactness, and the first note of the bar is usually forte“ [„Ce genre exige beaucoup de netteté, de précision, de justesse, et la première note de la

³⁷ *ibid* p.32.

³⁸ Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart, *Ideen zu einer Ästhetik der Tonkunst*, (Vienna, 1806) [p.139].

³⁹ Woldemar, *Grande Méthode*, p. 47.

measure est ordinairement forté“].⁴⁰ It seems clear from Woldemar's descriptions and music examples that the *coup d'archet à la Cramer* consisted of a series of very short bowstrokes in the middle of the bow similar to modern sautillé, rather than the somewhat longer ones in the upper half of the bow which other violinists might have been expected to use for the same music. An admirer of this style of playing wrote in 1804:

Cramer in London was the first to introduce a new, more attractive manner of playing into his concertos. Half, even whole pages full of rolling passagework were played staccato. Whereas formerly one played these fast notes with the end of the bow, now one used the middle of the bow. Thereby they were made more separate, rounder, in a word, more beautiful.

Cramer in London war der erste, der in seinen Konzerten eine neue, gefälligere Spielart einführte. Halbe, auch ganze Seiten voll rollender Passagen wurden staccato gespielt. Wie man vorher mit der Seite des Bogens diese geschwinden Noten abspielte, so brauchte man jetzt die Mitte des Bogens. Dadurch wurden sie abgesondeter, runder, mit einem Worte, schöner.⁴¹

In another article this kind of bowstroke is referred to (probably by the same writer), as played „with a half-bouncing bow“ [„mit einem halb hüpfenden Bogen“],⁴² but, however neatly Cramer himself executed this bowstroke, it seems that many of his imitators were less successful. The admirer of Cramer's bowing went on to say:

Many, however, also ruined their previously good manner of playing after laborious effort to play with the middle of the bow, through too strong a pressure on the strings. The bow hopped here and there, and the tone became unpleasant rough and scratchy.

Mancher verdarb sich aber auch seine vorige gute Spielart nach mühsamer Applikation, mit der Mitte des Bogens zu spielen, durch zu starken Druck auf die Saiten. Der Bogen hüpfte hin und her, und der Ton ward unannehmlich, rauh und kratzend.⁴³

Despite its popularity in some quarters this technique was not universally adopted. There is no clear evidence of its having been used by orchestral players, and those solo players who did use it seem specially to have employed it in the passagework of concertos. Even in that context, many other musicians do not seem to have been so enamoured of this bowstroke and it appears already to have acquired a bad name in some quarters at an early stage. Leopold Mozart wrote to his son in 1778 giving an account of a visit to Salzburg by the violinist Janitsch. He admired many aspects of his playing, commenting especially on his „facility and lightness of bowing“ and describing it as similar to Lolli's except that he played Adagio better. The comparison of Janitsch's playing with that of Lolli is revealing,

⁴⁰ *ibid* p.37.

⁴¹ *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 6 (1803–4) 730 „Über die heutige verworrene Strichbezeichnung“.

⁴² *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 5 (1802–3) 665.

⁴³ *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 6 (1803–4) 730.

for a writer in 1799 observed of Lolli's performance in allegro: „his was not the modern use of the bow where it is believed that effectiveness is to be found in clipped, hopping strokes and where the bow's long melting stroke, which almost outbids the beauty of the human voice, is neglected“⁴⁴. Leopold contrasted Janitsch's style of playing with that of other unnamed violinists (but most probably having followers of Cramer in mind), saying: „I am no lover of rapid passages where you have to produce the notes with the half tone of the violin and, so to speak, only touch the fiddle with the bow and almost play in the air“.⁴⁵ Everything that is known of the violinists with whom W. A. Mozart associated and whom he admired, argues that he shared his father's preference for the broader style. This is suggested in particular by his praise for the playing of Ferdinand Fränzl⁴⁶ and by Rochlitz's comment that Mozart specially admired the playing of Johann Friedrich Eck, for its tone, bowing and command of legato.⁴⁷ That Fränzl and Eck probably rejected the Cramer stroke entirely is suggested by what is known of their joint pupil, Eck's younger brother Franz. Franz Eck undoubtedly helped to foster his 19-year-old pupil Spohr's profound prejudice against springing bowings during their trip to St Petersburg in 1803.⁴⁸ From this and other scraps of evidence (for instance Schubart's descriptions of other violinists' styles of playing),⁴⁹ it seems clear that Cannabich (Cramer's teacher), Eck and other members of the Mannheim school during the 1770s and 80s did not cultivate Cramer's style of bowing, which he almost certainly developed after he left Mannheim, at about the age of 20, during the mid 1760s.

If we exclude springing bowings from the repertoire of the eighteenth-century orchestral player we are left with a variety of on-the-string strokes ranging from smoothly connected legato to accented and sharply detached staccato, as well as strokes which are detached by raising the bow from the string between notes. The distinction between raising the bow and bouncing it through the use of the elasticity of the stick is an important one. Quantz made much of the necessity of detaching the bow from the string where possible to achieve a cleanly separated staccato; but to avoid misunderstanding he observed:

⁴⁴ *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 1 (1798-9) 579.

⁴⁵ Emily Anderson ed. *Letters of Mozart and his Family* (London, 1938, 2nd ed. 1966) p. 455; W. A. Bauer, O. E. Deutsch and J. H. Eibl, *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen* (Kassel, 1967-75) ii, 244.

⁴⁶ Anderson op. cit. p. 384 [Bauer et al. op. cit. ii, 137].

⁴⁷ *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 2 (1799-1800) 316.

⁴⁸ Clive Brown „Bowling Styles, Vibrato and Portamento in Nineteenth-Century Violin Playing“, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 113 (1988) 101.

⁴⁹ Schubart, op. cit. pp. 59, 158, 298 etc.

It was said above that the bow must be somewhat raised from the string for notes which have a little stroke over them. I only mean this to be so in the case of notes where there is sufficient time. Thus in Allegro, the quavers and in Allegretto the semiquavers are excepted from this if many follow one another: for these must certainly be played with a very short bowstroke, but the bow will never be lifted or separated from the string. For if one wanted always to lift the bow as far as is required for the so-called *Absetzen*, there would not be enough time remaining to return it again at the right time, and notes of this sort would sound as if they were hacked or whipped.

Oben ist gesagt worden, daß bey den Noten über welchen Strichelchen stehen, der Bogen von der Seyte etwas abgesetzt werden müsse. Diese verstehe ich nur von solchen Noten, bey denen es die Zeit leidet. Also werden in Allegro die Achttheile, und im Allegretto die Sechzehnteile, wenn deren viele auf einander folgen, davon ausgenommen: denn diese müssen zwar mit einem ganz kurzen Bogenstriche gespielt, der Bogen aber niemals abgesetzt, oder von der Seyte entfernt werden. Denn wenn man ihn allzeit so weit aufheben wollte, als zum sogenannten Absetzen erfordert wird, so würde nicht Zeit genug übrig seyn, ihn wieder zu rechten Zeit darauf zu bringen, und diese Art Noten würden klingen, als wenn sie gehacket oder gepeitschet würden.⁵⁰

Since Quantz specified tempo in terms of pulse beats it is possible to be fairly certain about the speed of notes to which he referred. His Allegro has 80 minims to the minute and his Allegretto 80 crotchets; thus the notes which he wished to be played on the string are at a tempo where such notes are nowadays often played off the string.

In fact, both positive and negative evidence for faster notes being played on the string at this period is easily found. Whenever writers of string methods during the late Baroque, Galant and Classical periods were specific about which part of the bow would normally be employed for shorter strokes, they invariably referred to the upper half, or indeed to the top quarter of the bow. Corrette in 1738 instructed that „quavers and semiquavers are played at the tip of the bow“ [„les croches et les double croches se jouent du bout de l'archet“],⁵¹ Robert Crome in the 1740s cautioned: „take care you don't let your Bow Hand come too near the Fiddle, but rather play with the small end of the Bow, unless it be to lengthen out a long note“.⁵² The accounts of bowstrokes in Reichardt, Löhlein and all other treatises of the period, before Woldemar, which the present writer has seen, do not recommend the use of anything that can reasonably be identified as a springing bowstroke.

At this point it may be appropriate to consider the relationship of these various types of bowstroke to the orchestral music of the Classical period and to look at some of the clues to composers' intentions which can be found in the scores.

⁵⁰ Quantz, op. cit. ch.17 section 2, para.27.

⁵¹ Michel Corrette, *L'école d'Orphée* [...] (Paris, 1738) p.7.

⁵² *The Fiddle New Model'd* (London n.d. [c.1750]); quoted in Edmund van der Straeten, *The Romance of the Fiddle*, (London, 1911) p.204.

Generally, the shorter and more delicate the stroke envisaged by the composer, the nearer to the point he would have expected it to be played. Thus Kirnberger specified the extreme point of the bow for light metres, requiring well-separated bowstrokes.⁵³ In contexts where this sort of specially distinct but light bowstroke was required composers occasionally gave the instruction *punta d'arco colla punta del arco*, sometimes *punto d'arco*, especially in German sources, or various abbreviated versions), apparently to obtain a lighter stroke than the ordinary detached stroke in the upper half which might otherwise have been used. Piccini indicated it in *La Cecchina, ossia La buona figliuola* (1760) (Ex.11) and David Perez in *Solimano* (c.1768) (Ex.12, 13, 14b). It is specified in the third movement of Haydn's String Quartet Op. 55 No.1, and was later to be required in similar contexts by Rossini in *L'Italiana in Algeri* and many other operas, by Weber in *Der Freischütz*, by Beethoven in the String Quartet op. 132, by Meyerbeer in *Il crociato in Egitto*, and by Berlioz in the *Symphonie Fantastique*.

In many ways the *punta d'arco* of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries seems to have been the Classical equivalent of the modern springing (*sautillé* or *spiccato*) bowstroke. It is interesting that Hermann Schröder in his *Die Kunst des Violinspiels* of 1887, having remarked that springing bowstrokes were then „an indispensable type of bowing for every violinist“ [„eine unentbehrliche Strichart für jeden Geiger“], went on to say:

In the old Italian and particularly in the German school up to L. Spohr, it was less used. One played passages suited to these bow strokes on the whole with short strokes with an on-the-string bowing at the point.

In den italienischen, besonders in den deutschen Schulen bis zu L. Spohr wurde sie weniger angewandt. Man spielte die diesem Striche angemessenen Stellen grösstentheils mit kurzen Strichen im liegenden Bogen an der Spitze.⁵⁴

The term *punta d'arco* itself was defined by Lichtenthal in 1826 thus: „The notes marked with this expression require a particular execution which consists of striking gently on the string with the point of the bow thus producing a light staccato“ [„Le Note marcate con tale espressione richiedono un'escuzione particolare, la quale consiste nel battere dolcemente colla punta dell'arco sulla corda, producendo così uno staccato leggiero“].⁵⁵ And Busby's dictionary explained *punta d'arco* as: „with the end, or with a

⁵³ Kirnberger, *The Art of Strict Musical Composition* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1982) p.388.

⁵⁴ Hermann Schröder, *Die Kunst des Violinspiels* (Köln, 1887) p.72.

⁵⁵ Peter Lichtenthal, *Dizionario e bibliografia della Musica* (Milan, 1826) art. „punta d'arco“.

slight touch of the bow".⁵⁶ Johann Adam Hiller defined the term rather differently, applying it to the staccato produced at the point of the bow by a series of short strokes in one up-bow, but this would not fit most of the instances where the expression appears in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century music.⁵⁷

In all the places marked *punta d'arco* in Ex.11–15 the natural instinct of the modern player would be to use the middle or lower-half of the bow with an off-the-string stroke; but it seems clear that this instinct did not come so naturally to eighteenth- and even nineteenth-century players. For instance, defining the word „spiccato“ in his Dictionary of Musical Terms J. A. Hamilton wrote: „Pointedly, distinctly. In violin music, this term implies that the notes are to be played with the point of the bow.“⁵⁸ And as late as the 1870s the anonymous author of *The Violin: How to master it. By a professional player*, discussing the use of the upper half of the bow, remarked: „All rapid music, which is bowed and not slurred, ought to be played with this part; all that is fine and delicate in violin playing is found in the upper half of the bow“; he only allowed the use of the lower half when „the short stroke is wanted crisp, loud and noisy“. ⁵⁹

Other terms used to indicate various types of separation frequently encountered in Classical scores include *spiccato*, *staccato* and *sciolto*. Defining *spiccato*, Burney wrote:

Distinct, detached, separated, in Music as if half the note were cut off by a rest. This term is nearly of the same signification as *sciolto* and *staccato*; except that on the violin, when *spiccato* is written over or under a group of notes, they are to be touched lightly with a vibration of one bow; and *sciolto* and *staccato* passages and movements require a strong bow to every note.⁶⁰

In Burney's definition, therefore, like Hamilton's, *spiccato* seems to be essentially the same as *punta d'arco*, and this tallies with Schröder's observation that the short stroke at the point was often indicated by the instruction *leggiere*.⁶¹ For some musicians, however, *sciolto* was also quite different from *staccato*. Fröhlich observed in 1810:

Yet another type of gentle staccato is specified by the word *sciolto* under the notes, which means free, detached. It should therefore be played lightly without stiffness, but especially with much movement of the wrist.

⁵⁶ Thomas Busby's *Dictionary of 300 Musical Terms*, 3rd Edition revised by J. A. Hamilton (London [1840]) p.40.

⁵⁷ Johann Adam Hiller, *Anweisung zum Violinspielen [...]* (Leipzig [1792]) p.41.

⁵⁸ J.A.Hamilton, *Dictionary of Musical Terms*, 4th Edition 1837 art. „spiccato“.

⁵⁹ *The Violin: How to master it. By a professional player*, (Edinburgh, 5th Edition 1882) p.55.

⁶⁰ In Abraham Rees, *Cyclopaedia* (London, 1802–1819) art. „spiccato“.

⁶¹ Schröder, op. cit. p.72.

Noch eine Art des gelinderen Stoßes wird durch das unter den Noten gesetzte Wort *Sciolto* ausgedrückt, welches frey, ungebunden heißt. Sie sollen also mit Leichtigkeit ohne Steifheit, sondern vorzüglich mit vieler Beweglichkeit des Handgelenkes gespielt werden.⁶²

Some eighteenth-century composers evidently used these words with distinct meanings while others did not. Many seem to have used *sciolto* to signify separate as opposed to slurred, but not to mean sharply accented or detached, reserving *staccato* for that purpose. Ex.14a, 15 and 16 from David Perez *Solimano* are instructive. In 14a a forte passage is marked *staccato* in the strings and at the same time *battute* in the wind (a combination often found in Perez's scores). When a similar passage occurred in a piano dynamic he wrote *pun.^{do}* (*punta d'arco*) (14b). In Ex.15 the instruction *sciolte ed eguale* is probably designed to ensure a separate but smooth performance rather than slurred or *staccato*. In Ex.16 *lig.* (*ligato*) reinforces the slurs while *sciol.* (*sciolte*) indicates separate but probably not *staccato* bowing (note the simultaneous slurs in the wind instruments on the top two staves).

Another word occasionally encountered in this sort of context which is often misunderstood is *vibrato*. Before the middle of the nineteenth century it primarily indicated accent rather than oscillation of pitch or intensity. Lichtenthal defined *vibrato* as „strongly accented“ [„marcato fortamente“],⁶³ and it is often found in Italian opera scores during the early nineteenth century, evidently in this sense. Georg Joseph Vogler, however, seems to have used it rather differently, to indicate a succession of lightly accented detached notes, as Ex.17, from the autograph of his symphony in G suggests. (The word occurs in a similar context in Vogler's melodrama *Lampedo* p.36ff.) This use of the term may be reflected in a definition of *vibrato* from the *Wiener Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* of 1813, where it is described thus: „Here the notes will not be torn out by the roots but merely tickled at their tips“ [„Die Töne werden hier nicht mit der Wurzel heraus gezogen, sondern nur an ihren Spitzen gekitzelt“].⁶⁴

Finally, there is the important matter of slurring. In many cases, even such a basic matter as whether notes should be slurred or bowed out is difficult to determine. Various inconsistent conventions governed this. Many eighteenth-century composers and copyists, for instance, seem to have assumed that notes above a certain velocity would be slurred as a matter of course and omitted slurs, or only haphazardly marked them over such notes. Often a composer seems to have found it more convenient to use a term such as *staccato* or *sciolto* to show that a passage of fast notes

⁶² Joseph Fröhlich, *Vollständige theoretisch-praktische Musikschule*, (Bonn, 1810–1811) p.49.

⁶³ Lichtenthal, op. cit. art. „vibrato“.

⁶⁴ *Wiener allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* 1 (1813) 435.

should be separate than to mark slurs where he expected them to be played. Sometimes a staccato mark on one or more notes seems to have been an indication that the others should be slurred; in Ex.18a the staccato marks on the quavers in the 2nd violin part may show that this note should not be included in the slur which, in the absence of instructions to the contrary, the player would almost certainly have inferred from the demi-semiquavers. Ex.18b shows the copyist occasionally writing in a slur on these figures.

Much knowledge of the assumptions or intentions of Classical composers in these matters is irretrievably lost, for the relationship between terminology, notation and practice is often impossible to establish. Study and comparison of eighteenth-century scores and parts in conjunction with treatises, documentary and journalistic sources can clarify some points and demonstrate areas of contradiction. In the end, though, our application of the knowledge gleaned from these studies to the performance of the music of the period must always be more an exercise of creative imagination than a matter of historical accuracy.

Music Examples

XIII. Polonoise.



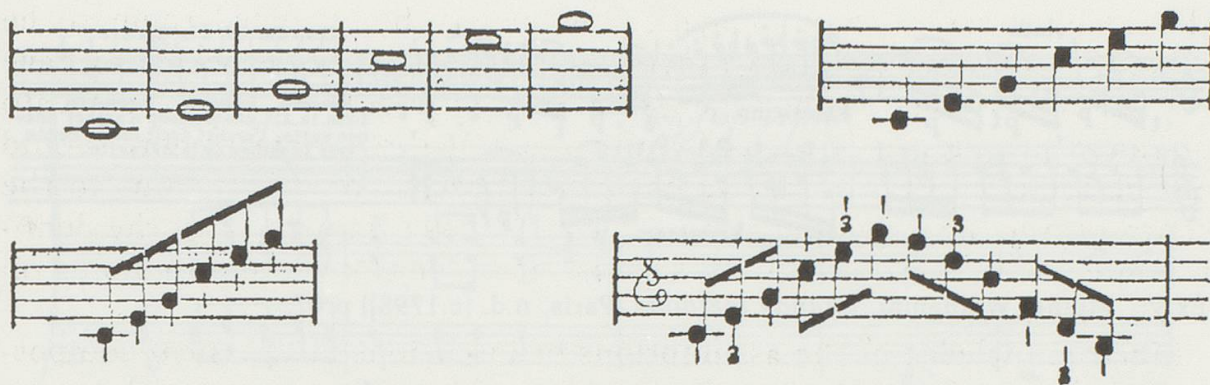
Ex.1: Löhlein, *Anweisung zum Violinspielen* (Leipzig & Züllichau, 1774) p.74.



Ex.2: ibid, p. 68 [Allegro].



Ex.3: Reichardt, *Über die Pflichten des Ripien-Violinisten* (Berlin & Leipzig, 1776), p.11.



Ex.4: Reichardt, op. cit., pp.9-10.

Violin I

XIX. Andante. *b* = up bow *q* = down bow



Violin II



Ex.5: Löhlein, op. cit., pp.86 & 87.

XVI. Adagio.



Ex.6: *ibid.*, p.80.



Ex.7: *ibid.*, p.113.



Ex.8: Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon* (Frankfurt am Main, 1802) art. „Piquieren“.

Handwritten musical score for Ex.13. The score consists of several staves. The top staff has the instruction *fin fiato se potri*. The middle staves have the instruction *piano a puntarlo*. The bottom staff has the lyrics *il ge-ni-tore* and *Chi tanto Com'empio in*. The bottom right of the score has the instruction *Tutti piano a puntarlo*.

Ex.13: ibid., [Allegro teatrale].

Handwritten musical score for Ex.14a. The score consists of several staves. The top staff has the instruction *Colpo*. The middle staves have the instruction *battute*. The bottom staff has the instruction *Stai*. The bottom right of the score has the instruction *B.*

Ex.14a: ibid., [Allegretto cantabile ed affetuoso].

p. rinf.
p. lmf.
p.
p. poud, acc. i. sf.
p.
p. poud, acc. i. sf.
Bella Si Bella pieta Si Bella pieta Si bella Si
p. poud, acc. i. sf.

Ex.14b: ibid., [Allegretto cantabile ed affetuoso].

121
ferme op.
p.
p. rinf.
p. lmf.
p. poud, acc. i. sf.
p. poud, acc. i. sf.
In pro cella Si Funes za altro o

Ex.15: ibid., [Allegro assai].

Handwritten musical score for Ex. 16. The score consists of nine staves. The top staves contain vocal lines with lyrics: "Ma quale oh Dio." The bottom staves contain piano accompaniment. Performance markings include "Lig." (Ligature), "Sist." (Sustain), and "Lig." (Ligature). The tempo is indicated as "Un poco andantino".

Ex.16: ibid., [Un poco andantino].

Handwritten musical score for Ex. 17. The score consists of five staves. The top staves contain piano accompaniment. Performance markings include "p vibrato" (piano vibrato) and "pizz" (pizzicato). The tempo is indicated as "Allegro".

Ex.17: Georg Joseph Vogler, Symphony in G (1779) [Allegro].

Del Sig. Piccini

3/3

p^o Str.

And.^{te}

Una povera Ragazza

f

p^o

Una povera Ra =

china qualche cosa qualche cosa qualche cosa trovarai

Si si =

con arco

for.

ignora. Si Pa: drona si Padrona. o chi! (iel non abbandona) o chi! (iel non abban =

con arco

for.

Ex.18a & b: Niccolò Piccinni, *La Cecchina* ossia *La buona figliuola* [Andantino].