

THE DIVISION OF TASTE:  
PROFESSIONAL AND AMATEUR ORNAMENTATION IN THE VIOLIN TREATISES OF THE  
MID-EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

By

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(Under the Direction of Dorothea Link)

ABSTRACT

In the middle of the eighteenth century a new type of musical document began to circulate in the cities of Western Europe. Foundational treatises that promised to aide in the aspirations of amateur violinists appeared on the shelves of many middle and upper class homes. These treatises differed from the many violin tutors that had appeared earlier in the century in their significantly wider scope, treating as they did every aspect of violin playing from the basics of finger technique to more refined issues of taste. In recent inquiries into the ornamentation of the eighteenth century these documents have played an important role. Generally they have been interpreted as heralding the rise of a new, more austere taste in ornamentation that would eventually come to constitute the Classical style of performance. I will argue instead that a split occurred at approximately mid-century between the professional and amateur styles of performance.

INDEX WORDS: Violin, Ornamentation, Performance Practice, Eighteenth Century

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## **Introduction**

In the middle of the eighteenth century a new type of musical document began to circulate in the cities of Western Europe. Foundational treatises that promised to aide in the aspirations of amateur violinists appeared on the shelves of many middle and upper class homes. These treatises differed from the many violin tutors that had appeared earlier in the century in their significantly wider scope, treating as they did every aspect of violin playing from the basics of finger technique to more refined issues of taste. They also distinguished themselves in their being authored by violinists like Francesco Geminiani and Leopold Mozart who were widely considered to be the most eminent authorities on the subject. Among the many topics covered by these treatises was ornamentation, one of the central concerns of music making at that time. The ornamentation described in these treatises was generally much simpler than the prolix diminutions that had typified the first half of the century.

In recent inquiries into the ornamentation of the eighteenth century these documents have played an important role. Generally they have been interpreted as heralding the rise of a new, more austere taste in ornamentation that would eventually come to constitute the Classical style of performance. What this reading fails to consider is that in most cases these foundational treatises were not meant to represent the performing habits of their authors. Rather they were produced with the interests and the abilities of their audience in mind. In the following I will consider a number of case studies in which some of the most widely read authors on ornamentation produced treatises that describe a style of performance quite distinct from their own with the interest of satisfying the needs

of their amateur readership. By considering a number of such cases I will demonstrate that the imagined shift toward a more austere style of ornamentation never occurred. I will argue instead that a split occurred at approximately mid-century between the professional and amateur styles of performance. I will also argue that although many professional authors produced texts that describe the amateur style of performance, they themselves continued to perform in a professional style until the century's end.

### A Brief Word on Terminology

The study of ornamentation is unfortunately complicated by a lack of consistency in the terms used to describe the various kinds of ornaments. Generally the ornaments of the eighteenth century are divided into two categories. The first is often referred to as “necessary” or “French” ornamentation. This category includes all of the smaller ornaments that are usually notated with symbols such as the trill, the mordent, or the turn that were most common in the French style of performance. The second category is designated by a variety of terms. For the most part authors use different translations of Johann Joachim Quantz’s term *willkürliche Veränderungen*, such as free ornamentation, Italian ornamentation, diminution, and extempore embellishments, among others. All of these terms refer to the improvisatory and melismatic character of this type of ornamentation. It is important to note that this type of ornamentation was generally not indicated by the composer. Typically the performer was expected to improvise this style of embellishment. In the following I will refer to the first type as “necessary” or “French” and the second as “free Italian” ornamentation.

### The Rise of the Violin Treatise

In the second half of the seventeenth century a new type of player began to take interest in the violin. Amateur musicians across Europe gravitated to the instrument that had until this point been primarily kept within the realm of professionals. This trend, which began in England, eventually spread to the rest of Western Europe and resulted in a series of publications that were written with the needs of amateurs in mind.<sup>1</sup> These publications can be roughly divided into three phases: (1) books covering a wide range of musical topics of interest to amateurs that begin to include small sections on playing the violin c. 1650-1700, (2) tutors devoted solely to the violin that give enough instruction to play simple tunes c. 1700-1750, (3) the treatises of Geminiani (1751) and Mozart (1756) that extensively describe the technique of violin playing as well the beginnings of professional concerns such as taste, ornamentation, and performance.

An example of a publication from the first phase is John Playford's *A Brief Introduction to the Skill of Musick*. This document, which covers a wide range of topics that would be of interest to amateur musicians, was updated to include a section on playing the violin in its second revised edition of 1655. Playford's section on the violin runs for only two pages, in which he describes it as being particularly well-suited to modern tastes, especially for those "whose phancey is delighted by nothing but Ayres, Corants, and Jiggs."<sup>2</sup> As for how one might play this newly popular instrument Playford offers only the pitches to which one must tune the open strings. Such mentions of the violin in general music tutors

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<sup>1</sup> David Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing From its Origins to 1761 and its Relationship to the Violin and Violin Music* (1965; repr., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 244-247.

<sup>2</sup> John Playford, *A Brief Introduction to the Skill of Musick*, in *Early English books, 1641-1700* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1966), microfilm, 221:15.

certainly indicate an increased interest in the instrument during this period, but they do not offer the reader much information about how the instrument is played. A more full description of playing the violin did not appear in print until near the end of the seventeenth century.

The first known work to specifically address the violin was John Lenton's *The Gentleman's Diversion or the Violin Explained* (1693).<sup>3</sup> As the title of this tutor suggests, it was intended for wealthy amateurs who wanted to fill their leisure time by making music with the newly popular violin. Unlike earlier treatments, such as Playford's, this tutor contains, or at least claims to contain, all of the information necessary to allow an absolute beginner to play simple music on the violin. It also has a number of lessons or short pieces of music that one might play after becoming proficient with the fundamentals. After this work a flurry of similar publications came to market. In the table below (table 1) I have provided a list of tutors published in England during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. I have given the author (if known), the title, and the date for each publication.

Table 1. Early Violin Tutors.<sup>4</sup>

|  |
|--|
| J. Lenton, <i>The Gentleman's Diversion or the Violin Explained</i> , 1693 |
| T. Cross, <i>Nolens Volens</i> , 1695                                      |
| <i>The Self-Instructor on the Violin</i> , 1695                            |
| <i>The Second Book of the Self-Instructor on the Violin</i> , 1697         |
| J. Bannister, <i>The Compleat Tutor to the Violin</i> , 1699               |
| <i>The Third Book of the Self-Instructor</i> , 1699                        |
| <i>The First, Second, and Third Book of the Self-Instructor</i> , 1700     |

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<sup>3</sup> Malcolm Boyd and John Rayson, "The Gentleman's Diversion: John Lenton and the First Violin Tutor," *Early Music* 10, no. 3 (1982): 329-332. There are advertisements for other violin tutors that would seem to precede Lenton's but they have yet to be found. For more information see David D. Boyden "A Postscript to 'Geminiani and the First Violin Tutor,'" *Acta Musicologica* 32, no. 1 (1960): 40-47.

<sup>4</sup> This list is taken from Boyden, "A Postscript," 45-47.

Table 1. Continued.

- J. Bannister, *The Compleat Tutor* (book 2), 1700  
*Musical Recreations: or the whole Art and Mystery of playing on the Violin*, 1701  
 Nolens Volens, *The Second Book for the Violin*, 1701  
 J. Bannister, *The Compleat Tutor* (book 3), 1702  
 J. Lenton, *The useful Instructor on the Violin*, 1702  
 Nolens Volens, *the Third Book for the Violin*, 1704  
*Compleat Musick-Master*, 1704  
*Compleat Musick-Master* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), 1707  
 J. Bannister, *The Compleat Tutor... The Fourth Book*, 1707  
*The 4<sup>th</sup> Book of the Musical Recreation; or the whole Art of playing on the Violin*, 1708  
*The 4 Books of Nolens Volens, or the Art of Playing on that Instrument*, 1709  
*The New Violin-Master; or the whole Art of Playing on that Instrument*, 1709  
*Book of Instruction for the Violin*, 1709  
*Second Book of the Violin Master*, 1710  
*Third Book of the Violin Master Improved*, 1711  
*Nolens Volens; or the most compleat Tutor to the Violin*, 1712  
*The 6<sup>th</sup> Book of Nolens Volens, or the most compleat Tutor to the Violin*, 1713  
*The Compleat Tutor to the Violin. The Fourth Book*, 1713  
*Nolens Volens the 7<sup>th</sup> Book, or the most compleat Tutor to the Violin*, 1715  
*Nolens Volens the 8<sup>th</sup> Book*, 1716  
*The Compleat Tutor to the Violin*, 1717  
*The Compleat Tutor to the Violin, 3d Book*, 1719  
*Books for Learners on the Violin*, 1721  
 T. Brown, *Compleat Musick-Master*, 1722  
*The 6<sup>th</sup> Book of the Compleat Tutor to the Violin*, 1723  
*The Compleat Tutor to the Violin- The Fifth Book*, 1727  
 J. Playford, *Introduction to the Skill of Musick*, 1730  
*The Art of Playing on the Violin*, Part V of *The Modern Musick-Master*, 1731

Most of these tutors were published in London, but many of them did make their way to the continent as well.<sup>5</sup> These publications had in common a rather limited ambition. They were designed to give their readers enough proficiency to play simple tunes and little else.<sup>6</sup>

The first treatise to address technical demands beyond those required of the dilettante was Francesco Geminiani's *The Art of Playing on the Violin* published in London

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<sup>5</sup> Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing*, 358.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 246-247.

in the year 1751.<sup>7</sup> This treatise offered significantly more detailed accounts of shifting, articulation, and bowing than had been available in the tutors that had preceded it. It also offered an introduction to subjects like taste, ornamentation, and playing in ensembles that were likewise not to be found in the tutors of the first half of the century. Five years after the publication of Geminiani's treatise Leopold Mozart published his *Versuch einer gründlichen Violinschule* that covered in still greater detail many of the issues that had been neglected by the tutors of the first half of the century.<sup>8</sup> Because these treatises covered their subject so much more comprehensively and because their authors were much better esteemed than their predecessors, these two treatises have often been read as the primary testaments of professional performance practice in the eighteenth century. In the following section I will consider how these treatises, and others like them,<sup>9</sup> have informed contemporary writing on ornamentation in the eighteenth century.

### Modern Interpretations of the Treatises of the Eighteenth Century

The intention of this summary is to trace the development of two problematic ideas that originated in the writings of the earliest scholars of eighteenth century performance-practice. The first of these issues, which arises primarily in works that deal with the history of the violin specifically, is the assessment of the treatises of Mozart and Geminiani as representative of professional performance practice. The second issue, which tends to

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<sup>7</sup> Available in Francesco Geminiani, *The Art of Playing on the Violin* (London, 1751; facs., London: Travis & Emery, 2009).

<sup>8</sup> Modern translation available in Leopold Mozart, *A Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing*, trans. Editha Knocker, 2nd ed. (1948; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>9</sup> The treatises of J. J. Quantz (1752) and Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1753 part one, 1762 part two) are most often consulted in tandem with the treatises of Mozart and Geminiani.

appear in more general works on ornamentation, is the sentiment that these treatises are the first iterations of an aesthetic shift toward a more austere style of ornamentation that occurred during the second half of the eighteenth century. As I will discuss below both of these ideas are problematic in that they do not fully take into account the contextual considerations that must necessarily inform our readings of these documents.

The first major scholarly study of the violin to consider how the instrument might have been played in different times is David Boyden's massive *The History of Violin Playing from its Origins to 1761 and its Relationship to the Violin and Violin Music* (1965).<sup>10</sup> As the title suggests this work deals with much more than just violin ornamentation in the eighteenth century. That being said, Boyden's book, along with a number of articles that he wrote to supplement the information contained therein, provide the framework from which most subsequent studies of violin ornamentation begin.<sup>11</sup> In his evaluation of violin publications of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century Boyden posits that the spike in production of basic violin tutors during this time is representative of an increased interest in the instrument among amateur musicians. Regarding these early tutors he states that they can only provide limited information about professional performance practice. He views the treatises of Geminiani and Mozart as the first true records of professional violin performance practice to be published in the eighteenth century.<sup>12</sup> In his opinion these treatises distinguish themselves from the tutors that came before them in their inclusion of many aspects of professional performance such as extended shifting

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<sup>10</sup> Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing From its Origins to 1761 and its Relationship to the Violin and Violin Music* (1965; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

<sup>11</sup> David Boyden, "Geminiani and the First Violin Tutor," *Acta Musicologica* 31, no. 3 (1959): 161-170 and David Boyden "A Postscript to 'Geminiani and the First Violin Tutor'" *Acta Musicologica* 32, no. 1 (1960): 40-47.

<sup>12</sup> Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing*, 364-366.



technique and performing in ensembles. This reading is mostly correct, but it fails to highlight the aspects of professional performance, such as ornamentation, that are not fully addressed by these treatises. Boyden's important and lasting assessment of these documents paved the way for many subsequent authors who followed him in their use of these treatises as a primary source of information for professional performance practice.

Another pioneering scholarly work that covers a wide range of information and substantially shaped the performance practice discourse is Robert Donington's *The Interpretation of Early Music* (1963).<sup>13</sup> In his reconstruction of the performance practice of the past Donington relies heavily on writings taken from the periods in question. Throughout his discussion of the eighteenth century Donington's own words are greatly outnumbered by those of authors like Quantz, C. P. E. Bach, and Leopold Mozart. In this way the work is invaluable as it offers an easily accessible synthesis of the opinions of some of the most important authors of the past. While it is difficult to find fault in an approach that relies so heavily on primary documents, there is nevertheless a substantial oversight in Donington's approach. The overwhelming majority of the documents that he consults were written for amateur players and as such do not offer much insight into the performance practice of professional performers. This oversight results in a particularly egregious chapter titled "Post-Baroque Ornamentation" in which Donington posits "Free ornamentation began to lose its status as a primary element of interpretation during the second half of the eighteenth century."<sup>14</sup> In defense of his claim Donington gives twelve quotations from primary documents published between the years 1760 and 1958. His list

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<sup>13</sup> Robert Donington, *The Interpretation of Early Music*, rev. ed. (Bath, UK: Faber and Faber, 1974).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 181.

of quotations is curious, as only the first three date from the period he is considering. The first of the relevant quotations, which is taken from C. P. E. Bach's treatise, is hardly a warning against such ornamentation.

Nowadays varied repeats are essential, being taken for granted from every performer... Often it is nothing but the variations, particularly when joined to prolonged and over-curiously ornamented cadenzas, which arouse the loudest applause from the audience. And what abuses of these two resources occur! ... Yet in spite of the difficulties and abuses, there is always a value in good variation.<sup>15</sup>

Donington's second quotation, which he attributes to John Hoyle's *Complete Dictionary of Music* (1770), is actually a plagiarized passage taken from Geminiani's treatise, a fact that was apparently unknown to Donington, which therefore places its original date of publication at 1751.<sup>16</sup> This quotation warns only against the potential dangers of such ornamentation being employed by an amateur or someone who has not yet acquired good taste.

What is commonly called good taste in playing or singing, has been thought, for some years past, to destroy the true melody, and the intention of the composer. It is supposed by many, that a real good taste cannot be acquired by any rules of art; it being a particular gift of nature, indulged only to those who have a naturally good ear; and as most flatter themselves to have this perfection, hence it happens that he, who sings or plays, thinks of nothing so

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<sup>15</sup> Donington, *The Interpretation of Early Music*, 181.

<sup>16</sup> The passage that Donington quotes from Hoyle's definition of "expression" is taken word for word from Geminiani's description of ornamentation found on page 6 of his *The Art of Playing on the Violin*.

much as to make continually some favorite passages; but in expressing with strength and delicacy the intention of the composer, should his thoughts be taken up with.<sup>17</sup>

The third quotation, which comes from Thomas Busby, gives only a passing admonition.

An appellation sometimes given to the decorative notes which a singer or instrumental performer adds to a passage (he wants caution but takes it for granted).<sup>18</sup>

The late date of origin of the other quotes renders them irrelevant to any question of eighteenth century practice. Taken together this evidence hardly supplies enough support for Donington's claim that free ornamentation fell out of fashion in the late eighteenth century. However weak his evidence was, Donington's assertion has proven to be one of the most important tenets of subsequent scholarship on ornamentation. While the authors who followed Donington did manage to find better sources to support the supposed shift away from free ornamentation, they nevertheless continued to fall into the same trap: an overreliance on treatises that describe amateur practice without considering the habits of professional musicians.

Donington's tendency to rely heavily on treatises for information about ornamentation was replicated by Frederick Neumann. In his first major work, *Ornamentation in Baroque and Post-Baroque Music* (1978),<sup>19</sup> Neumann's debt to the early treatises, in particular that of C. P. E. Bach, can be seen even his organization of material.

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<sup>17</sup> Donington, *The Interpretation of Early Music*, 182.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Frederick Neumann, *Ornamentation in Baroque and Post-Baroque Music with a Special Emphasis on J.S. Bach* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978).

Compare, for example, the following table (table 2) that presents Neumann's chapter titles along with the section headings of C. P. E. Bach's chapter on ornamentation.

Table 2. Section headings from Neumann and C. P. E. Bach.

| <u>C. P. E. Bach</u>       | <u>Neumann</u>                  |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| General                    | Introduction                    |
| The Appoggiatura           | Baroque Trends of Ornamentation |
| The Trill                  | One Note-Graces                 |
| The Turn                   | The Slide                       |
| The Mordent                | The Trill                       |
| The Compound Appoggiatura  | The Compound Trill              |
| The Slide                  | The Mordent                     |
| The Snap                   | Other Small Ornaments           |
| The Elaboration of Fermate | Free Ornamentation              |

In both of these works the necessary or French ornaments like the trill, slide, etc. are each dealt with individually. Both authors also reserve a small amount of space for free ornamentation at the end of their respective treatments. It is interesting to take note of the similarity in their reasoning as to why this ornamentation should only be dealt with slightly. Bach writes, "I shall treat the latter group only briefly in connection with the performance of *fermate*. There are several reasons for this... their use is governed chiefly by taste... they are too variable to classify... in keyboard music they are usually written out... there is no real need for them."<sup>20</sup> Neumann writes "In turning our full attention to this subject, I shall attempt no more than a sketch in broad outline." Among the reasons he gives for such an exclusion Neumann states that "free ornamentation does not lend itself to the formulation of doctrines" and that we should instead rely upon "the ever-growing availability of *passaggi* written out by composers."<sup>21</sup> The ways in which Neumann's works resemble their sources undoubtedly speak to their quality, but at the same time they

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<sup>20</sup> Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, ed. and trans. William J. Mitchell (New York: Norton, 1949), 80.

<sup>21</sup> Neumann, *Ornamentation in Baroque and Post-Baroque Music*, 525.

bespeak a potential weakness and a tendency to favor information taken from documents meant for amateur readers.

In his treatments of free ornamentation Neumann offers a more nuanced reading in that he consistently divides the issue along national/ethnic lines. He generally describes French ornamentation from the time of Lully to the end of the eighteenth century as being explicitly notated and rather sparse. On the opposite side of the spectrum, in Neumann's opinion, is the Italian tradition that maintained a florid and improvisatory style of ornamentation even into the nineteenth century. For Neumann the Austro-German style of playing is situated somewhere between these two poles. As the century progressed he claims that the Germanic school gravitated toward the French habit of not adding any significant ornamentation beyond what is called for by the composer. In support of this claim Neumann primarily relies on evidence taken from the treatises of Leopold Mozart and C. P. E. Bach.<sup>22</sup> In this way Neumann continues Donington's assertion that the lush style of ornamentation of the early eighteenth century fell out of use by the century's end, but unlike Donington he does so in a more nuanced fashion in that he specifies that this shift was primarily a phenomena of the German-speaking lands. Neumann does not explicitly connect this shift to a Classical style of performance; but it should be noted that the only composers he discusses after what he calls the "new trend" away from free ornamentation are Joseph Haydn and Wolfgang Mozart.

The division between a Classical and Baroque style of ornamentation that was tacitly outlined in Neumann's writing is made explicit in Stanley Sadie and Howard Meyer

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<sup>22</sup> Frederick Neumann, *Performance Practice of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (New York: Schirmer, 1993), 510-552.

Brown's *Performance Practice* (1990).<sup>23</sup> In this work, which covers a wide range of topics in an encyclopedic fashion, the history of performance is divided, without any explicit point of division, between the Baroque and Classical eras. In his treatment of Baroque ornamentation, David Fuller relies heavily on a metaphoric comparison between Baroque ornamentation and jazz improvisation, and while this comparison will surely cause specialist in either field to cringe, it does nevertheless animate an otherwise informative discussion of ornamentation that urges liberal ornamentation for most repertoires.<sup>24</sup> The treatment of Classical ornamentation given by Robert Levin is more careful in its recommendation. Levin is one of the finest living improvisers of eighteenth century music, but his conclusions are nevertheless rather tame. In keeping with the suggestions found in the treatises of C. P. E. Bach and Leopold Mozart, Levin recommends that free ornamentation of Classical music should be reserved for only a few situations, specifically, "restatements of a movement's principal theme generically invite ornamentation, particularly in slow movements and rondos."<sup>25</sup> Outside of these situations Levin urges caution in adding any improvised ornamentation to music of the late eighteenth century. Levin does not specify any national distinctions in his article, but it is interesting to note that in his discussion the overwhelming majority of his sources and musical examples are of either German or Austrian provenance.

The ideas developed in these early studies have persisted more or less intact to the present day. An example of this continuation can be seen in the writings of Robin Stowell,

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<sup>23</sup> Stanley Sadie and Howard Meyer Brown, eds., *Performance Practice*, vol. 2, *Music After 1600* (New York: Norton, 1990).

<sup>24</sup> David Fuller, "The Performer as Composer," in *Performance Practice*, 2:117-146.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Levin, "Instrumental Ornamentation, Improvisation and Cadenzas," in *Performance Practice*, 2:273.

who addresses ornamentation in each of his many works on violin performance practice. He summarizes the situation in the eighteenth century as follows: “Italian freedom of interpretation also extended to the introduction of extempore ornamentation... Arbitrary elaboration played comparatively little part in French practice, although performers should not feel restrained from making tasteful extempore additions. The German approach was essentially a compromise of the Italian and French, but some German composers began well before 1750 to notate precisely the interpretive details of their compositions.”<sup>26</sup>

All of these readings rely, to varying extents, on Boyden’s original assumption that treatises such as those of Leopold Mozart and Geminiani were indicative of professional performance practice of this time. Based on this assumption they read the contents of the treatises as indicators of an aesthetic shift, in the German speaking lands, away from free ornamentation and towards what some call the “Classical” style of performance. As I will discuss in the following this reading is based on a fundamentally flawed assumption. While it is true that the treatises of Mozart and Geminiani contained much more information than the tutors that had preceded them, they were still quite far from describing professional performance practice, especially in regards to ornamentation.

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<sup>26</sup> Robin Stowell, *The Early Violin and Viola: A Practical Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 85.

### **Francesco Geminiani and Arcangelo Corelli**

Geminiani's treatise held for some time the distinction of being called the first violin treatise. This erroneous attribution was not fully rebuked until Boyden's work in the 1960s that shed light on the many amateur publications that came before it (see table 1). After it became clear that Geminiani's treatise was by no means the first of its kind scholars began to view it instead as the first "professional" violin treatise. In this section I will challenge that reading by considering the ways in which Geminiani's treatise was not so much a departure as it was a continuation of the trend for publishing amateur violin treatises that began in England in the late seventeenth century. Before moving on to the treatise itself it will be necessary to first consider Geminiani's connection to his well known-teacher, Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713).

Geminiani left his native Lucca for Rome in the year 1705 with the intention of studying with Corelli, who was the most widely renowned violinist of his day. Corelli enjoyed a peerless status at this time, having just published his *Sonate a violino e violone o cimbalo, op. 5* (Rome, 1700). These sonatas along with Corelli's other publications (four sets of trio sonatas and a set of concerti grossi) were considered the finest examples of their respective genres already during Corelli's lifetime. As a player Corelli dominated in a city that was home to many of Europe's leading violinists and he was so well esteemed that cardinals vied for the right to be called his patron.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> For general information on Corelli see Peter Allsop, *Arcangelo Corelli: "New Orpheus of Our Times"* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).



When Geminiani arrived in Rome he was already a very capable musician, having studied first with his father, who was in his own right an accomplished violinist, and then with the well-known Carlo Lonati of Milan. Regarding the dates of Geminiani's studies in Rome there is surprisingly little documentary evidence. Unlike most of Corelli's other pupils there is no evidence of Geminiani ever having performed in Rome. This lack of evidence suggests that if Geminiani did study with Corelli he only did so for a short period of time.<sup>28</sup> In his own descriptions of his time in Rome Geminiani seems to have inflated the truth. This can be seen in the many second-hand accounts that are given by his students, critics, and early biographers, where he is frequently describe as being "one of the most distinguished of his [Corelli's] scholars,"<sup>29</sup> an extension of the truth that was most likely motivated by Geminiani's desire to connect himself to such a celebrated violinist.<sup>30</sup> Toward the end of his life, after his celebrity had already been established, Geminiani began to describe his time in Rome differently. In a private conversation that was remembered by Thomas Twining, Geminiani describes his interactions with Corelli as consisting of only a few meetings without referencing any kind of extended tutelage, a telling that is more likely closer to the truth.<sup>31</sup> Whatever the actual nature of Geminiani's relationship to Corelli, we know that in traveling to Rome Geminiani acquired the ability to cast himself as a pupil of Corelli, an asset that undoubtedly advanced his professional prospects.

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<sup>28</sup> Enrico Careri, *Francesco Geminiani: Life and Works and Thematic Catalogue* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 5-7.

<sup>29</sup> Charles Burney, *A General History of Music From the Earliest Ages to the Present Period*, ed. Frank Mercer, 2 vols. (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1945), 2:445.

<sup>30</sup> Careri, *Francesco Geminiani*, 46-54.

<sup>31</sup> Twining's correspondence is reproduced in Enrico Careri, "The Correspondence between Burney and Twining about Corelli and Geminiani." *Music & Letters* 72, no. 1 (1991): 38-47.

After his time in Rome Geminiani acquired his first professional positions, first as a replacement for his father as a violinist in the Cappella Palatina in Lucca and then in the more respected court of Naples, where he was initially appointed as director of the orchestra. Regarding what actually occurred during Geminiani's time in Naples we have little evidence. A secondhand anecdote from Burney tells us that Geminiani was so incapable a time-keeper that he was demoted to the rank of violist.<sup>32</sup> Whether or not this was the case is unclear. What we do know is that Geminiani could not make the living he intended in his native land. As a result he followed a path that so many of his compatriots had taken before him: he sought his fortune in the more prosperous cities of Northern Europe.

Geminiani set off for English shores in 1714 and met a very welcoming public. The extent of the English infatuation with Geminiani's playing was remembered by John Hawkins as follows: "In the year 1714 he came to England, where in a short time he so recommended himself by his exquisite performance, that all who professed to understand or love music, were captivated at the hearing him; and among the nobility were many who severally laid claim to the honour of being his patrons."<sup>33</sup> These initial successes in London were in no small way dependent upon Geminiani's connection to the legacy of Corelli, whose publications were then greatly esteemed in England.<sup>34</sup> In accounts of Geminiani or Corelli from this time one is scarcely mentioned without the other.<sup>35</sup> A typical example of this can be seen in the following account given by Geminiani's pupil Charles Avison in

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<sup>32</sup> Enrico Careri, "Per una biografia di Francesco Geminiani (1687-1762)," *Rivista italiana di musicologia* 23 (1988): 205.

<sup>33</sup> John Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music*, ed. Othmar Wessely, 2 vols. (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1969), 2:847.

<sup>34</sup> Allsop, *Arcangelo Corelli*, 190-192.

<sup>35</sup> Careri, *Francesco Geminiani*, 46-58.

which he cites the concertos of both Corelli and Geminiani as examples of how the genre should be treated as opposed to concertos in what he calls “the rapid style,” presumably referring to gallant music. In his opinion the music spoke for itself, “If any person doubt the force of this truth, he may easily try it by experiment. Let him attend to the concerto of Corelli or Geminiani performed immediately after one of those tumultuous pieces, I flatter myself he will need no fuller demonstration.”<sup>36</sup>

Geminiani emphasized his connection to Corelli quite overtly in his first set of twelve solo sonatas that was published in 1716 as his opus 1. In this set Geminiani follows the model of Corelli’s twelve solo sonatas, op. 5 quite closely.<sup>37</sup> The resemblance between the two is clearly displayed when one compares the opening movements of both works (Figures 1 and 2). Both are set in the bright and resonant key of D major, they both make use of many rhapsodic shifts of tempo, and finally they are both written in a quasi-improvisatory style.

In the years following the publication of his first set of sonatas Geminiani continued to emphasize his connection to Corelli and to seek out the patronage of noble benefactors. To this end he published an arrangement of the first six sonatas of Corelli’s op. 5 as concertos as well as two sets of concertos of his own composition that enjoyed considerable success. These attempts eventually resulted in Geminiani being offered a position as Master and Composer of State Music in Ireland in 1728, a position that he declined. According to Hawkins, Geminiani could not fill the position because it would have

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<sup>36</sup> Charles Avison, *Charles Avison’s Essay on Musical Expression with Related Writings by William Hayes and Charles Avison*, ed. Pierre Dubois (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2004), 182.

<sup>37</sup> Careri, *Francesco Geminiani*, 13, 84-95.

Figure 1. Arcangelo Corelli, Sonata I in D Major, Op. 5 (Rome, 1700).<sup>38</sup>



required him to renounce his Catholic faith.<sup>39</sup> Whether or not this was Geminiani's sole reason for declining the position has recently been called into doubt. Enrico Careri attributes Geminiani's decision to pass over the position to a desire to "avoid the limitations that regular service might impose."<sup>40</sup> Whatever the reason for Geminiani's decision, this moment marked a turning point in his career. After this point Geminiani more and more undertook business ventures that he hoped would result in profit rather than trying to increase his reputation with the hopes of securing steady employment.

<sup>38</sup> Arcangelo Corelli, *Sonate a violino e violone o cimbalo, op. 5* (Rome, 1700), International Music Scores Library Project/Petrucchi Music Library: Free Public Domain Sheet Music, Accessed March 19, 2017, [http://ks.imslp.net/files/imglnks/usimg/f/fb/IMSLP74741-PMLP28348-Corelli-\\_12\\_Sonatas\\_Op\\_5.pdf](http://ks.imslp.net/files/imglnks/usimg/f/fb/IMSLP74741-PMLP28348-Corelli-_12_Sonatas_Op_5.pdf).

<sup>39</sup> Hawkins, *A General History*, 848.

<sup>40</sup> Careri, *Francesco Geminiani*, 21.

Figure 2. Francesco Geminiani, Sonata I in D Major, Op. 1 (London, 1716).<sup>41</sup>



His first definite step in this direction came at the end of 1731 when he put on a series of subscription concerts, the proceeds of which he used to fund his publishing endeavors. As a further means of raising capital Geminiani also started dealing in paintings, which according to Burney, helped him to fund his travels.<sup>42</sup>

When Geminiani republished his op. 1 in 1739 he certainly had the needs of his new customers in mind. The purpose stated on the title page of this republication was to include “the ornaments of the adagios, and the finger numbers for the shifting of the

<sup>41</sup> Francesco Geminiani, *Sonate a violino, e violone, e cimballo, op. 1* (London, 1716), International Music Scores Library Project/Petrucchi Music Library: Free Public Domain Sheet Music, Accessed March 19, 2017, [http://ks.imslp.net/files/imglnks/usimg/8/8d/IMSLP187123-PMLP150456-Sonatas\\_op.1-Geminiani.pdf](http://ks.imslp.net/files/imglnks/usimg/8/8d/IMSLP187123-PMLP150456-Sonatas_op.1-Geminiani.pdf).

<sup>42</sup> Burney, *A General History*, 993-994.

hand.”<sup>43</sup> From this description one might assume that Geminiani was following the lead of his teacher who had in 1710 brought out a republication of his op. 5 in which “one has added the ornaments of the adagios to this work.”<sup>44</sup> Although these two descriptions may suggest that we should expect a similar treatment there is a telling difference: in Geminiani’s new edition he added not only the ornaments but also the finger numbers. This suggests that Geminiani’s new edition, unlike Corelli’s, was geared toward non-professional customers who would have need of such information. In fact it is one of the first non-pedagogical publications for violin to include such a rudimentary convenience.<sup>45</sup>

Beyond the inclusion of finger numbers one can also notice a significant stylistic difference between the ornamentation included in Corelli and Geminiani’s respective republications. In the republication of Corelli’s op. 5 a florid style of ornamentation predominates. This can be seen in the following example (Figure 3) in which the composed bass and treble line occupy the bottom two staves and the ornamentation as it might have been played is represented on the top staff.

The ornamentation represented here would have been well beyond the abilities of the typical amateur player. In addition to the technical requirements placed on the player one must also do a great deal of interpretation as the ornamentation, here and in many other places throughout the collection, often adds up to more time than the given measure would allow.

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<sup>43</sup> Francesco Geminiani, *Le prime sonate a violin, e basso* (1739; repr., New York: Performers’ Facsimiles, 2005), title page.

<sup>44</sup> Arcangelo Corelli, *Sonate a violino e violone o cimbalò, op. 5* (1710; repr., New York: Performers’ Facsimiles, 1999), title page.

<sup>45</sup> Peter Walls, “Violin Fingering in the 18th Century,” *Early Music* 12, no. 3 (1984): 306.

Figure 3. Arcangelo Corelli, Sonata II in D Minor, Op. 5, Second Edition (Amsterdam, 1710).<sup>46</sup>



The player must also decide how these passages should be executed, whether they should be played evenly as notated or instead with expressive rhythmic unevenness. These requirements along with other more specific difficulties that arise throughout the set make Corelli's ornamented adagios accessible only to professional violinists.

This edition of Corelli's sonatas was well known in England shortly after its initial publication, and it was in part this very edition that had so endeared the English public to Corelli's music.<sup>47</sup> It is surprising then to note how substantially Geminiani diverged from his teacher's model when it came time to produce a new edition of his own op. 1. Figures 4

<sup>46</sup> Arcangelo Corelli, *Sonate a violino e violone o cimbalo*, op. 5 (1710; repr., New York: Performers' Facsimiles, 1999).

<sup>47</sup> Allsop, *Arcangelo Corelli*, 192.

and 5 present the same excerpt first in the first edition without ornaments and then in the second edition with the ornaments included.

Figure 4. Francesco Geminiani, Sonata VII in C Minor, Op. 1, First Edition (London, 1716).<sup>48</sup>

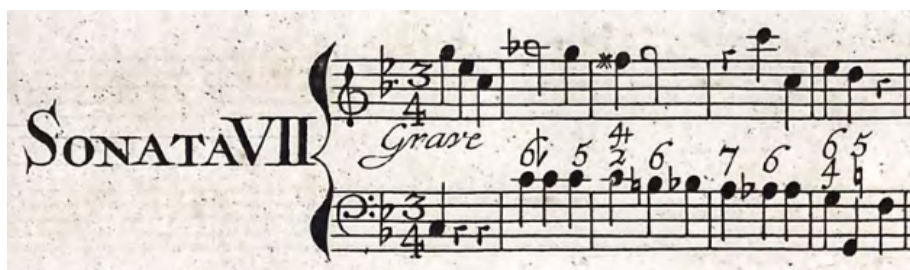


Figure 5. Francesco Geminiani, Sonata VII in C Minor, Op. 1, Second Edition (London, 1739).<sup>49</sup>



Here as in the rest of his updated edition Geminiani adds only a few ornaments, most of which belong to what was often described as the necessary or French type of ornamentation; gone are the fantastic tiratas that animate Corelli's line. Such a stark divergence from Corelli's well known style of ornamentation is surprising given

<sup>48</sup> Francesco Geminiani, *Sonate a violino, e violone, e cimballo, op. 1* (London, 1716), International Music Scores Library Project/Petrucchi Music Library: Free Public Domain Sheet Music, Accessed March 19, 2017, [http://ks.imslp.net/files/imglnks/usimg/8/8d/IMSLP187123-PMMLP150456-Sonatas\\_op.1-Geminiani.pdf](http://ks.imslp.net/files/imglnks/usimg/8/8d/IMSLP187123-PMMLP150456-Sonatas_op.1-Geminiani.pdf).

<sup>49</sup> Francesco Geminiani, *Le prime sonate a violin, e basso* (1739; repr., New York: Performers' Facsimiles, 2005).



Geminiani's repeated efforts early in his career to connect himself to his teacher's legacy through his publications. His choice to include finger numbers and to present a much simpler style of ornamentation must have originated in a desire to produce a work that would be of use to amateur English musicians.

Geminiani's actual rendering of these sonatas was in all likelihood much more extensive than is indicated in the second edition of his op. 1. It would be quite odd to assume that Geminiani, one of the most capable violinists of his generation, would only employ a vocabulary of ornaments that did not exceed the ability of the typical amateur. The most extant description of Geminiani's playing comes from Hawkins, who describes Geminiani's performance as containing "all of the graces and elegancies of melody, all the powers that can engage attention, or that render the passions of the hearer subservient to the will of the artist."<sup>50</sup> In addition to this description Hawkins provides an example in the form of Geminiani's written-out ornamentation of a Corelli sonata that he claims offers "the best specimen that can be given of the style and manner of his execution."<sup>51</sup> In this excerpt (example 1) I have added Corelli's composed melody on the middle staff, which is not present in the original for reference.

The style of this excerpt is much more florid and more professional than the ornamentation found in the second edition of Geminiani's op. 1. It is interesting to note that in choosing examples to give as representations of Geminiani's style of playing Hawkins passed over the second edition of his op. 1, which he discusses elsewhere

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<sup>50</sup> Hawkins, *A General History*, 904.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

Example 1. Geminiani's ornaments for Corelli's Sonata IX in A Major, Op. 5, mm. 1-4.<sup>52</sup>



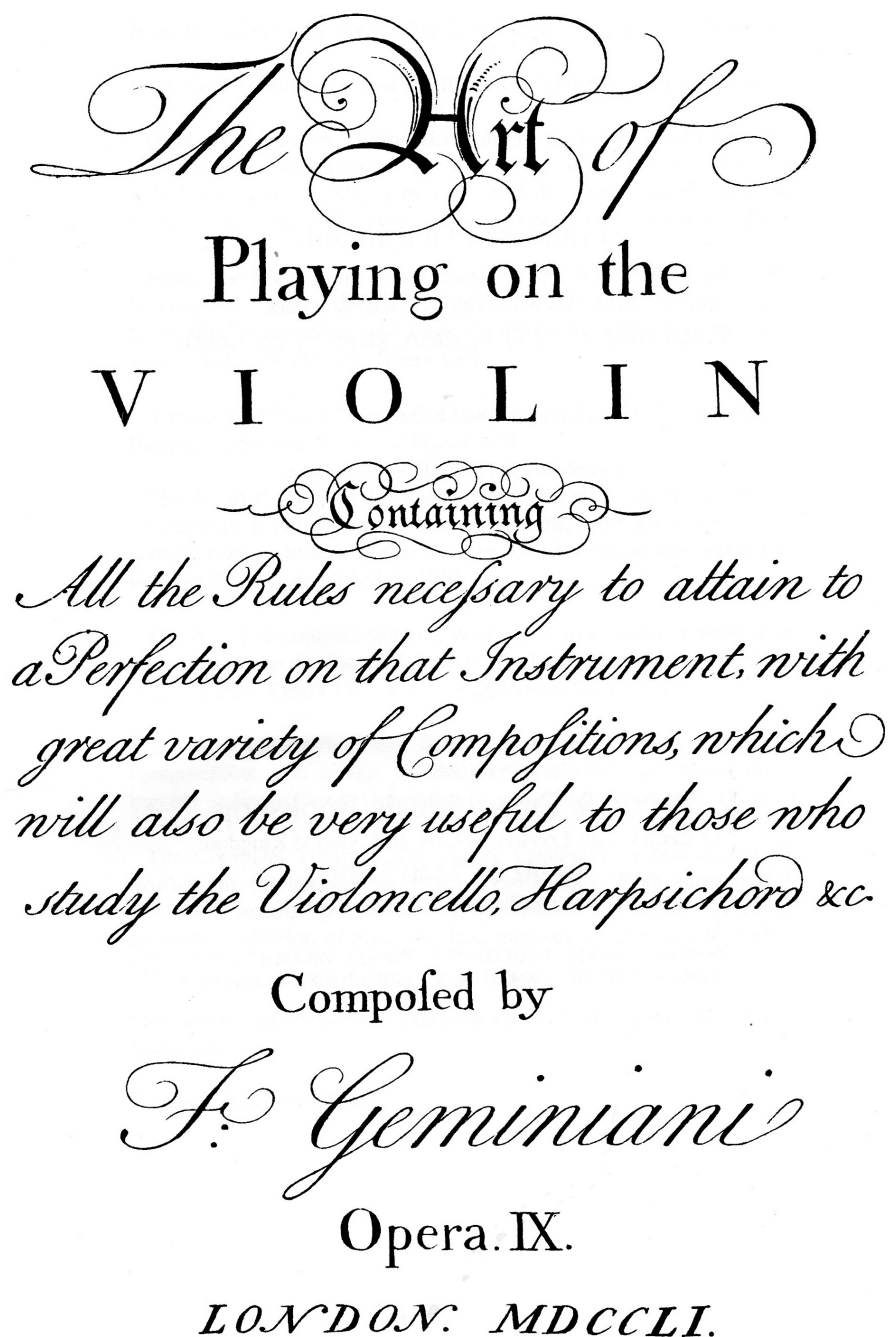
in his biography of Geminiani, choosing instead to use Geminiani's ornamented version of Corelli's op. 5, presumably because it offered a better example of Geminiani's typical method of performance.

The title page of Geminiani's *The Art of Playing the Violin* (London, 1751) makes a subtle but important statement in its conspicuous lack of a dedication (figure 6). This detail sets the treatise apart from contemporary treatises, all of which were dedicated to patrons. Had Geminiani included such a dedication he could have expected to receive the customary

<sup>52</sup> Hawkins, *A General History*, 904.

gift from the dedicatee. His decision to forgo the opportunity of a potential reward shows that at this point in his career he had by and large abandoned the prospect of noble

Figure 6. Title page from *The Art of Playing on the Violin*.<sup>53</sup>




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<sup>53</sup> Francesco Geminiani, *The Art of Playing on the Violin* (London, 1751; facs., London: Travis & Emery, 2009).

patronage.<sup>54</sup> It is also interesting to note that after this point Geminiani published only explicitly pedagogical works, a decision that was likely motivated by a desire to turn a profit rather than establish a reputation as he had endeavored to do with the publications from the early part of his career.

Within his treatise Geminiani provides a table (figure 7) that “contains all the ornaments of expression, necessary to the playing in a good taste.”<sup>55</sup> The ornaments are of a surprisingly limited range and all belong to the necessary or French type. These are the ornaments that would have been well within the abilities of Geminiani’s amateur readers. Unlike the more prolix ornamentation that is preserved in the second edition of Corelli’s op. 5, their execution does not require anything more than the proper interpretation of a given symbol.

Peter Walls has suggested that the ornamentation Geminiani describes in his treatise and that he demonstrates in the second edition of his op. 1 is indicative of a shift in his taste away from his Italian provenance toward a more French inclination.<sup>56</sup> Indeed these works were published during a time when Geminiani was spending much of his time in Paris and many of the slow movements closely resemble the French style that was popular at that time. However, this change in publication habits does not necessarily reflect a correlative shift in his performance style. Accounts given by those who heard Geminiani perform during this time tend to describe a performer who frequently

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<sup>54</sup> Geminiani did not include dedications in his next three publications, *Guida Armonia* (1752), *Art of Accompaniment* (1756), and *Harmonic Miscellany* (1758). He resumed the practice of dedication shortly before his death, honoring the Countess of Charleville on the title page of his last publication, *The Art of Playing the Guitar* (1760).

<sup>55</sup> Francesco Geminiani, *The Art of Playing the Violin* (1751; repr., London: Travis & Emery, 2009), 6.

<sup>56</sup> Peter Walls, “‘Ill-Compliments and Arbitrary Taste’?: Geminiani’s Directions for Performers,” *Early Music* 14, no. 2 (1986): 223-224.

Figure 7. Ornament Table from *The Art of Playing on the Violin*.<sup>57</sup>

indulged in a more active style of ornamentation than his publications would suggest. A prime example can be seen in the following review taken from Hubert Leblanc's *Défense de la basse de viole contre les enterprises du violon et la pretensions du violoncel* (1740), in which he describes hearing Geminiani and his countryman and fellow Corelli student Giovanni Battista Somis. In this excerpt neither violinist is referred to by name. Rather the two are described by their geographic location in relation to France.

Thus there were set up two champions- one from beyond the Alps [Somis], and the other from beyond the sea [Geminiani], who were transcendent. They were elevated as the *non plus ultra* of those who could make music

<sup>57</sup> Francesco Geminiani, *The Art of Playing on the Violin* (London, 1751; facs., London: Travis & Emery, 2009), 26.

with the fingers and the bow... Their coming was made known like that of hornets and the posters announced a concert where their musical eloquence should inveigh against us French, like that of Demosthenes against Aeschines.<sup>58</sup>

Further on in his discussion of the music of Corelli's pupils, Leblanc is more specific about his objections to the Italian style. He complains that it "is stuffed with innumerable notes in a small space,"<sup>59</sup> a complaint which was often lodged against the Italian school.

Reviews such as this suggest that even after he began to publish in a simple, French style Geminiani still maintained a fiery Italian style of performance. If he were to publish a document, as his teacher Corelli had, that actually represented his performance style then it would only have been of use to a limited few. The only advantage that Geminiani would have had to gain from such an endeavor would have been to increase his reputation in the hopes of securing patronage, an aspiration that seemed to be of no interest to Geminiani in the later part of his career. Taken together these considerations can help us to better understand Geminiani's publications. They show us that the publications that he brought out later in life and the ornamentation described therein were not meant to constitute a disavowal of the style of Corelli nor were they an embrace of the French style; rather they were an attempt to capitalize on the opportunity presented by the surge of amateurs who took interest in the violin in the first half of the eighteenth century.

In the following section I will consider the similar case of Leopold Mozart who published his treatise five years after Geminiani had published his. This inevitably raises

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<sup>58</sup> Complete English translation available in Barbara G. Jackson, "Hubert Le Blanc's *Defense de la Viole*," *Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America* 11 (1974): 29.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

the question of contact. Did Mozart know Geminiani's treatise, and if so is there any clear influence from Geminiani in Mozart's treatise? The answer is most likely no. When Mozart published his violin treatise he claims to be the first to have done so, stating in the preface that he "wondered greatly that nothing had been published as a guide to so popular and, for the greater part of music, so indispensable an instrument as the violin."<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, there do not seem to be any clear borrowings from Geminiani in Mozart's treatise that would suggest a familiarity. Taken together, this evidence indicates that Mozart did not know Geminiani's treatise when he wrote his own. That being said, both authors were working in very similar situations and as a result produced treatises that bore a great semblance to each other. As I will discuss below, Mozart, like Geminiani, was a staunch advocate for the free Italian style of ornamentation in professional contexts and yet, decided in his own treatise, to describe primarily the necessary or French style of ornamentation that would have been within the abilities of his largely amateur readership.

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<sup>60</sup> Mozart, *Treatise*, 7. Mozart's claim to primacy seems to be grounded in two criteria: publication and the extent of material that is covered. Mozart knew a number of substantial violin treatises that circulated in manuscript before his treatise was published but apparently considered his to be unprecedented because it was published. Mozart was also well aware that others had published tutors for the violin before him. He even asked his publisher Johann Jacob Lotter to send him a copy of the elementary German-language violin tutor *Rudimenta Panduristae* by Georg Christoph Wagenseil (Augsburg, 1751) to consult as he was writing his own treatise (letter to J.G. Lotter, August 28, 1755). Thus it seems that Mozart considered his treatise to be the first of its kind because it was the first published treatise to deal extensively with the violin.

### **The Treatises of Leopold Mozart and Giuseppe Tartini**

When Mozart was writing his treatise, he drew upon the works of many authors who had come before him. For his chapters on ornamentation he relied particularly upon Giuseppe Tartini's *Regole per ben suonar il violino*. This treatise, which began circulation c. 1752,<sup>61</sup> was hand-copied by Tartini's students for most of its early history and dealt specifically with ornamentation, without addressing other, more fundamental topics that would have already been well under the fingers of Tartini's professional students. Mozart's treatise, on the other hand, was aimed at an amateur market and covered topics ranging from the very basics of violin playing to more refined issues relating to taste and ornamentation. Both of these treatises have played a huge role in modern attempts at reconstructing the ornamentation of the eighteenth century. Oftentimes Tartini is portrayed as being the last author of the high Baroque and Mozart is held up as one of the first authors to describe what has been deemed the Classical style of performance. In the following I will challenge this reading by considering the way in which the needs of their respective readers caused these two violinists, who otherwise had a great deal in common, to produce very different accounts of ornamentation in the middle of the eighteenth

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<sup>61</sup> Little is known about the early history of this document, which circulated in manuscript for some time before eventually being published in France in 1771. Erwin Jacobi deduces the date of 1752 from the following evidence: "Definite proof that the 'Traité' was in existence before 1756 is provided by Leopold Mozart's incorporation of much of Tartini's 'Traité' in his violin tutor of that year... on the other hand, one can be fairly certain that Johann Joachim Quantz did not know Tartini's treatise when he published his flute tutor in 1752." For more information see: Giuseppe Tartini, *Traité des Agréments de la Musique*, ed. Erwin R. Jacobi, trans. Cuthbert Girdlestone (Celle: Hermann Moecke Verlag, 1961).



century. Because Mozart's treatise has had a much more profound influence on modern studies of the subject I will take his treatise as a starting point.

Within Mozart's chapters on ornamentation we find descriptions concerning the execution of various ornaments and how that execution may vary in a given situation. For example a trill is initially defined as an "alternation of two neighboring notes which are either a whole-tone or a half-tone apart."<sup>62</sup> Later he describes specific varieties of the trill that may be executed in a given situation: "If a trill occurs in the middle of a passage... then not only is an appoggiatura made before the trill, but the appoggiatura is held through half the value of the note."<sup>63</sup> Along with these detailed descriptions concerning the execution of the ornaments Mozart gives many an austere warning to his reader, lest he or she should become "one of those unmusicianly violinists who wish to befrill each note."<sup>64</sup> He even goes so far as to exclaim "Enough! Let us make no embellishments, or only such as spoil neither the harmony nor melody."<sup>65</sup> Modern scholars have taken this evidence as cause to place Mozart on one side of an historical shift: "The nascent antidiminution movement, manifested in the stance of Gluck, C.P.E. Bach, and Leopold Mozart, was a portent of weighty changes that were to come to full fruition in the Classical era."<sup>66</sup> In this reading Mozart advocates a new style of ornamentation that favors local, French-style ornaments, such as the trill or the appoggiatura, over the Italian style, which includes a less specific corpus of fantastic, improvisatory figures.

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<sup>62</sup> Mozart, *Treatise*, 186.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 190.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 180.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>66</sup> Neumann, *Performance Practice*, 540.

The problem with this approach is that it assumes that Mozart's treatise fully represents his opinions on playing the violin and that the advice that he gives for aspiring violinists can be directly applied to questions of professional performance practice. Mozart stated quite clearly in his preface that this was not the case. In a discussion of the deficiencies of his treatise, he states that "there is still much to be dealt with... but what are these things? Such matters as belong to the lighting of a beacon to guide the weak judgment of many concert performers and, by means of rules, to form the good taste of an intelligent soloist."<sup>67</sup> It is important that we keep this in mind when reading Mozart's treatise. It reminds us that the rules and the warnings that we find were not intended for professional violinists. Rather they were, like the rest of the treatise, meant for "pupils and the benefit of teachers."<sup>68</sup> This means that Mozart's treatise must be understood as only a partial statement of his opinions on playing the violin.

Luckily for us Mozart left an extensive record of his opinions on matters relating to professional performance in his letters to other musicians. Of the many who were reckoned in this forum one violinist rose above the others: Pietro Nardini (1722-1793). After hearing Nardini for the first time Mozart wrote, "In beauty, clarity, evenness of tone, and cantabile taste, no better can be heard."<sup>69</sup> After this first encounter in 1763 Mozart had many more opportunities to hear Nardini in various settings.<sup>70</sup> These interactions,

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<sup>67</sup> Mozart, *Treatise*, 8. Mozart, like many other writers on music in the eighteenth century, uses the term "taste" (*Geschmack*) to refer to both the aesthetic judgment of music and the ornamentation that necessarily results from that assessment.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Leopold Mozart to Lorenz Hagenauer, Salzburg, 11 July 1763, *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, ed. Wilhelm A. Bauer, Otto Erich Deutsch, and Joseph Heinz Eibl (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1962-1975), 1:77. German original: "in der Schönheit, Reinigkeit, Gleichheit des Tones und im Singbaren Geschmacke nichts Schöners kan gehört werden."

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 1:74, 1:331, 1:332, 1:338, 1:388.

which ranged from formal performances to more intimate chamber music making, allowed Mozart ample opportunity to become well acquainted with Nardini's style of performance. We can gain some insight into the type of ornamentation that Nardini would have employed by consulting the many adagios that he left with written-out ornamentation. In the following excerpt from his Sonata in E-flat (Figure 8) the composed melody is presented on the top staff, below which is an example of one way that Nardini might have rendered it in performance.

Figure 8. Pietro Nardini, Sonata in E-flat , Adagio.<sup>71</sup>



The ornamentation recorded here resembles the descriptions and examples that Mozart gives for what he calls “discretionary ornamentation.”<sup>72</sup> In his treatise Mozart treats this

<sup>71</sup> Pietro Nardini, *VII sonates pour violon et basse avec les adagio brodés*, ed. Enrico Gatti (Bologna: Arnaldo Forni Editore, 2007), 2.

<sup>72</sup> Mozart's term for this type of ornamentation, “*willkürlichen Auszierungen*,” is usually translated as “arbitrary ornamentation” in English. I have chosen instead to use the term “discretionary” to highlight what I perceive to be the intended meaning and to remove the negative connotations of the term “arbitrary.”

style only slightly. In contrast to his treatment of the other ornaments Mozart offers very little verbal instruction regarding the execution of these ornaments opting instead to provide examples as means of an explanation such as the following example of a tirata (Example 2).

Example 2. Tirata example from *Versuch einer gründlichen Violinschule*.<sup>73</sup>



Nardini taking leave from his employment in Florence to comfort his teacher through his dying months. This extensive and continued personal relationship with his teacher (which also was far from common) attests to the profound influence that Tartini had on Nardini. In Nardini's compositions and in his performance style the influence of his teacher is quite clear.

The following example (Example 3) is taken from Tartini's treatise on ornamentation; it demonstrates how one might ornament a common cadential progression. I have given the composed line as well as the first three (out of eight) suggested methods of ornamenting such a passage.

Example 3. Ornamentation examples from *Traité des Agréments de la Musique*.<sup>75</sup>

The image displays four musical examples of a cadential progression in common time, each consisting of a treble and bass staff. The bass line is consistent across all examples, starting on G2 and moving down stepwise to D2. The treble line variations are as follows:

- Composed Line:** Treble staff shows a simple melodic line: G4, A4, B4, A4, G4.
- Ornamentation Type One:** Treble staff shows the same notes as the composed line, but each note is preceded by a mordent ornament.
- Ornamentation Type Two:** Treble staff shows the same notes as the composed line, but each note is preceded by a mordent ornament.
- Ornamentation Type Three:** Treble staff shows the same notes as the composed line, but each note is preceded by a mordent ornament.

In his treatise Tartini suggests that students should first learn to ornament simple cadential patterns like this and then apply those same techniques to other bass motions “in progressions of the fundamental bass which do not form cadence.”<sup>76</sup> An example of such a

<sup>75</sup> Tartini, *Traité*, 115.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 107.

style of ornamentation can be seen in the following excerpt from an ornamented Adagio by Nardini (example 4). In this example the composed violin line is on the highest staff, below which is the ornamentation as it would have been performed, and on the bottom is the bass.

Example 4. Pietro Nardini, Sonata in E-flat, Adagio, mm. 9-10.<sup>77</sup>

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a violin and bass duet. Each system consists of three staves. The top staff is the composed violin line, the middle staff shows the ornamentation as it would have been performed, and the bottom staff is the bass line. The key signature is E-flat major (three flats). The first system shows a melodic line in the violin with a trill ornament in the middle staff. The second system shows a more complex ornamentation with multiple trills and grace notes in the middle staff.

In both of these examples we can observe a florid style of ornamentation that incorporates many figures that resemble the discretionary ornamentation described in Mozart's treatise. To observe the likeness between Tartini and Nardini in sharper contrast we can compare their style with the following example (Example 5) from Jean-Marie Leclair (1697-1764) who was one of the most eminent French violinists of the eighteenth century.

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<sup>77</sup> Pietro Nardini, *VII sonates pour violon et basse avec les adagio brodés*, ed. Enrico Gatti (Bologna: Arnaldo Forni Editore, 2007), 4.

Example 5. Jean-Marie Leclair, Sonata in E minor, Op. 9, no. 2, Andante, mm. 1-4.<sup>78</sup>



In this excerpt Leclair calls for only small, local ornaments, such as the trill and the appoggiatura, without any instances of what Mozart would label as discretionary Italian ornamentation.

The inheritance of the Italian school, as propagated by Tartini, was a tradition that Mozart and Nardini shared. We can see evidence of this influence in Mozart's treatise, where, during his discussion of the execution of accompanied trills, he refers to Tartini as "one of the most celebrated violinists of our time."<sup>79</sup> In addition to this direct reference much of the wording and the musical examples found in Mozart's chapters on ornamentation follow Tartini's model very closely.<sup>80</sup> Some of his examples even seem to have been borrowed directly from Tartini's treatise. Compare, for example, their respective descriptions of the appoggiatura.

There are two kinds of grace notes [appoggiaturas]. One kind descends to the main note; the other rises to it: I shall speak first of those that descend;

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<sup>78</sup> Jean-Marie Leclair, *Second livre de sonates a violon seul avec la basse continue*, op. 9 (1743; repr., New York: Performers' Facsimiles, 2009).

<sup>79</sup> Mozart, *Treatise*, 201.

<sup>80</sup> Alec Hyatt King, note to 1985 reprint of Leopold Mozart, *A Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing*, trans. Editha Kocker, 2nd ed. (1948; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

they are the most natural and the most pleasing. Two kinds of descending grace notes must be distinguished; to wit, long or sustained grace notes, and short, passing ones.<sup>81</sup>

There are both descending and ascending appoggiature, which, however, are divided into accentuated appoggiature and passing appoggiature. The descending appoggiature are the most natural... The descending appoggiature are of two kinds: namely, the long and the short.<sup>82</sup>

The resemblance between these two descriptions suggests that Mozart was either borrowing from Tartini or was in comprehensive agreement with him. After examining Mozart's musical examples the former seems most likely, as can be seen in the following examples of trills from both treatises (Example 6 and 7).

Example 6. Giuseppe Tartini, trill examples from *Traité des Agréments de la Musique*.<sup>83</sup>



<sup>81</sup> Tartini, *Traité*, 65-66.

<sup>82</sup> Mozart, *Treatise*, 167.

<sup>83</sup> Tartini, *Traité*, 74-75.



Example 7. Leopold Mozart, trill examples from *Versuch einer gründlichen Violinschule*.<sup>84</sup>



The only difference between these two examples is the rhythmic notation of the trill. In his example Mozart shows the acceleration whereas Tartini chooses to describe the acceleration in a subsequent example (not shown). Aside from that small detail, it is remarkable that Mozart chose to use the same two pitches that Tartini had to demonstrate the two types of trills.

In his description of the vibrato Mozart also follows Tartini's lead quite directly. Like Tartini, Mozart divides the vibrato into three types: slow, rapid, and increasing. Mozart also chooses to use a very similar graphic of "U" shapes in different sizes to indicate the different types of oscillation, as can be seen in the following examples from both treatises (Figures 8 and 9).

<sup>84</sup> Mozart, *Treatise*, 187.

Figure 8. Leopold Mozart, vibrato example from the first edition of *Versuch einer gründlichen Violinschule* (Augsburg, 1756), page 244.

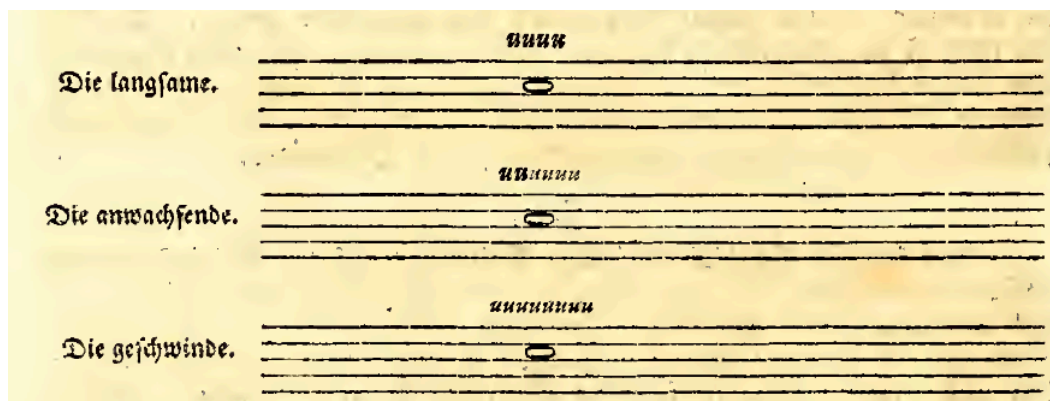
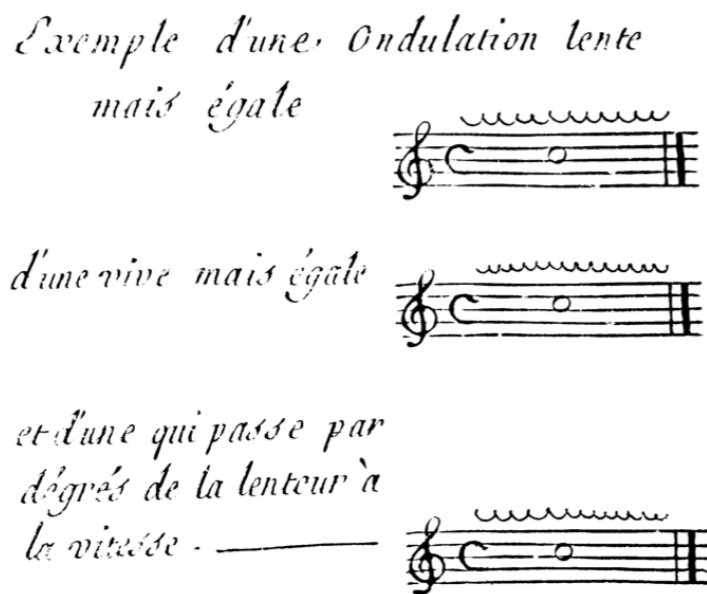


Figure 9. Giuseppe Tartini, vibrato example from the first printed edition of *Traité des Agréments de la Musique* (Paris, 1771), page 29.<sup>85</sup>



Apparent borrowings such as these suggest that Mozart was using Tartini's treatise as a resource for the construction of his own and that Mozart was indebted to, or at least in agreement with, the Italian tradition on issues relating to ornamentation. Nevertheless, the

<sup>85</sup> The use of a "U" shaped graphic and the division of the vibrato into three categories also appears in earlier, hand copied versions of Tartini's treatise.

affinity between Mozart and the Italian school has recently been called into doubt. Expanding upon what he perceives to be an historical shift away from free, Italian-style ornamentation Frederick Neumann calls into focus Mozart's point of departure from Tartini's model: "The shift in opinion [away from discretionary Italian-style ornamentation] is even more palpable with Leopold Mozart because he so clearly parts company on this issue with Tartini, whom he follows so closely in all matters of small ornaments. Leopold has little use for diminutions and mentions only the standardized small patterns."<sup>86</sup> What Neumann is pointing out is that Tartini's treatise contains a large and detailed discussion of free, Italian-style ornamentation that is not replicated in Mozart's treatise.<sup>87</sup> This leads him to the conclusion that by choosing not to include such a discussion Mozart was tacitly condemning the use of such ornamentation. Furthermore he points out that Mozart explicitly condemns their use in passages such as the following: "All these decorations are used, however, only when playing a solo, and then very sparingly, at the right time, and only for variety in often-repeated and similar passages."<sup>88</sup> Taken together this evidence produces a convincing argument for a split on the issue of free ornamentation between Mozart and the Italian school of Tartini and Nardini. However, this schism appears less well defined when we try to reconcile it with Mozart's outright appreciation for Nardini's quite lush style of ornamentation and when we consider some of Mozart's other remarks, in particular, his stated intention to remedy his treatise by

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<sup>86</sup> Neumann, *Performance Practices*, 540.

<sup>87</sup> Tartini, *Traité*, 94-125.

<sup>88</sup> Mozart, *Treatise*, 214.

producing another work that properly addresses the subject of the ornamentation of soloists.<sup>89</sup>

In order to better understand how these seemingly contradictory opinions might be reconciled into a more cohesive aesthetic, we must consider the significant difference in the intended purposes of the documents from which we are forming our account. When Tartini was writing his treatise his intention was to provide an aid to his students, most of whom were, like Nardini, already accomplished violinists when they came to study with him. Because Tartini's treatise was intended for a limited readership of professionals, it circulated only in manuscript and did not appear in print until 1771, a year after the author's death.<sup>90</sup> Mozart's treatise, on the other hand, was always intended for publication and was conceived from the beginning as being produced "not only for the use of pupils and the benefit of teachers, but because I desire earnestly to convert all those who, by their bad teaching, are making failures of their pupils."<sup>91</sup> The two could not have been further apart in their intended readership: Tartini's treatise was meant for the most accomplished violinists in Europe while Mozart's was intended for the uninformed or the misinformed.

When reading Mozart's treatise it is essential to keep his intentions in mind. If we consider Mozart's treatise alone, or in conjunction with other foundational treatises, like those of Quantz and C. P. E. Bach, then we are recreating an incomplete picture of music

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<sup>89</sup> Mozart, *Treatise*, 8, 225. In the closing words of the 1787 edition of his treatise Mozart reiterates his concerns about what he considered to be the greatest deficiency of his treatise. This time, at the end of his life, it reads more as an opportunity long abandoned. "I will therefore close here, but will repeat that which I said at the end of the first edition of this treatise, namely, that much remains to be said for the benefit of our worthy platform artists, and that I shall perhaps venture to bestow upon the musical world another book. I should unfailingly have so ventured, had not my travels hindered me."

<sup>90</sup> Tartini, *Traité*, 39-40.

<sup>91</sup> Mozart, *Treatise*, 8.

making in the eighteenth century. Treatises like Mozart's describe the performance practice of a wide range of amateur musicians in the mid-eighteenth century. What they do not do, or do not do very much is describe the performance practice of professionals or, as Mozart called them, "platform artists." So when we come to questions of taste in ornamentation in professional genres, such as the adagio of a solo sonata or a concerto, it is necessary to look further. In this chapter I have argued that the music and writings of Tartini and his student Nardini can provide such a resource. Tartini's treatise and Nardini's ornamented adagios are invaluable supplements for the interpretation of Mozart's writing. They both offer invaluable insights into the professional considerations that are explicitly lacking in Mozart's treatise. Considering these documents in this way, as complementary rather than contradictory accounts, allows us to understand Mozart's treatise more fully. In a sense they can serve as the "beacon" which Mozart regretted leaving unlit, that might light the way for today's worthy platform artists.

### **Cartier: A Late Eighteenth Century Reading of Mozart and Geminiani**

In the foregoing I have considered the ways in which the treatments of ornamentation found in the treatises of Mozart and Geminiani were crafted with the needs of amateur violinists in mind. I have also considered how the ornamentation represented therein differed substantially from the type of ornamentation that these authors considered to be appropriate in professional contexts. As a final consideration I would like to reinforce my assertions by looking at the ways in which an important violin treatise published later in the century selectively draws upon the works of both Mozart and Geminiani. By observing what is used, and what is neglected, we can gain insight into what musicians of the late eighteenth century considered to be valuable in the treatises of Mozart and Geminiani.

The want of a text that could serve as a basis for study at the newly founded Paris Conservatoire occasioned Jean-Baptiste Cartier to write his massive *L'art du violon* (Paris, 1798). As such it was the first treatise to be published in the eighteenth century with the sole intention of training professional violinists. Unlike the treatises of Mozart and Geminiani, which were meant for amateurs but included some information about professional concerns, Cartier's treatise was meant from the beginning to aid in the study of career musicians.

In the construction of his treatise Cartier relied heavily on the works of those who had come before him. His sense of indebtedness is apparent on the title page of his treatise where he presents two masters from each of the three national schools of violin playing (Figure 10). Positioned proudly atop the page are the two masters of the Italian school,



Figure 10. Jean-Baptiste Cartier, *L'art du violon*, title page.<sup>92</sup>



Corelli and Tartini. Beneath them, representing the French are Leclair and Pierre Gavinies. On the bottom are Leopold Mozart and Johann Stamitz representing the German-speaking

<sup>92</sup> Jean-Baptiste Cartier, *L'art du violon* (Paris, 1798; facs., New York: Broude Brothers, 1973), title page.

lands. Stamitz, who is better remembered today as a symphonist, was in his own day known as a virtuosic performer on the violin. Although Geminiani was not included on the title page he is given credit in the foreword for providing the precepts and the examples derived from the principles of the Italian School.<sup>93</sup> Throughout his treatise Cartier borrows heavily from these violinists; his decisions regarding what to take from each are telling. In the first two sections of his treatise Cartier describes the fundamental techniques of violin playing: holding the instrument, fingering, scales, etc. Throughout this section Cartier relies primarily on the treatises of Mozart and Geminiani, giving citations whenever he uses one of their musical examples or provides a translation of an excerpt taken directly from their treatises.<sup>94</sup> These borrowings cover a wide range of topics mostly relating to the positioning of the left hand and the use of the bow. In the small portion of the first section that deals with ornamentation Cartier does not rely as extensively on the works of Geminiani and Mozart. He cites each only once in connection to this topic; Geminiani is given credit for a paragraph on vibrato and Mozart is cited for an example of a turned trill. The majority of the information on ornamentation and other more advanced concerns like polyphonic playing and elaborate bow techniques is found in the massive (300 out of 335 pages) third section of the treatise. This section is an anthology of compositions drawn from the most revered violinists of each national school. In the table of contents for this section (figure 11) the violinists are divided by ethnicity. The numbers next to each of their names indicate the pages on which their respective compositions can be found. One can observe that the names of the violinists who were featured on the title page are emboldened and that for the most part they have a comparatively large number of

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<sup>93</sup> Cartier, *L'art du violon*, ii.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., direct citations found on pages 1, 3, 7, 10, 29, 30, and 33.



Figure 11. Jean-Baptiste Cartier, *L'art du violon*, table of contents to third part.<sup>95</sup>

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Catalogue  
DES MAÎTRES  
Qui Composent la Collection.

Ecole  
Italienne et Lombarde

- Barbella. (Page 156.
- Bonporti. 62.
- Castrucci 302
- Chabran. 94. 128.
- Corelli 35. 38. 40.
- 63. 69. 103.
- De Giardini. 56.
- Demachi. 278.
- Ferrari. 172.
- Geminiani (Principes.) 255
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- Guerini. 88.
- Locatelli 314, 324
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- Manfredi. 270
- Miroglio. 50.
- Nardini 206, 216, 224, 232,
- Nofieri 329 246, 288. 320.
- Paglini \* 306.
- Piane Desplanes 119.
- Pugnani. 112
- Santa Raphael 190.
- Spadina 168. 323.
- Tartini 39 137. 151.
- 194. 263. 307.
- Traversa. 110.
- Vilantini. 93.
- Vivaldi. 102.

ÉCOLE  
FRANÇOISE.

- Aubert. Page 55.
- Branche. 296.
- Capron. 116.
- Cupis. 60.
- Danvergne. 70.
- GAVINIÈS. 78. 284.
- Guignon 58. 126.
- Guillemain. 124. 176. 266..
- Labbe (Principes.)
- Leblanc. 132.
- LECLAIR. 122.
- 145. 255, 268, 298.
- Mondonville. 93. 120.
- Navoigille. 82. . . .
- Robineau. 142.
- Sénallie 54.
- Tarade (Principes.)
- Travenol. 49.
- Vachon. 76.
- Moria 332.

Ecole  
Allemande

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- Blasius (F.) 174.
- Cramer. 170.
- Erlz. 74.
- Kenis. 258.
- Mozart (L) Principes
- Roxer. 175.
- Stad. 114.
- Stamitz (G) 83, 318, 320.
- Telemann. 254.
- Tremais. 154.
- Triemer. 283.
- Van hall. 282.
- Zarth. 72.
- Zimmerman. 118.

\* Français

<sup>95</sup> Cartier, *L'art du violon*, 34.

compositions included. The only exception is Mozart, who is featured on the title page but has no compositions included in the anthology. Instead, next to his name, we see only “*principes*” to indicate that while his compositions were passed over, the principles he established in his treatise were deemed substantial enough to see him lifted to the status of a master of the German school. Cartier claims that by working through the pieces collected in this section one could acquire “all of the technical requirements of the bow and the fingers that are indispensable to the shaping of all styles.”<sup>96</sup> He then goes on to describe how many of the works were included to address particular aspects of performance, such as the fugal movements of Geminiani’s sonatas, which were included to demonstrate the specific difficulties that playing multiple voices on a single voice instrument presents.<sup>97</sup> It is in this section that Cartier attempts to impress good taste in ornamentation upon his readers. He does so by providing many examples of sonatas with written-out ornamentation. The best-represented violinist in this section is Nardini; of the eight works of his that are included seven contain written-out ornamentation. This decision to include so many of Nardini’s ornamented adagios indicates that Cartier was likely of the same mind as Mozart in considering Nardini’s ornamentation to be the best example of the professional style. In addition to Nardini’s ornamented adagios Cartier also provides many other examples of written-out ornamentation in the sonatas of other violinists like Leclair and Stamitz who, like Nardini, published their works with professional ornamentation as they might have performed it. Geminiani’s ornamented adagios, which were published with amateur ornamentation, are not included.

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<sup>96</sup> Cartier, *L’art du violon*, iii (toutes les pratiques du mécanisme de l’archet et des doigts indispensable pour se façonner à tous les Styles).

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., iv.

The exclusion of Geminiani's ornamented adagios from the anthology and the decision generally to exclude Mozart and Geminiani's verbal descriptions of ornamentation suggest that Cartier found their examples and principles related to this topic to be irrelevant for the training of professional violinists. It is not that he found them to be old fashioned; his treatise contains many examples of ornamentation in the sonatas of violinists like Leclair and Tartini that were published decades before the treatises of Mozart and Geminiani. It would seem then that in assembling his treatise for the students of the Paris Conservatory Cartier took only that which he considered to be relevant from the works of both Mozart and Geminiani, passing over material such as their descriptions of ornamentation that would only be of use to an amateur violinist.

\* \* \*

When modern musicians approach the treatises of Mozart and Geminiani today they might use Cartier's model of selective reading as a starting place, taking only that which pertains to their specific situation and ignoring advice that is given for violinists with a different set of needs. Undoubtedly a great deal of material from both treatises is of unequalled value to any inquiry into performance practice of this time. Mozart's description of the positioning of the instrument and Geminiani's examples of subtle dynamic gradation are arguably the most clearly articulated accounts of those aspects of playing the violin that were penned in the eighteenth century. While it is important to realize the value of these accounts, it is equally important to realize how we must filter these ideas through contextual considerations. Both Mozart and Geminiani were writing for amateur readers and the way that they chose to describe playing the violin was inextricably linked to the needs and abilities of that readership. This means that for certain

aspects of playing, such as body position, playing in ensembles, and bow grip that are common to both professional and amateur performers alike, we can apply the information found in their treatises quite widely. For other aspects, like ornamentation, they can only tell us about performing in the amateur style. Regarding professional ornamentation it is necessary to look further to resources like the ornamented sonatas of Nardini.

We then must ask what it is that we wish to recreate. Geminiani's own rendering of one of his sonatas is not necessarily more authentic than the same sonata ornamented in the amateur style. Both are equally viable examples of eighteenth century performance practice. Indeed many modern performers might do well to stick closer to the amateur performance style. Without the extended and immersive training that was typical of professional performers in the eighteenth century one can easily run afoul of good taste and commit the same abuses that Mozart so frequently warned against in the playing of the amateurs of his day. This leaves the modern performer with a wide range of possibilities for interpreting music of the mid to late eighteenth century. It means that both the professional and the amateur style are equally appropriate options. The choice regarding which style to employ or how to blend the two is a matter of personal choice that is better left to one's own taste and ability than it is to theoretical postulation.

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