

Preface

Please take the time to read this preface and to familiarize yourself with the format and abbreviations used in the musical examples (pp. xx–xxi). It is also recommended that you watch the short introductory videos at <http://www.orch.info>. This will make it easier and more efficient for you to work with this book and its supplemental internet resources.

For whom is this book written? • This book is a guide to the art and craft of orchestral playing—a comprehensive survey of the vast range of skills and knowledge that a violinist needs to play in a professional orchestra. It addresses primarily








- conservatory and college students who are preparing for an orchestral career and have worked through the standard violin curriculum of technical exercises, etudes, virtuosic pieces, sonatas, and concertos
- audition candidates
- professional orchestral players at the beginning of their careers. *Orchestral Playing for Violinists* may also serve as a handbook for
- experienced professional orchestral violinists who are auditioning for better jobs or who simply want to improve their performance
- string teachers
- conductors and composers.






Additionally, this book may serve as a textbook for orchestral-repertoire courses; especially, the two-part excerpts in Part 8 are ideal for group instruction. Many sections will be useful to violinists and cellists too, and some of the material is suitable for advanced high-school students and accomplished amateurs. Finally, several sections in Parts 9 and 11 will be of interest to music librarians and “bowers” (the staff members who transfer bowings from the principals’ parts into the other parts).

Scope • The term *orchestral playing* is understood here as the participation in an orchestra that performs mainly Western classical music. Because orchestras and orchestral musicians are required to be versatile, the scope of this book has been kept as broad as possible. Included are discussions of the performance of

- symphonic works (symphonies, symphonic poems, concert overtures, variation cycles, suites, concertos)
- incidental music to plays
- oratorios and other choral pieces
- operas, operettas, musicals, and ballets.

The only exclusions made are chronological: the book focuses primarily on *music from about 1750 to about 1950*—that is, from the Classical period to the age of Schoenberg, Bartók, Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Copland, and Shostakovich, whose works have all entered the standard repertoire.

It will be impossible to do justice to the vast orchestral repertoire of the *Baroque* and especially to the diverse (and sometimes controversial) theories of Baroque performance practice. Those interested in more than the representative excerpts and general guidelines provided here may wish to rely instead on the extensive body of literature devoted to the topic (for instance,  Donington 1973,  Neumann 1978 and 1993,  Brown 1989,  Sadie 1991,  Cyr 1992,  Tarling 2000,  Jackson 2005).

Within the limits of this book it is neither possible nor sensible to do justice to the diverse playing techniques required for the performance of *music dating from the second half of the 20th century*. When it comes to recent and current compositions, tastes vary vastly between countries. Also, virtually every living composer presents individual systems of notation and technique, which sometimes differ from work to work. This book includes only a limited number of excerpts and some general guidelines for this repertoire; interested performers may consult specialized manuals and collections for further guidance ( Borciani 1977,  Stone 1980,  Sarch 1982,  Weisberg 1993,  Strange 2001).

Organization • *Orchestral Playing for Violinists* contains

- sections mainly for **reading**:
 - Part 1* • a brief historical sketch of the training of orchestral musicians and a comprehensive outline for orchestral training

Part 2 • a description of the *orchestral mode*—a mindset, attitude, focus, work process, and work style that is specific to and essential for orchestral playing

Part 9 • a manual of orchestral notation and performance practice—a guide to decoding and marking orchestral parts

Part 10 • guidelines for building a core repertoire of orchestral works and developing a sense of historical or regional style; most of this material appears on the companion website for this book, <http://www.orch.info> (see below)

Part 11 • guidelines for building a career as a professional orchestral violinist—from setting career goals to auditioning to surviving long-term orchestral work

• sections for both **reading and practicing**:

Part 3 • a guide to learning, practicing, and sight-reading orchestral repertoire

Part 4 • basic orchestral technique

Part 5 • bowing technique, sound production, and coordination

Part 6 • left-hand technique

Part 7 • *pizzicato* and other special technical issues

Part 8 • a guide to mastering the challenges of rhythm and ensemble playing


• sections to be used for **reference**:

Part 12 • a comprehensive guide to additional resources (websites, excerpt collections, technical studies, orchestral parts and scores, books, articles, periodicals, recordings, software); this survey appears on the companion website for this book, <http://www.orch.info>—together with the index, which has been duplicated there in order to facilitate searches

Part 13 • a general index of composers, compositions, terms, abbreviations, and symbols, with a glossary.

The portions of the book that cover orchestral technique, especially Parts 5–7, include for each technical issue

- short explanations and references to the literature
- preparatory exercises
- cross-references to examples in other chapters and to other compositions not included in the book
- extensive illustrative examples, drawn from the repertoire. The **excerpts** are supplied with bowings, fingerings, metronome markings, suggestions for appropriate stylistic realization, and tips for practicing (the charts on pp. xx–xxi show the format and abbreviations used in these excerpts). There is a small bias toward first-violin passages because they cover many of those technical issues encountered in second-violin parts as well. Most excerpts are relatively short, “surgically” removed from their original context so that you may practice them more efficiently. For reasons of space, it was necessary to limit the number of excerpts; additional excerpts—and even some entire pieces—are available available at <http://www.orch.info>.

Companion website (<http://www.orch.info>) • In order to work most efficiently with this book, you might want to have a close look at this website, which includes pp. 493–615 (see the table of contents on p. xi–xiii). This icon  marks all references in the book to material found on the website.

The website offers some material duplicated in the book—exercises and tables that you may download and print so that

you can keep an extra copy on your music stand for convenient reference.

Also, there is material found *only* on the website (and not in the book), either because it did not fit into the book or because it will be updated regularly:

- three chapters that address mainly concertmasters and principals although all orchestral violinists still might want to read them:
 - Chapter 5.34: “Good” and “bad” bowings
 - Chapter 9.23: “Which part should I play?” • Strategies for dividing the violins
 - Chapter 9.24: “Is my part accurate?” • Misprints, mistakes, inconsistencies, “improvements”
- Chapter 10.1: Selecting a core repertoire for study and practice
- Chapter 10.2: Building your core repertoire and style grid
- Chapter 10.3: Individual styles of orchestral string writing and their challenges
- Tables 11.4a and 11.5: solo passages for concertmasters and other principals
- Part 12: lists of resources
- a list of *errata*
- additional tips and suggestions, partially in response to expected feedback.

Splitting the material between the book and the website in this manner may cause the reader some inconvenience; but this was the only way to keep the book both physically manageable and affordable. Decide on the portions of the website that you will read online, that you will print out and read, and that you will ignore.

How to use this book • There are many ways to use this book, depending on your orchestral experience, technique, knowledge, and career goals:

- *Audition candidates* with little time to spare should concentrate on Part 3 (on practice strategies) and Chapter 11.6 (on auditioning). They may also wish to turn to the index and look up all examples that include common audition passages.
- *Professional players* may work systematically from cover to cover in order to close any gaps in their skills and knowledge.
- *Concertmasters or principals* may do the same and focus on the manual of notation and performance practice (Part 9), the explanations of how to bow orchestral parts (Ch. 5.34), and the discussion of orchestral responsibilities (Ch. 11.4–11.5).
- *Players with many years of experience, teachers, and conductors* will find that the book is convenient to use for reference. Consult the index any time you have a question about a specific piece or issue, or if you want to brush up on a specific technique.
- *Students* may find the book most helpful if they proceed by section in the following order: Chapters 1.3–1.4, Parts 11, 2–8, 10, 9. Another option is to immediately start practicing the excerpts in Parts 5–8, but it might be more efficient if you first “sweat” through the introductory sections (Parts 1–3), even if they seem a bit “theoretical.” While studying Parts 5–8, you might want to work on building your core repertoire (as described in Part 10).

When you are working for the first time through the book, however, you may want to skip

- the excerpts that seem most difficult, concentrating only on the exercises and a few easier excerpts
- the reading suggestions at the beginning of a chapter and all bibliographic references in the text
- references to orchestral-mode principles (for example, **OM6**) or other references with acronyms (for example, **G1**)
- cross-references to other examples and other compositions.

A typical comment about a musical example that includes such cross-references may look like this:

g-i, Ex. 3.4aa, 5.9a, 5.34pp, Barber, *Adagio* • Practice soft passages even slower and softer than written **SP8** (Gigante 1953, 31).

These instructions refer mainly to examples **g-i**, which you will easily find on the same page as the comments (or on the facing page). The additional examples in Chapters 3.4 and 5.9 cited here (easily found by turning to these chapters and looking for the correct example letter), the example in Chapter 5.34 found on the website, and Barber's *Adagio* (which you will not find in the book), serve merely as additional illustrative examples. **SP8** is the eighth strategy recommended for (physical) practicing in Chapter 3.9: "Exaggerate certain aspects in order to improve your control." The last citation in the example refers to the book by Gigante, listed in Chapter 12.7. Do not feel overwhelmed by all these references: when you work through the book for the first time, you may *ignore them*. (The same applies to the detailed explanations in Part 9 that address primarily concertmasters, principals, and experienced players.) But why, then, have these references and cross-references been included? They are intended for in-depth study, for musicians using the book for reference, or for musicians teaching orchestral-repertoire classes who need additional examples for particular issues. Many excerpts present several different technical or musical issues. Instead of reprinting

the same example multiple times, it is only practical to print each example once and then to include references back to this example. Each reader will have a different background, with different strengths and weaknesses, and therefore each will need to decide how closely to follow these cross-references. Similarly, each reader should decide whether to read a technical chapter first thoroughly, all the way through, or whether to play through the excerpts and exercises first, turning to the written comments only when it seems necessary.

Another tip: keep a list of any technical issues that you encounter, and continue to review the appropriate exercises and excerpts.

The Orchestral Violinist's Dictionary of foreign terms • An essential part of working efficiently with orchestral scores is understanding Italian, German, and French terms, abbreviations, and expressions. Because existing dictionaries lack, mistranslate, or misinterpret many important foreign terms and abbreviations, I have compiled comprehensive lists from the standard orchestral repertoire and published them as an eBook (Wulfhorst 2013, available at <http://www.orchestraldictionary.com> and at internet stores). This eBook serves two purposes:

- The systematic lists in Chapters 1–14 of the eBook allow you to memorize terms and abbreviations. The lists include very common structural words (numbers, prepositions, etc.) as well as thematically organized tables which correspond to Chapters 9.3–9.23 and 11.4–11.5 of this book.
- Use the index of the *Dictionary* for reference: look up any term, abbreviation, or expression that you might find in an orchestral part, full score, or job advertisement.

A book on this topic—the first of its kind—is bound to disappoint some readers because they will miss some of their favorite excerpts, techniques, or tips. I am therefore very eager to receive feedback for future editions of the book; comments concerning organization, repertoire selection, and missing resources are especially welcome. Please send any feedback to info@orch.info.

4.2 Principles for Daily Technical Routines

Technical routines serve five purposes.

(1) They loosen and warm up your playing apparatus, as described in Chapter 4.14.

(2) **OM5** They should cover the first tier of basic technique described in Chapter 4.1 so that you can master a large portion of any orchestral piece without extra preparation. Find or design exercises that are as *elementary and universal* as possible: the more basic they are, the more useful they are. Many technical studies and etudes tend to stress a certain type of virtuosic technique that, on the one hand, is far more specialized and advanced than the technique needed in the standard orchestral repertoire and, on the other hand, still leaves gaps. Even Flesch's popular *Scale System* (♩ 1926)—though seemingly comprehensive—covers only a limited assortment of scale types, arpeggios, and shifts. The exercises of Ševčík (♩ 1881 and 1895a–b) and Galamian (♩ 1966), by contrast, help you acquire a more comprehensive technique through basic, systematically organized patterns. Building on their exercise collections, I suggest in the following chapters certain routines that I have found most beneficial and efficient for orchestral playing.

Organize your routines so that they fit into a tight schedule while covering the most material:

- As the amount of time for practice before a rehearsal or performance will vary, establish sets of practice routines with varying lengths (fifteen, thirty, forty-five, or sixty minutes).
- Experiment to find the order of routines that suits you best.
- Design your own scheme for rotating keys, patterns, bow strokes, and rhythms. Design a two-week or four-week plan for your routines with all rotations—if necessary by means of a practice log (Ch. 3.7).
- Play all left-hand routines—scales, shifting exercises, double stops—in the same key for a certain time span (a day, a few days, or a week) and then move to the next key, following the circle of fifths.
- Rotate the shifting patterns in Ex. 4.8 so that every day you practice at least one exercise from each section (◻a–◻g).
- Rotate the bow strokes that you apply to scales or chordal arpeggios.
- Rotate those exercises that you practice slowly for checking the intonation and those that you practice fast for developing and maintaining facility. Also rotate patterns between duple and triple rhythms, as shown in Ex. 4.10f–i.

(3) Technical routines will help you to prevent your technique from deteriorating and to raise your technical standards.

Include in your daily routines simple, basic exercises to maintain and improve your sound quality and intonation: sustained notes (*sons filés*), slow legato and *détaché*, and simple scales. Additionally, identify the weaker areas of your technique and emphasize these areas in your daily routines.

(4) Use your daily routines both to prepare for the specific techniques required by your current repertoire and orchestral position and to balance and complement it:

- If you are rehearsing a piece in a remote key such as G♭ major practice your scale routines in that key.
- Use your arpeggios to practice various *ricochet* patterns for a Rossini overture or opera (Ex. 5.21y). Use your chromatic routines to practice fast ♩ patterns for Verdi's *Otello* I (Ex. 5.27l).
- If the aggressive playing required by a Shostakovich Symphony makes your sound quality suffer, practice delicate bow strokes. If you are playing contemporary pieces that require almost no “normal” tonal patterns, scales, or “pleasant” sounds, focus your warm-up on intonation in scales and double stops and on producing a beautiful timbre.
- As a second violinist always include high-position scales and arpeggios in your routines.

(5) Use your routines to strengthen your audiation skills: memorize all scale and arpeggio routines. First, this will make it easier to practice bowings patterns. Second, playing from memory while thinking in patterns and keys, will greatly improve your reading skills and your ability to maneuver freely across keys and positions.

4.3 Bow Pressure, Bow Speed, Soundpoint

Leaving aside the issue of vibrato, violinists create different colors primarily by varying three parameters: bow pressure, bow speed (which determines the bow length), and soundpoint (♩ Galamian 1962, 55). (Other variables such as bow direction, part of bow or bow point [a term coined here to pair with *soundpoint*], and tilt have less importance in this context.) A series of basic exercises for isolating the three main components and for varying each within a single bow stroke has been handed down through several generations of violinists—including Capet, Galamian, DeLay, Kawasaki, and Fischer. The first exercise below even goes back as far as L. Mozart (♩ 1756, V/§4–8/102–4). In addition to *sons filés*, these are the most useful sound-production exercises:

◻a • Change between maximum and minimum bow pressure.

Bow-pressure exercise

max. pressure min. pressure max. min. max. min. max. min. max. min. max. min.

- ⓑ • Change between maximum and minimum bow speed.
- ⓒ • Change between different soundpoints, as shown here for the two outermost soundpoints—the one closest to the bridge and the one closest to the fingerboard. Fischer suggests practicing at five soundpoints, which move more closely to each other and more closely to the bridge on higher strings and in higher positions. On the G string, for instance, Fischer (♫ 1997,

- 41) identifies five locations to include in these exercises:
 - (1) near the bridge
 - (2) between the bridge and the central point (the point about halfway between bridge and fingerboard)
 - (3) at the central point
 - (4) between the central point and the fingerboard
 - (5) at the fingerboard.

ⓑ Bow-speed exercise

ⓒ Soundpoint exercise

finger-board → bridge → fb. → br. → fb. → br. → fb. → br. → fb. → br. → fb. → br. →

4.4 Routines for Practicing Various Bow Strokes

In your daily routines, include the principal bow strokes. Add some hybrid and composite bow strokes from Part 5 for periodic review.

For all separate bow strokes, use various practice strategies, shown here for the tapping *spiccato* (Ch. 5.8, species 17):

- ⓐ–ⓑ • repeated pitches, with identical note values, in different groupings
- ⓒ • repeated pitches in diverse rhythms
- ⓓ • scales and arpeggios (Ex. 4.10–4.12), repeating each pitch eight, six, four, three, or two times
- ⓔ–ⓕ • scales and arpeggios, without repetitions in different metric schemes
- ⓐ+ⓕ, ⓑ+ⓔ • a combination of patterns — Precede each scale or arpeggio pattern with a “warm-up *vamp*”: repeat the first pitch with the appropriate stroke—perhaps with a gradual *accelerando* to the final tempo. As soon as the motion feels comfortable and the character sounds perfect, start the scale or arpeggio.

- ⓖ • various rhythmic patterns selected from Part 5 or from ♫ Galamian 1966/II

- ⓗ • in alternation with other strokes, particularly in combinations of slurred and separate notes (*composite bowings*).

Where possible vary not only the rhythm but also

- the bow direction (for equalizing downbow and upbow)
- the part of bow
- the dynamics (*f*, *p*, *crescendo*, *diminuendo*).

The minimum practice routine for basic strokes is a series of scales played at different speeds and played legato, *détaché*, and *spiccato* or *sautillé*:

- Ⓢ–Ⓣ • Practice the scale in eighths, triplets, and sixteenths at each of the given metronome settings. The two schemes of metronome numbers given here cover—in four and three steps, respectively—a maximum number of different speeds between 240 and 640 notes per minute. When you play eighths at ♫ = 144, for instance, your fingers and bow move at the same speed as for triplets at ♫ = 96 or sixteenths at ♫ = 72.

Practice strategies for bow strokes

TAPPING SPICCATO

ⓓ Ex. 4.10a ⓔ Ex. 4.10a ⓕ Ex. 4.12a

4.6 Coordination, Left-Hand Facility, and Left-Hand Articulation

“Good co-ordination means that the finger completely stops the string before the bow moves, i.e. *the left fingers lead and the bow follows*. When co-ordination is not good it means that the finger is a fraction of a second late, fully stopping the string only after the bow has already begun to move” (Fischer 2004, 14; my italics).

a • An excellent exercise for improving coordination is playing scales with slight anticipations of the left-hand fingers (Fischer 1997, 130).

b–**i** • Practice patterns such as Ševčík 1881/I, 2, with the rhythms from Ex. 3.9mm–xx—dotted rhythms and shifting fermatas—in order to develop and maintain finger speed.

Where possible, “raise or drop groups of fingers together, in a fan-like shape” or as a block (Fischer 2004, 11).

j • Practice slow legato scales with fast finger speed and strong left-hand articulation. The clarity of a finger change is determined solely by the speed with which the finger is dropped or lifted, not by the finger pressure (Fischer 2004, 7). Practice at a very slow pace, exaggerating the finger speed: drop the fingers in a fast, straight motion, without pressing them down; lift them with a fast, slightly sideways motion—that is, with the smallest amount of left-hand *pizzicato* (Galamian 1962, 10). Even when you play *p* with your right hand play *f* with your left hand in this manner. Though pedagogues recommend to keep the fingers generally close to the string, practicing with high lifts helps to develop finger speed.

Coordination exercise

Ex. 4.10a

Left-hand facility
Ševčík 1881/I, 2

Left-hand articulation exercise

4.7 Shifting Technique

➔ Ch. 6.2: fingerings • Galamian 1962, 23–27 • Fischer 1997, 145–84

Impeccable shifting technique is essential to orchestral playing. You can eliminate a main source of insecure or faulty intonation

- if you understand the mechanics and various species of shifts (this chapter)
- if you systematically build a solid, comprehensive shifting technique, and sustain it through continuous, diligent practice (next chapter).

Shifts must be smooth, with a slow approach to the goal tone and with lessened finger pressure during the motion. For large shifts into high positions, turn your violin slightly to your left (to an “open” position) and make sure that you gradually lower your elbow during the motion (Fischer 2004, 272). For smooth shifting, begin the motion from the wrist before the finger starts to move.

We distinguish between expressive and technical shifts. **Expressive shifts** are audible and have a musical motivation that determines their placement and the speed and manner in which the fingers and hand move. There are four types of expressive shifts:

- a–b** • the *full slide*
- c** • the *Classical or French slide*, with the hand moving on the finger that precedes the shift
- d** • the *Romantic or Russian slide*, with the hand moving on the finger that follows the shift (the notated pitch of the guide note is only approximate) — This shift is rare in orchestral playing.
- e** • the *combination slide*, with one finger beginning the slide and the other ending it (♫ Fischer 1997, 157–61) (again, the notated pitches of the guide notes are approximate).

Technical shifts, by contrast, should be as unnoticeable as possible. They are classified on the basis of technical considerations:

- f** • **Type A**: a shift executed with one finger, the simplest form
- g** • **Type B**: a shift to a higher-number finger in a higher position or vice versa—here from the first finger in the first position to the fourth finger in the second position
- h** • **Type B1**: Practice any Type-B shift first as a *two-step shift with a guide note*, also called the auxiliary note or intermediate note. The guide note lends stability to the shift and provides a secure framework for the hand:

① The starting finger slides up or down to the new position, as in the Classical slide (**c**).

② In upward shifts the target finger drops, and in downward shifts the sliding finger lifts.

Ultimately the goal is to perform the same shift without an audible guide note, as smoothly and quickly as possible.

- i** • **Type B2**: In order to make Type B completely unnoticeable you may also perform it as a *two-step or three-step delayed shift with extension*:

① While you keep the starting finger on the string extend the target finger upward or downward and drop it.

② If this is a downward shift, lift the starting finger.

③ As the hand and arm move to the new position, make sure the pitch does not change. If this is an upward shift, move the starting finger to the higher position as well.

This type of “creeping” and “crawling” shift (also called a “caterpillar shift”) works best for shifts to an adjacent position on the same string or to an adjacent string (Ex. 4.8h–s, ♫ Galamian 1962, 34). Shifts across two and more positions can be executed in this manner only in higher positions, unless you have large hands.

a 28-5 ♩ = 48
Puccini
Butterfly II/ii

b **c** **d** **e**
Expressive slides: full slide Classical slide Romantic slide combination slide

f **g**
Technical shifts
Type A Type B

h with guide note **i** delayed shift with extension
Type B1 ① ② Type B2 ① ③ ① ② ③

Part 5

Bowing Technique, Sound Production, Coordination

Whereas the violinist's left hand determines pitch and vibrato, the bow arm is the tool that enables us to make music and to create and mold all the nuances of dynamics, articulation, phrasing, and timbre. Musicians have long stressed the importance of the bow arm, including Quantz writing in the 18th century:

“The most important thing for performance on the violin or similar instruments is the bow stroke. It is the bow stroke that draws a good or poor sound from the instrument; it lends life to the notes; it expresses piano and forte; it excites the affects; and it creates the difference between sad and cheerful, serious and funny, sublime and flattering, modest and bold. In short, the bow stroke is what produces...musical speech, and it is what shapes a musical thought in many different ways. It is self-evident that the fingers [of the left hand] contribute to this result..., but in terms of performance the bow stroke is most essential”
(🎵 Quantz 1752, XVII/II/§3/187–88).

This sentiment was later echoed by 20th-century writers:

“Every nuance of tone we produce on a string instrument comes to life at the command and coaxing of the bow. The bow is the string player's paintbrush, the breath which gives life to our song, the sword with which to battle the virtuosic challenges of pyrotechnical passages, the whip to drive the horses, and the pen which brings forth the poetry”
(📖 Berman 1999, vii).

Part 5 is devoted to the principal challenges of orchestral sound production for the violinist, all related to issues of bowing, with the exception of vibrato (Ch. 5.6); these include:

- **OM2** blending, or the uniformity of sound within a violin section, and the ability to adapt flexibly to the conductor's interpretation and to the performance situation
- **OM4** the vast range of strokes, bowing patterns, articulations, dynamics, colors, and bowing modes that must be mastered
- **OM6** endurance
- **OM7** accurate coordination.

Before working through Part 5, review the practice strategies for bow strokes and bowing patterns in Ex. 4.4a–j. You might also want to read about orchestral intonation (Chapter 6.1), before practicing those excerpts in Part 5 that are particularly challenging for the left hand. — Feel free to substitute any scales for the scales included in the exercises.

5.1 The Basic Orchestral String Sound

Listening to the great violin virtuosos can be wonderfully inspiring, but there are fundamental differences between the ideal sound quality for solo playing and the ideal sound quality for orchestral playing. Whereas a soloist's sound needs to project to be prominent, the guiding principles for orchestral sound production are **blending and adapting** **OM2**. Ideally the general timbre of an orchestral violinist—at all dynamic levels—is a polished, smooth, clear, and focused sound, with a slightly dark color. It is rarely aggressive, harsh, or rough, and never should it be muffled or oily. If all players in a section strive for such a timbre, a homogeneous, well-blended section sound will result. This has become especially vital in the age of recordings, as the microphone will pick up the tiniest traces of impurity or heterogeneity of timbre. Moreover, if the sound does not blend within a section, other problems—even the slightest, unavoidable inaccuracies in intonation or rhythm—

are highlighted and magnified. But if the sound blends well, slight discrepancies in intonation and rhythm will be less noticeable.

The tools • A good orchestral **violin** is determined less by its volume than by its easy response and especially its sound quality; this includes a balance of high and low partials that is responsible for the beauty of its sound, evenness of its registers, smoothness, and clarity. (Incidentally, probably far more audition candidates are rejected because they sound unpolished than because they did not sound loud enough.) It is due to neither coincidence nor snobbishness that many orchestral violinists strive to own an Italian instrument, preferably an older one: such instruments—especially when played with a French bow—tend to have the ideal sound qualities described above. Some of the Italian violins from the 17th and 18th centuries, however, are too fragile to withstand the adverse conditions of modern stages and pits—including dry air and artificial light—let alone the added tension resulting from the modern, higher pitch and the frequent sudden changes in temperature and humidity during travel. Moreover, there has been a strong tendency to overvalue instruments by prominent Italian builders. They are appraised like antiques: their origin, workmanship, and state of preservation are much stronger determinants for the price than their sound quality. If you have limited funds, look for other types of violins that may come close in sound quality but are more affordable, including the following (listed in order of preference):

- “no-name” Italian instruments from the 18th and 19th centuries (an ad for them might read, for instance, “Roman School” or “Workshop of [Builder]”)
- Italian instruments by famous builders that have one or more non-authentic parts, such as a scroll by an anonymous maker
- old violins by makers of other nationalities who apprenticed or worked in Italy, including German, Dutch, British, or Spanish sources
- Italian instruments that were built more recently
- instruments from other national schools of violin making (📖 Scott 2001, 39–45).

Have your violin maker cut and fit the bridge and soundpost so that the registers are balanced, the response is easy, and the G string does not hit the fingerboard. Making the lower strings sound as clear and resonant as the E string is a special challenge for the violin maker.

An excellent **bow** may be even more crucial to orchestral playing than a valuable violin. Any amount of money that you can afford to add to the purchase price of your instrument will probably go further toward improving your sound quality when spent on a bow than when spent on the violin itself. The battle against the deficiencies of a bad bow can be fatal in an orchestra. Many players are surprised to discover the “magic” that a great bow will do for them—how well it responds to changes of pressure and speed, how easy and beautiful it makes passages with off-the-string or composite bowings sound (especially in **p** and **pp**), how stable it feels in the softest sustained passages, and how clearly it articulates without sounding harsh. When you try out bows be sure to test some of the tricky passages included in Part 5.

Many of the best bows that meet these criteria and excel at such tests are made by prominent French makers. But consider bows by lesser-known French makers, as well as British, German, and other bows that are excellent yet often more affordable. Some players have had very good experiences with carbon-fiber bows, which are less expensive and more climate-resistant than pernambuco bows; they are more frequently used as spare bows for pieces with plenty of *col legno* or for outdoor performances.

Decent, inexpensive Baroque-style violins and bows are available from specialized violin makers and mail-order vendors.

Do not save on **strings**. Choose the brand that best suits your violin and playing style. Base your decision on sound quality, response, pitch stability, time span for break-in, and *pizzicato* timbre. Change your strings regularly, particularly the two top strings. Avoid steel A strings: their timbre does not blend well when you play in the string section, and on most violins it is so different from the D string that it causes a strong break in register.

The first secret to a blended section sound is quite simple: **never play too loudly**. Apart from the fact that **f** and even **ff** are often one or two notches below the maximum dynamic level of a piece, the violin’s sound quality tends to become harsh or brittle when played very loudly: it loses smoothness and flexibility and ceases to blend.

a/153 • Even in the moments of greatest intensity you may not play so loudly that your sound becomes unpolished and you cannot hear the rest of the section easily let alone match their sound.

In general, your approach to sound needs to be controlled, slightly cautious, and “laid back.” Still, your sound must be alive and energetic—even when you play for a microphone and need to take special care to avoid any harshness. Strive continuously to find the fine line between brilliance and aggressiveness, smoothness and dullness, blended sound and bloodless playing. The solution often needed in the orchestra is a concept we may call “controlled intensity” or “fake **f** or **ff**”—an intense, focused sound that is below your maximum dynamic level (Ch. 2.1, **OM3**, Ex. 9.19m).

Technically speaking, this means that violinists should, above all, **avoid excessive bow pressure**, which is the worst enemy of a blended sound. Aside from robbing your instrument of its natural ring and noble beauty and preventing it from carrying, excessive pressure will cause your sound to stick out from the blend of the rest of the section.

a–**c** • Be especially careful when playing on the E string, as it is thin and quite sensitive to pressure; in fact, it does not require much pressure, since it has a strong natural ring. Choose the amount of pressure carefully so that the sound does not become overly bright, wiry, harsh, or aggressive; the sound should speak and sing, not scream.

a • For additional intensity, here on the gradual ascent, use longer bows, even on the separate duplets. Move your soundpoint closer to the bridge but keep the bow light.

c/44, **d**/78 • Be especially careful with bow pressure on pitches such as e³, which may stick out because of its strong overtones and bright ring.

d • Use minimal bow pressure in exposed, delicate, high passages where blending is especially difficult and the slightest harshness is very noticeable.

a Tchaikovsky Symphony 5/ii

146 **Andante mosso** ♩ = 66 + **animando un poco** ♩ = 69

fff con anima con desiderio e passione **LONG BOWS** *con tutta forza*

150 *fff* **Molto più andante**

154 *ff* **animando** *f* **riten. Più animato** *mf* *p* **riten. All. non troppo** *fff*

Brahms Symphony 1/i

Un poco sostenuto ♩ = 92+

b *ONLY f espr. e legato NOBLE*

6 *mf* *pizz.* *f* *p*

24 *ff* *sf*

Mozart Symphony 41/i

Allegro vivace ♩ = 76

c *f* **DOLCE**

45 *mf* **d** *p* **RESTEZ**

The image displays a page of musical notation for string bows, divided into three sections: (a), (b), and (c). Section (a) features Tchaikovsky's Symphony 5/ii, starting at measure 146 with 'Andante mosso' (♩ = 66+) and 'animando un poco' (♩ = 69). It includes dynamics like *fff* and *con anima*, and the instruction 'LONG BOWS'. Section (b) shows Brahms' Symphony 1/i, starting at measure 1 with 'Un poco sostenuto' (♩ = 92+). It contains dynamics such as *f*, *mf*, *p*, and *fff*, along with performance directions like 'ONLY f espr. e legato NOBLE' and 'RESTEZ'. Section (c) presents Mozart's Symphony 41/i, starting at measure 39 with 'Allegro vivace' (♩ = 76). It includes dynamics *f* and *p*, and the instruction 'DOLCE'. The notation includes various bowing techniques like slurs, accents, and dynamic hairpins, as well as specific bowing marks like 'V' and 'K'.

e • Blending is easier in a lower register. On the G string, use a heavier, more compact sound, produced with more pressure. But still keep the sound noble and clear: do not suffocate it with excessive pressure, and do not allow it to become “oily.” For stronger natural ring raise your bow arm to the level of an imaginary “C string.” The ideal bowing “plane” for the G string is not close to the D-string level but rather at a 90° angle to the diagonal line that goes from the G string groove to the *right* foot of the bridge, which transmits the sound to the soundpost (Fig. 5.1,

Fig. 5.1 Ideal bowing “plane” for a resonant G-string sound

Bruckner Symphony 7/ii

e

Sehr feierlich und sehr langsam ♩ = 63

G-Saite immer fort

mf *cresc. sempre* *sehr markig DIVISI BOWING:* *djm.*

IV 1 V SOLI 2 V V 3 1 (1) 1 III

As counterintuitive as it may seem, a blended, homogeneous section sound does not always mean complete uniformity of timbre. This becomes most obvious in those situations that represent the most extreme challenge for homogeneous playing—two violinists performing the same exposed, high line in unison. Many orchestral musicians have heard excellent “duos” who did not attempt to sound completely alike in such passages but produced **complementary timbres**: one played with a little more presence in the sound, while the other played more softly and smoothly, fitting his or her sound “inside” or “around” that of the dominating

partner. This type of complementary playing actually sounds more homogeneous than playing that is equally matched.

f • Find a partner to practice this and other unison passages for two solo violins, listed in Table 11.5/A (Ex. 6.20z). Experiment with blending your intonation and vibrato colors as well.

a-e • Do the same with *tutti* passages that are challenging for a blended section sound. Practice the same passages also in an orchestral-repertoire class. Choose a room that is not very reverberant. Take turns leading, and listen to a recording of the session.

Verdi Requiem/iii

f

Andante mosso ♩ = 66

p ancora più *p* *pp cant.* *cresc. sempre* *ppp*

2 vns. SOLI V V

61 69 76

ppp *cresc. poco a poco* *mf*

+ sop.

5.2 Controlling and Adapting the Elements of Bowing

Aside from blending, orchestral sound production involves

- **OM7** accurate performance of the *printed and handwritten* dynamics
- **OM2** continuously and flexibly adjusting your dynamics and timbre to a variety of *unwritten* factors—some specific to a piece or passage and some specific to a particular performance situation.

OM7 Perform all printed and handwritten nuances of dynamics and timbre with surgical **precision**, and never abandon a sense of dynamic **discipline** essential to orchestral playing. Special challenges include passages where it might be tempting to crescendo (Ex. 9.18b) or passages where the same or similar music appears two or more times with subtle dynamic differences (Ex. 3.4m/922–25). Execute all dynamics so well that someone could transcribe them from your playing and come up exactly with what is written on the page.

This requires **complete control** over all individual elements of sound. Gain technical control by practicing systematically,

isolating, and modifying the individual variables of sound (bow pressure, bow speed, soundpoint, bow point, vibrato). Focus especially on removing any technical obstacles such as dependence on bow direction.

Ex. 4.3a–c (p. 59) • Review these preparatory exercises to improve your sound control.

a–e • Practice sustained notes and scales—both *détaché* and legato—with different dynamic patterns. In order to gain complete control over the various elements of bowing, change the dynamics by modifying one, two, or three of the following parameters: bow pressure, bow speed, soundpoint. Isolate, change, and combine these parameters in the order:

- (1) only the bow pressure
- (2) only the bow speed (bow length)
- (3) only the soundpoint
- (4) both the bow pressure and bow speed (bow length)
- (5) both the bow pressure and soundpoint
- (6) both the bow speed (bow length) and soundpoint
- (7) all three elements.

f–g • Learn to pace short or extended **dynamic processes** (*dim.* and *cresc.*) so that they are absolutely continuous: each note must sound a little louder or softer than the preceding note.

Controlling dynamics with different elements of bowing

a *pp p mf f ff f mf p pp* *mf p pp* *ff* *pp*

d Ex. 4.10a *ff f mf p pp p mf f*

e *pp p mf f ff f mf p*

f *pp ff pp*

g *ff pp ff*

Martin Wulforth

The Orchestral Violinist's Companion

Martin Wulfhorst

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Vol. 2: Left-Hand Technique • Pizzicato and Other Special Techniques •
Rhythm and Ensemble Playing • Notation and Performance
Practice • Repertoire and Style • Profession and Career • Resources



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9 Decoding and Marking Orchestral Parts: A Manual of Orchestral Notation and Performance Practice

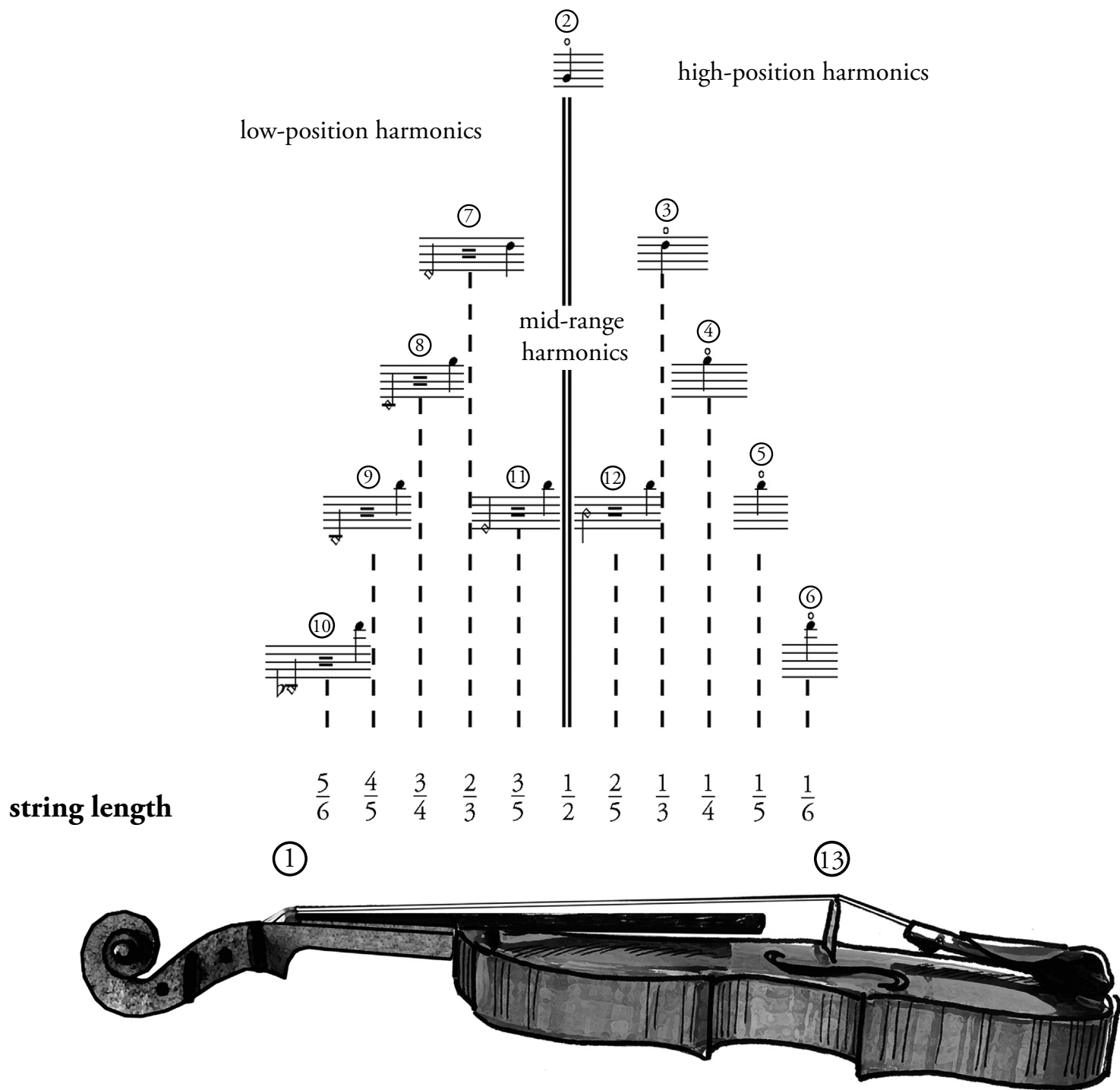
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- Determine the fraction of the string length that produces any simple natural harmonic.
- Reduce the fraction if possible.
- Substitute 1 for the numerator if it has another value. The new fraction will give you the string length for the sounding pitch of the harmonic.

Consider, for instance, the *major-third-harmonic* (Fig. 9.10 ⑨): the fraction for the string length of $4/5$ cannot be reduced; if you substitute 1 as the numerator, the string length of $1/5$ gives you the second octave plus major third as the sounding pitch of the

harmonic, shown in Fig. 9.10 ⑤. But the same formula gives you two further natural harmonics between ⑨ and ⑤ which are rarely properly understood and will be called here **simple mid-range natural harmonics** (for lack of a better term). The harmonics at $3/5$ and $2/5$ of the string length (⑪–⑫)—that is, at the major sixth and major tenth—produce the same sounding pitch as the harmonics at $1/5$ or $4/5$ (⑨ and ⑤). (These two are the only mid-range natural harmonics within the spectrum of Fig. 9.10 because the remaining fractions— $2/4$, $3/6$, $4/6$ —can be reduced.)

Fig. 9.10: Simple natural harmonics and equivalent string lengths on the G string



Artificial harmonics follow the same principles as low-position natural harmonics. The only difference is that you use not the open string but an additional lower, firmly stopped finger, usually the first finger, as the base or fundamental. In other words, the sounding pitches are relative to the pitch of the stopped finger instead of the pitch of the open string.

- Ⓐ-Ⓒ • *Fifth-harmonics* produce the twelfth.

 - *Fourth-harmonics* produce the second octave.
 - *Major-third-harmonics* produce the second octave plus major third. But artificial harmonics smaller than *fourth-harmonics* are rare in the orchestral repertoire.

Ideally, artificial harmonics are notated as double stops with a *regular note head* for the firmly stopped finger and a *diamond-shaped note head* for the finger that touches the string lightly.

- Ⓘ, lower staff • Sometimes you will find a form of combined notation, with an additional element that—though redundant—avoids all ambiguities: the sounding pitch is added as a small note head to the stem of the artificial harmonic, with or without parentheses. In such combined notation an *8^{va}* sign may refer only to the sounding pitch and not to the fingered pitch (Ravel, Piano Concerto/i (23)).

Natural and artificial harmonics—equivalents

- Ⓙ/1 and 6–32 • As this chart of all practical harmonics shows, there are two to six realistic playing options for *d*² and for all pitches from *g*² upward.

- Ⓚ/2–5 • For the four pitches between *e*^{b2} and *f*^{#2} there is merely one single feasible performance—the *fifth-harmonic*.

Artificial harmonics

Ⓐ Fifth-harmonics

Ⓑ Fourth-harmonics

Ⓒ Major-third-harmonics

Alternative technical performances

Only one single technical performance:

10

16

Decoding and Performing Harmonics

Step 1 • Analyze the notation.

What type of notation does the composer use? Does he or she specify only the sounding pitch, only the technical performance, or both?

- If the composer specifies the technical performance, does he or she require a high-position, mid-range, or low-position natural harmonic or an artificial harmonic? What strings and what positions are required? What is the sounding pitch?
- If the composer specifies merely the sounding pitch, proceed to Step 3.

Step 2 • Check the accuracy.

Because many composers make mistakes with harmonics keep your ears open and examine each harmonic closely. Is the pitch harmonically correct? Are the accidentals and the octave range correct and plausible?

- e** • In the violin part, the engraver notated the pitch touched by each finger but omitted accidentals and failed to specify the strings and positions. The only harmonics that fit into the given context are natural harmonics in the third position.
- f-g** • In **g** Verdi correctly wrote *fourth-harmonics* but ten measures earlier in **f** he incorrectly notated *fifth-harmonics* (which are traditionally read as *fourth-harmonics* on the same fundamentals).

Verdi *Ballo I/Prel.*

e Allegro assai moderato ♩ = 63

Violin part: *p* armonici

Sound: OFF

Trad. performance: *p* 3RD POSITION

Verdi *Aida IV/11*

f Meno mosso ♩ = 63

vn. 1/II *pp* armonici

Violin part: *pp*

Trad. performance: *pp*

g *sempre armonici sfiorando la 4.^a*

h • Especially frequent are problems with ambiguous, inconsistent, or erroneous notation of octave registers (Verdi's *Quattro Pezzi*/iv/41, Bartók's *Viola Concerto*/i/207). Because of the ranges of the two violin parts, the only viable register here is *one* octave above the written pitches.

Step 3 • Choose the best performance technique.

Because some composers provide only awkward or inferior-sounding choices for performance (if any choice at all!), weigh all viable options against each other; consult chart **d** if necessary. In particular you might want to substitute *fourth-harmonics* (or *sixth harmonics*) for *third-harmonics* because the latter do not speak very well, and to substitute *fourth-harmonics* for *fifth-harmonics*

because the latter are awkward for the left hand. But in spite of the extensions some players prefer *fifth-harmonics* to *fourth-harmonics* because they have a fuller ring and better response. You might also want to substitute artificial harmonics for natural harmonics because the latter, though less risky, tend to sound slightly flat (for complex reasons explained in **e** Beament 1997, 26–27). They also cannot be vibrated, if that is an issue. If necessary write your preferred performance on, below, or above the staff—at least in your practicing copy.

i, lower staff • The artificial harmonic better connects to the stopped note and improves intonation.

Allegretto moderato ♩ = 80

Puccini
Turandot II

Violin parts: *pp* (armonici)
*dall' E a F taglio facoltativo (SEE CH. 9.4)

Suggested performance:

Allegretto ♩ = 96

Ravel
Tombeau II

Original: *p*

Suggested performance: *p*

3x

9.11 Ornaments (I): Grace Notes and Appoggiaturas

➡ Ch. 5.11: technical issues • 🌐 Wulfhorst 2013, Chap. 10: foreign terms and abbreviations • 📖 Brown 1999, 📖 Donnington 1973, 📖 Neumann 1978, 1986, and 1993, 📖 Tarling 2000, 📖 Wulfhorst 2005: performance practice

Charts of ornament symbols in old treatises and modern textbooks might create the impression that you only need to memorize one of these systematic lists in order to know how to perform each ornament in any circumstance. Nothing could be further from the truth. The charts, which some historians call “inane,” are merely attempts to bring some order to the disordered mesh of chronological and regional traditions and personal idiosyncrasies. But when it comes to ornaments “‘common practice’ is a chimera for *any* period”—and this is particularly true for the 18th and early 19th centuries (📖 Neumann 1986, 3).

First, there was **little congruence between symbol and execution**: even in the music of a single composer one finds different symbols used for the same ornament, as well as the same symbol used for different ornaments. The same kind of turn or trill turn could be written in various ways (described below). Inversely, symbols such as *tr*, *∞*, *~*, and *↔* often served as *universal signs* which merely instructed the performer: “Choose one of several common ornaments.”

Second, because there were no generally accepted interpretations of ornamental symbols, an 18th-century composer had to expect that performers would find different interpretations for the same symbols. In fact, the quality of **freedom and spontaneity** was exactly what characterized much of 18th- and early 19th-century ornamentation—even in orchestral performance. Modern notions of clarity, consistency, and uniformity were foreign to many 18th-century musicians in this area.

a, **Ex. 9.12c** and **f** • A common issue is the use of different ornamental symbols for two or more analogous passages in the same piece. Did the composer use the second symbol as a “synonym” for the first—perhaps as some form of shorthand notation, as I suggest in **a**? Or did the composer intend a different ornament for the sake of variety? Often there is simply no right or wrong answer.

The only way for a composer to ensure a precise performance of a certain ornament was to write it out. Bach did this with some of his appoggiaturas, and Haydn, Mozart, and especially Beethoven began to do this with single and multiple grace notes, trill turns, and inverted mordents.

u–**v** • Often *Schleifer* were written with two or more “little notes”—a form of notation that even in the 18th century caused debates about speed and placement (see below).

b • To make sure the musicians would play the *Schleifer* fast and before the beat here Mozart wrote out the ornament in full note values.

The lack of congruence between symbol and meaning in the 18th and early 19th centuries is the rationale for the procedure shown in Table 9.11.

Chapters 9.11–9.13 provide the basis for this decision process: they explain the common types of ornaments in Classic and Romantic music and the various ways they were notated.

There is no species of ornaments more relevant to this discussion than the *grace note*. The term is often used indiscriminately:

- First, the term grace note is used to describe a notational symbol—a “little note,” or a smaller ornamental note that will be referred to by its Baroque name “*grace*.”

c • In the 18th and early-19th centuries *graces* were still written without slurs and slashes. Always add the slur, as has been done in many modern editions.

- Second, the term grace note is commonly used for two distinct types of one-note ornaments:

d • A true **grace note** is played *before* the beat, without any emphasis; it is very short. To indicate a grace note add a stroke over the main note or a slashed note above the *grace*; both symbols are shown here.

e • An **appoggiatura** is played *on* the beat, with a slight or strong emphasis to highlight its dissonant character (*appoggiare* means “to lean on”). Its note value is defined, though the precise length is determined by the performer (see below). To indicate an appoggiatura add a stroke over the *grace* or add rhythmic cues; both markings are shown here.

Table 9.11: The process of decoding ornamental symbols

- ① Examine the melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic context, as well as dynamics, articulation, and pace.
- ② Consider all stylistically appropriate interpretations. If necessary consult the explanations below as well as other literature listed at the beginning of this chapter.
- ③ Choose the interpretation that fits the context best.
- ④ **OM2** and **OM5** Prepare yourself for other viable interpretations in case the conductor makes a different choice.
- ⑤ At the rehearsal, ask the conductor about any ambiguous ornamental symbols, and if necessary add markings to your part—using vertical lines, rhythmic cues above the staff, and added accidentals. See the examples in this chapter.

a Haydn Symphony 96/ii
Andante [$\text{♩} = 92$]

b Mozart, *Don Giovanni* 1/4
Andante con moto [$\text{♩} = 76$]

c Mozart Div. K 131/iv
Allegretto [$\text{♩} = 72$]

Original notation: Played as grace notes: Played as appoggiaturas:

The first decision for the performer of 18th-century and early-19th-century music is whether the *grace* indicates a grace note or an appoggiatura. According to a popular rule of thumb, *graces* must be performed

- as appoggiaturas in Baroque and Classical music
- as grace notes in Romantic music.

When you practice from an unmarked part, generally abide by this rule because conductors follow it in the majority of cases. But from the 18th century to the present day, the proper performance of *graces* has been highly controversial, and there are arguably many exceptions to the above rule. There is strong evidence that 18th-century *graces* were frequently interpreted as grace notes (Türk 1789, III/3/§21/220, Neumann 1977, 48–199, Brown 1999, 460–63). We can only speculate to which extent the guidelines below were accepted during the age, but because they make musical sense we should not hesitate to consider them.

Musical context—harmony, melody, rhythm, articulation, dynamics—can help us to make decisions regarding performance practice. Play a *grace* as a grace note in the following situations (which include some overlaps):

- [f]** • (*harmony*) An appoggiatura may result in faulty voice-leading: here it would create parallel fifths between the first and second eighth notes, D–E over G–A (Neumann 1978, 138).
- [g]** • (*harmony*) The main note is a written-out appoggiatura: an appoggiatura to an appoggiatura sounds awkward.

- [h]–[i]** • (*melody*) Characteristic melodic elements should not be obscured; these include repeated notes (**[h]**), rising half steps (Ex. 5.11y), or a standard dotted cadential formula shown in **[i]**, $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$. Incidentally, the last-mentioned excerpt is also an example for a *Zwischenschlag*—a *grace* between two slurred notes, which should be played as a grace note in most cases.

- [j]–[k]** • (*rhythm*) Characteristic rhythms may not be obscured; these include:

- [j]**, **[a]** • triplets (with the grace note notated as *grace* or with a *tr* sign), compound rhythms, *siciliano* rhythms, syncopations, dotted rhythms
- [k]** • groups of even binary note values.

- [l]**, **[a]**, **[h]**, **[j]** • (*articulation*) The quality of notes with short articulation and notes followed by rests should not be obscured.

- [m]** • (*dynamics*) A *fp* or an accent should not shift to the *grace*.

Further, the second part of the above-mentioned rule of thumb (that *graces* should be played as grace notes in Romantic music) must be taken with a grain of salt:

- [n]** • In some 19th-century works slashed or unslashed *graces* have traditionally been played as appoggiaturas—particularly in expressive passages by Weber, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Wagner, Smetana, Dvořák, and J. Strauss, Jr.

Cantabile [♩ = 112]

[f]

Bach
Cantata 120/iii

Allegro [♩ = 80+]

[g]

Mozart
Flute 1/8

Larghetto [♩ = 56]

[h]

Mozart, *Idomeneo*
Ballet 32/ii

Andante [♩ = 112]

[j]

Mozart
Symphony 31/ii

Allegro [♩ = 120]

[k]

Haydn
Symphony 100/i

I
33

Mozart
Idomeneo I/2

Allegro con spirito [$\text{♩} = 76$]

m
6

Mozart
Giardiniera II/13

Allegro agitato [$\text{♩} = 80$]

n
191

Smetana
Moldau

L'istesso tempo [$\text{♩} = 76$]

If the performer decides to play a *grace* as an **appoggiatura** he or she is faced with a second decision: which note value should it receive? Many musicians of the late 18th century adopted what is known as *Tartini's Rule* (♩ 1753–56, 65–67): regardless of its notated value, a *grace* that indicates an appoggiatura receives

(o) • *half the value* of a binary note

(p) • *two-thirds the value* of a ternary note. (Occasionally, in recitative-like passages the *grace* receives the *full note value* if another note with the same pitch follows.)

It is likely that throughout the 18th century many *graces* were played according to *Tartini's Rule*:

(q) • Typical examples are passages with the pattern $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$, which is almost always to be played as $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$.

(r) • This also applies to the frequent passages in Rossini where the same pattern is notated with a slashed *grace*. Incidentally, through the early 19th century, some normal ♩ were written as ♩ .

But even in the late 18th century, performers frequently played appoggiaturas shorter than suggested by Tartini (♩ Brown 1999, 471). Further, composers such as Mozart began to apply carefully differentiated note values to appoggiaturas. A new school of writers demanded that the note value of the *grace* should determine its performance (♩ C.P.E. Bach 1753, I/ii/2/§5/63). The reason was the desire to bring more clarity into this particularly foggy area of performance practice.

(s) • Tartini's rule for ternary notes, associated with the *empfindsam* style of the mid 18th century, was apparently abandoned (♩ Brown 1999, 464). The *grace* was played according to its value.

Tartini's Rule

q
34

Mozart, Violin
Concerto 4/i

Allegro [$\text{♩} = 116-26$]

r
22

Rossini
Turco I/1

Allegro [$\text{♩} = 120$]

s
27

Mozart
Flute I/3

Larghetto [$\text{♩} = 60$]

t • But what remained especially controversial was the performance of ♩ : was it to be played, according to *Tartini's Rule*, as

♩ , or according to the notated value, as ♩ ?

t Menuetto Allegretto [♩ = 120]

Mozart
Symphony 28/iii

Multiple grace notes or “little notes” appear frequently as *Schleifer*. Generally play such scale segments shortly *before* the beat. Do this especially when one or more of the following conditions given above for short grace notes is met (cf. **f**–**m**):

u • The *Schleifer* precedes a characteristic rhythmic pattern, such as the *siciliano* (shown here).

v, **r** • The *Schleifer* precedes a note with short articulation.

w • The *Schleifer* is not found in all instruments: here the first trumpet, flute, and oboe play in unison with the first violins but have no ornament.

Ex. 6.3d • The *Schleifer* is written before the bar line.

According to Neumann (1989, 98), Mozart tended to use “little notes” for the pre-beat *Schleifer* and to write the on-the-beat version in full note values. But this is no ironclad rule, as an examination of the similar patterns in **b** and **v** will demonstrate.

x • When the *Schleifer* is written in full note values, equalize different note values: composers of Mozart’s generation generally did not yet write quintuplets or septuplets. (About the issue of over-dotting full-value *Schleifer* or assimilating them to a triplet background see Ex. 9.7w.)

u Grazioso [♩ = 60]

Mozart
Figaro

v Andante [♩ = 60+]

Mozart
Figaro

w [♩ = 108–68!]

Bach, Christmas
Oratorio I/1

x Andante [♩ = 100+]

Mozart
Figaro III/19


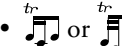
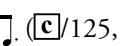

9.12 Ornaments (II): Doppelschläge

In order to avoid confusion with the turn of a trill, we will use the German term *Doppelschlag* (plural: *Doppelschläge*) for the type of turn that is used as an independent ornament.

During the Classic and early Romantic periods there was no congruence between *Doppelschlag* symbols and their performance. “Little notes,” \sim , \curvearrowright , \curvearrowleft , and *tr* were often used indiscrim-

inately for various types of *Doppelschläge*. Classifications such as the one in Table 9.12 are merely attempts to bring some clarity to this confusing and controversial topic and to provide some guidance for the performer. Remember that ultimately the decision is guided by the conductor’s taste.

Table 9.12: The Doppelschlag in the Classical and Romantic eras: types, notation, performance

<i>type</i>	<i>notation</i>	<i>suggested performance</i>
<p>Type A • Doppelschlag on a prominent note that is not connected to the next note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a note on the beat, usually a strong beat, followed by a rest (a, c) a note on the beat, usually a strong beat, with specified or implied short articulation (f/1 and 9, g, h, k, ccc/7) an off-beat note followed by a rest (m, o) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> three „little notes“ (a, f/9, g, o) ~ or ~ (f/1, h)  (k)  or  (c/125, k, m, ccc/7) <i>tr</i> (c/139–40) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> usually played on the beat (If the <i>Doppelschlag</i> were played before the beat, these figures would lose their essential rhythmic characteristics: the stressed beat would no longer sound like a clear downbeat and the repeated off-beats would sound „fuzzy“.) usually a four-note figure, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a triplet plus a longer note value (b, d, i, l, n) at a very fast pace, four notes of the same value (p) according to Neumann (n 1989, 119) a five-note figure if notated as ~ or <i>tr</i> (But this performance, shown in c, loses its elegance and is unrealistic in fast tempos.) occasionally before the beat, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> in order to highlight the short articulation (f/1 and 9, i, Haydn, <i>Symph.</i> 92/ii/52) in order to fit the ornament into a very fast rhythmic pattern (g) never —a common mistake!

a Allegretto |♩ = 84| **b** Play:

Mozart *Figaro* II/13

c Allegro assai |♩ = 60| **d** Play: **e** Acc. to Neumann's guidelines:

Mozart *Symphony* 33/i

f Menuetto. Allegretto |♩ = 120| **g** Presto |♩ = 69| **h** Allegro con brio |♩ = 69–76| **i** Play: **j** or:

Haydn *Symphony* 96/iii Mozart *Ov. Figaro*

k Allegro [moderato] |♩ = 108| **l** Play: **m** Allegro assai |♩ = 100+| **n** Play:

Haydn *Symphony* 6/iv Mozart, *Don Giovanni* I/13

o Andante |♩ = 66| **p** Play:

Rossini *Barber* I/4



Part 11

Profession and Career

In Part 11 we will discuss career issues that concern all professional orchestral violinists, regardless of the country in which they work or the type of orchestra in which they are employed.

11.1 Planning an Orchestral Career

➔ Tables 1.4a and 1.4c

If you are working as a professional violinist or intend to become one, invest time and energy into planning, building, and maintaining your career. Table 11.1 shows the individual stages of this process, based on the plan for task mastery shown in Table 1.4a.

Table 11.1: Planning your career: challenges, strategies, time goals, schedule

Stage 1 • Making career decisions (Ch. 11.2–11.5)

- **G** Examine the nature of orchestral work carefully before deciding to work toward a career as a professional orchestral musician (Ch. 11.2).
- Set specific career **G**oals: for which orchestras and for which positions are you aiming (Ch. 11.3–11.5)?
- Find out more specific **I**nformation about the type of orchestras and the responsibilities of the positions for which you intend to apply after graduation. In order to understand the options and requirements, you should talk to other players, gain experience working as a substitute, read reports and analyses of the everyday life of orchestral musicians, and explore the websites of orchestras and orchestral organizations (Ch. 12.1b–c and 12.7–12.8). You can rely on a large number of articles and books on aspects such as auditioning, orchestra organization, and medicine for the performing arts (see Chapter 12.4/o7). This step is crucial because working conditions vary drastically between countries and between

orchestras. Consult a career counselor. (An increasing number of conservatories offer this service.)

- Before applying for a position, **A**ssess your performance skills and determine your strengths and weaknesses. This is a crucial but difficult step. Audition as much as possible to test yourself and see how you stack up against your competition. Play for musicians who have no personal stake in your career and are likely to give you an impartial evaluation. Consider that it might be misleading to compare yourself to players who have been working in orchestras for a long time. The technical quality of orchestral musicians has risen substantially, while the ratio of graduates to open positions has increased in several countries (Ch. 1.3). Instead, compare your level of playing to violinists who have recently been hired. — Every time you arrive at a crucial point in your career, repeat this self-evaluation process.
- **P**lan your strategies according to the guidelines set forth in the following chapters. Establish time goals: decide what you want to accomplish in a month, three months, half a year, a year, a few years, and by the end of your career.

Stage 2 • Auditioning (Ch. 11.6)

- Set your **G**oals (see above).
- Collect **I**nformation, **P**lan your auditions, and gather application materials.
- Receive supplementary training and advice (lessons and audition workshops), and earn professional experience.
- Choose and perfect your Mozart concerto and other solo repertoire, and prepare orchestral excerpts.
- Practice sight-reading and sight-reading-plus.
- Prepare for other audition tests: playing a trial concert, playing chamber music, bowing a part, and interviewing.
- Practice the audition process.
- Learn to cope with performance anxiety.
- Learn to cope with post-audition stress.

Stage 3 • The first years in an orchestra (Ch. 11.7)

- Continue to improve your playing (and, if you like, prepare for auditions for better jobs). Expand your orchestral repertoire.
- Study the “mechanics” of an orchestra and optimize your performance in all areas of orchestral work: rehearsals, concerts, recordings, tours, educational programs, working with a conductor, working within a section, and working within the social structure of an orchestra.
- Learn to cope with unsatisfactory working conditions.

Stage 4 • Long-term work in an orchestra (Ch. 11.8)

- Learn to cope with the physical and mental challenges of long-term orchestral work.
- Attempt to prevent health problems, but learn to cope with them if they occur.
- Maintain your technique and musicianship so that they do not deteriorate.
- Continue to be motivated so as to avoid “burning out.”

11.2 Making a Career Decision: “Is This Profession Right for Me? Am I Right for This Profession?”

Any career decision should be based on a consideration of both your qualifications and the state of the job market. Self-evaluate your abilities and examine the economic prospects: “Am I good enough?” “Will I be able to make a living?” As described above, you can find answers to these questions by taking auditions and by researching the job market. But even if you have learned all the skills and acquired all the knowledge presented in Parts 2–10, even if your playing meets the standards at the auditions that you intend to take, even if there are sufficient open positions that would allow you to make a decent living—you still need to examine your level of motivation and your personality. Ask yourself two crucial questions:

- *Do I love playing in orchestras and do I want to do it professionally?*
- *Do I have the right personality for this career?*

More than a few orchestral violinists realize too late that they have never truly enjoyed what they do for a living. What they really have dreamed of since their childhood is a career as a soloist or chamber-musician (a dream often based on an unrealistic, idealized perception of a soloist’s or quartet player’s strenuous life and insecure existence). When this aspiration fails, playing in an orchestra seems like the next best (or only) way to earn a living as a violinist. Even if this type of orchestral player is rarer today than in the days of Carl Flesch (who saw a frustrated soloist in every orchestral violinist), this preference toward solo playing still continues to impact most violinists’ perception of themselves (♫ Flesch 1928/II, 70). Most recently, Pinchas Zukerman publicly spoke about violinists who join an orchestra “as the last resort” after realizing that they will never have a solo career (📖 Mazey 2006). But a soloist’s failed dreams are not sufficient reason to pursue a backup career as an orchestral musician. Not only are the repertoire, playing style, learning process, and work routine of an

orchestral musician different than those of a soloist (as described in Parts 2–10), but also the profession requires unique musician-skills and personality traits.

Above all, you must **love orchestral music**—or, to be precise, you must love the specific repertoire that you will play in the orchestras for which you are applying. Look at their recent repertoire, and self-reflect: “Do I want to play this music over a long stretch of time, possibly the rest of my life?” Only if you love this music will you be able to tolerate the taxing work conditions and often the unrewarding violin parts that characterize a good portion of the repertoire, especially if you pursue a career as a second violinist. In a sense, an orchestral player must be *more of a musician than an instrumentalist*. Naturally you need to master your instrument, but your passion must be at least as much for the music itself—specifically orchestral music—as for the violin.

This is an especially crucial issue for pit musicians. If you do not feel any affinity for opera, singing, and singers, coping with the everyday work of an opera musician will seem like sheer punishment for you. Your job will be miserable for you if, while sitting in the pit playing an inane second-violin part for an aria, you spend your time thinking, “I wish I were playing the solo in the Tchaikovsky Concerto instead!” Loving (or at least liking) the music you play is an even greater challenge for ballet or musical orchestras. Though much symphonic repertoire may be more gratifying for violinists, symphony musicians can also become disgruntled. If you already find yourself viewing the rehearsals and concerts of your conservatory orchestra as an annoying infringement on your practicing time and other “more valuable” musical activities, take this sentiment as a warning sign and seriously reexamine your career choice. Also, do not assume that all professional work will be more rewarding than playing in a student orchestra.

In addition to loving orchestral music, you must enjoy the nature of orchestral work and have the appropriate personality traits for it (📖 Stepanauskas 2001). The first principal challenge is **working in an ensemble**:

- You need to learn how to work in a team: not even a concertmaster’s or principal’s chair is a place for an outsized ego, an individualist, or a self-centered, inconsiderate personality. (For the sake of brevity only the male form concertmaster will be used from here on, but of course the same conclusions apply to concertmistresses.)
- You must feel comfortable working in a strict hierarchy, and must be willing to subordinate your artistry to that of someone else. Even if you think the conductor’s tempos or the concertmaster’s bowings are inappropriate, you still must execute their interpretation to the best of your abilities, without losing your enjoyment in the work.
- You need the ability to handle criticism, including misdirected or undeserved criticism.

Another principal challenge is coping with a fundamental disparity: while pursuing lofty artistic ideals you must cope continuously with unsatisfying working conditions that are beyond your control or influence (Ch. 11.7). This requires unique **personality traits**:

- You need the “rage to master” (📖 Winner 1996)—that is, you need to passionately strive for perfection, even if it seems like nobody will notice or care. Set the standards for your own performance very high, but do not get frustrated if attaining them seems impossible. Being a good orchestral musician often means doing good work in spite of whatever obstacles come your way.
- You need to find pride in good craftsmanship. Even if the overall performance seems to lack artistry, you must be able to find satisfaction and pleasure in simply playing a piece with good intonation, rhythm, and sound.
- You need a “workhorse mentality.” An orchestra is not a place for delicate personalities—you need to roll up your sleeves and work hard.
- You need the capacity to handle high levels of physical and emotional stress.
- You need a stable temperament, a cheerful outlook, a good sense of humor, and a playful attitude: contributing to a positive atmosphere is crucial for high-quality music-making, especially under stressful conditions. Funny, witty, clever remarks—but not derogatory, sarcastic comments made at the expense of others—can often defuse tense situations or make frustrating rehearsals more bearable. Even little pranks that may seem silly to outsiders will help you cope with some horrible music and grueling work. After all, orchestral musicians make their living by “playing.”
- **OMI** You need a strong sense of decency, loyalty, and integrity. Emulate the orchestral musicians who possess all these traits and have learned to cope with the adversities of their work environments. Contrary to the clichés about disgruntled musicians, there is a relatively high job satisfaction rate among professional orchestral musicians—indicating that many have found ways to cope with the stress and difficulty of their career (📖 Kivimaki 1994, 📖 Bernstein 1986, 📖 Allmendinger 1996, 201, 📖 Olbertz 2004, 📖 Paternoga 2005, 16). Their love for what they are doing is so strong that they can tolerate bad work hours, physical discomfort, and often insufficient financial compensation. If you adopt this attitude, you will have a better chance to become happy in your chosen profession.

11.3 Career Goals (I): “Which Orchestra is Right for Me?”

After you have made the decision to become an orchestral musician, you need to define your career goals more specifically. Some violinists have no choice but to apply for every vacant orchestral job in their region, because there are so few. But others may find themselves faced with a choice between vastly different career paths—especially if they are willing to search for orchestral work globally (📖 Cahill 2004, 60–72). You should base any career decisions on a careful examination of the options available to you and the corresponding requirements.

- For the *top symphony orchestras*, which go on international tours and play live broadcasts as well as studio recordings,

technical perfection and polished sound are indispensable. Because there is sometimes little rehearsal time, familiarity with the standard symphonic repertoire is expected. For example, the top British orchestras often play several different programs in a single week, with barely a run-through for works in the standard repertoire.

- In *medium- and small-sized symphony orchestras* (including semi-professional community ensembles), the repertoire and quality of work vary greatly and depend to a large degree on the institutional structure, funding, and other factors. Sometimes these ensembles cooperate with an opera or ballet company.
- In *opera orchestras* rhythmic flexibility and the ability to learn a lot of music in a short amount of time are essential. This is especially true for repertory companies in Germany and Austria. It applies less to opera companies who use the Italian *stagione* system; they usually proceed one opera at a time, finishing a series of performances (with the same singers, players, and conductor throughout) before moving onto rehearsals for the next production.
- Similar skills are required from the members of European-style “*allround orchestras*.” Such city- or state-funded ensembles play symphonic repertoire on the concert stage as well as operas, operettas, musicals, and ballets in the pit. The repertoire is particularly large in the orchestras of the major European opera houses, which often play over ten premieres in a single season, in addition to a standing repertoire of thirty or even more operas, operettas, and ballets (most with little or no rehearsal) as well as additional symphony programs. As a novice member of the orchestra, you might be faced for the first time with operas by Strauss, Wagner, and Verdi—all in the same week and all without rehearsal! Some such orchestras are very large, with 150 or more full-time musicians. Others are small, performing *Tannhäuser* or *Tosca* with as few as eight first violins; these performances require secure players with a very sturdy sound.
- A specific type of orchestra common especially in Europe and Asia is the *radio symphony orchestra* (RSO)—a large, high-caliber ensemble affiliated with a radio or television network. Examples are the orchestras of the British BBC, the Hamburg NDR, or the Tokyo NHK. Most radio orchestras were founded originally to promote the contemporary music of their own countries and to record rare repertoire. But nowadays many have turned into excellent touring symphony orchestras, playing mostly standard repertoire (though still with a slight emphasis on contemporary music). As is the case with the top symphony orchestras, recording with a radio symphony orchestra requires perfect intonation and rhythm and a polished sound quality.
- A small number of full-time, high-caliber, professional *chamber orchestras* play mostly repertoire from the 18th and 20th centuries. Musicians in these ensembles need a very clean technique and soloistic qualities, as well as the willingness to tour extensively.
- In addition, many orchestras are hired—permanently or for a limited time span—for *specialized repertoire or tasks*: early

music, contemporary music, choral music, musicals, ballets, commercial and film music (studio work), children's concerts, festivals, and so on. Naturally, musicians must master the technique, performance practice, playing style, and working style associated with each venue.

Ironically, the emergence of specialized orchestras has paralleled the opposite trend: in recent decades, orchestral musicians—both collectively and individually—have been forced to **become more versatile**.

- Symphony orchestras have begun to hire conductors of period-instrument ensembles to reintroduce formerly “forbidden” 18th-century repertoire to their concert programs. This has meant that orchestras now require their players to be familiar with issues of performance practice.
- Even orchestras known traditionally for conservative programming have begun to play more contemporary music.
- Symphony orchestras put on opera gala concerts or take on partial seasons in the pit.
- Opera orchestras have added symphony concerts to their season.
- Opera houses stage musicals and use the same orchestras that play operas by Mozart, Verdi, or Wagner.
- Ballet orchestras play entire symphonies by Mahler or Shostakovich in the pit.
- Classical orchestras play “pops” or cross-over concerts, accompany pop stars, and record movie soundtracks.
- Musicians take on extra work outside their traditional field. Symphony musicians, for instance, accept freelance work in opera houses, musical orchestras, period-instrument ensembles, studios, and other venues.

In order to prepare yourself for such wide-ranging tasks, **keep the scope of your repertoire and playing style as wide as possible**.

With respect to **pay, benefits, typical length of employment, and job security**, the differences between various countries and even between orchestras within the same region are vast. (Do not assume a direct link between salary and the artistic quality of an ensemble [Allmendinger 1996, 215–216].) In some European countries—notably Germany, Austria, Switzerland, the Benelux, and Scandinavia—even the small, lower-level orchestras generally provide a decent standard of living, excellent benefits, and a secure existence comparable to those of a government employee. Players might even be granted the option of a part-time tenured position while they raise children. In other countries, by contrast, orchestral musicians rush from one freelance job to the next—always waiting for phone calls, never knowing what the next day will bring, fearing sickness, and supplementing their salary with teaching or less rewarding jobs (Tubiana 2000, 197).

11.4 Career Goals (II): The Concertmaster

➔ 📖 Heider 1975 • 2000 📖 Lang Eddlemon 1980 • 📖 Mischa-koff 2006 • 📖 Payne 2008, 📖 Solare 2011

Some players find fulfillment playing in the second-violin section of a good orchestra, whereas others only feel happy in a leading

position, even if this means lower artistic quality or pay. At some point, many orchestral violinists must decide which of these two paths to pursue.

All orchestral violin positions (listed in 🌐 Wulffhorst 2013, Ch. 16) are associated with different tasks, different qualifications, and varying levels of recognition, responsibility, and stress. Certainly the concertmaster needs to possess a particularly wide range of specialized skills. But do not forget that many of the concertmaster's qualifications and tasks are shared by the other leadership positions and that between one-sixth and one-third of all violin positions in most orchestras have leadership responsibilities (including the associate or assistant concertmaster, principal or sub-principal, and section player with an “assigned chair,” who leads when needed). Because of the characteristics that these positions share, all aspiring orchestral violinists should read the following description.

Artistic responsibility • In some respects your role as a concertmaster is to complement the conductor, to share his or her artistic leadership, and to serve as the link between orchestra and conductor.

- You translate the conductor's interpretation into technical terms for the strings. You ask questions to clarify dynamics, articulation, timbre, character, and performance-practice philosophy (see the questions raised in Part 9).
- You diplomatically steer the conductor in the right direction should he or she waste or misuse rehearsal time or demand sounds that are technically unrealistic or musically inappropriate.
- You strive to maintain musical standards even when the conductor fails to do so. The best preparation is to gain experience as a section player in a top orchestra in order to develop a sense for high-level, polished orchestral playing.
- You help shape the profile of the orchestra by developing a suitable performance style and philosophy.
- You help to defuse conflicts between conductor and orchestra. (It is best to do this outside the rehearsal studio.)
- You assist in developing a vision for the section and the orchestra—for instance, by helping to hire suitable players.

Personal qualities • You need leadership qualities such as integrity and reliability as well as interpersonal skills. Read one of the many excellent handbooks on leadership (📖 Kouzes 2012). Again, experience as a section player will teach you what it means to “work on the other side.”

One trait that sets successful concertmasters apart from other equally qualified violinists is a “thick skin”: you must be able to give your best even under extreme pressure and under the most adverse circumstances. You must be able to cope with a very high stress level and with relentless criticism (deserved and undeserved) from fellow players and conductors.


Prepare and **practice all tutti passages** so that you can answer any questions from conductors and fellow players, demonstrate the execution of tricky or “impossible” spots, and play everything in the appropriate style. Lead by example with impeccable intonation, rhythm, articulation, and sound. Be entirely consistent

and reliable in your bow division and other elements of playing so that the other players can model their playing easily on your own. Even more than section players, you need a clear and comprehensive style grid. **OM3** Most important, for the concertmaster the “eighty-twenty focus” becomes a “fifty-fifty focus.” You need to master your part so that you can devote considerable concentration to specific tasks such as leading, coordinating, and listening to other sections for homogeneous articulation and balance.

Impeccable concertmaster **solos** are especially important in the top orchestras, in which the section players—all of them highly accomplished violinists in their own right—expect their leader to shine as a famous soloist would. The most demanding and popular solos can be identified from lists of audition repertoire (Table 11.6/A). But there are countless others, many of them quite tricky (see the list in Table 11.4a). The challenges presented by these solos require special preparation.

- They demand the full range of virtuosic techniques: difficult shifts, ascents to the ultra-high range (to Ab^4 in Gounod’s *Faust* II/12), tricky trills (*Swan Lake* I/5b/47), tenths and other difficult double stops, chords (*Swan Lake* III/App.), harmonics (Rimsky, *Scheherazade*/iv/2+10), and linked staccato (Nicolai’s *Wives* II/ix/7c). The better you are able to master the virtuosic solo repertoire, the easier such passages will be for you.
- Yet most solos are not flashy but lyrical: the violin sings and soars. This kind of writing requires ravishing sound and phrasing, exquisite bow and vibrato colors, tasteful portamenti, the ability to shape melodies, and the ability to create a “magical” atmosphere. A cantilena such as the one found in the third of Strauss’s *Four Last Songs*, arguably the most beautiful solo in the entire repertoire, calls for the most expressive,

noble, captivating lyricism that the violin is capable of achieving. Keep experimenting with such melodies until you arrive at an interpretation that completely satisfies you. The solos from Puccini’s *Butterfly* or from ballet scores by Delibes, Minkus, and Tchaikovsky or from Scriabin’s symphonies are ideal introductions to this expressive style, which was also imitated in operetta and film scores.

- Creativity is also required for several notorious violin cadenzas, the epitome of which is found in Strauss’s *Heldenleben*. Listen, for instance, to Michel Schwalbé’s perhaps unsurpassed interpretation of Strauss’s capricious score on the Karajan recording (© Strauss 1974).
- An important part of this creative challenge is designing suitable fingerings and bowings, usually without relying on published editions (exceptions are  Bach 1996 and a few other scores listed in Chapter 12.6).

Task 11.4a • For practicing purposes, work out fingerings and bowings in some solos from Table 11.6/A.


- For solos in *concerti grossi*, serenade-type pieces, and 18th-century symphonies, you need to add stylish ornaments—particularly for repeated sections—and write your own fermata embellishments, *Eingänge* (lead-ins to the return of a rondo theme), and cadenzas. Any training in theory and composition and any experience in improvising will be helpful.

a-c • Two suggestions for a typical *Eingang*—a minimal one for the first time **b** and a longer one for the repeat **c**—illustrate this special task.


- **Task 11.4b** • Prepare so that you are not at a loss when you cannot find a published fermata embellishment or cadenza: write your own *Eingänge* and cadenzas for one or more of Mozart’s Serenades (*Colloredo*, *Serenata notturna*, *Haffner*). Compare them to other players’ versions in performances and on recordings.

a Rondeau. Allegretto [$\text{♩} = 100$]


Mozart, Serenade K. 239/iii
vn. 1 solo *p* *f* *simile* *p*



b Eingang:



c Alternative Eingang for the repeat:
meno mosso



- Many concertmaster solos resemble sections from a violin concerto: you need a soloist's intensity of sound to project over an entire orchestra and a soloist's presence to draw attention to your line. Though most lyrical solos are marked *p*, you will often need to separate slurs and design soloistic fingerings (emphasizing low positions for more resonant sound). Do not be misled by the distorted balance between solo and orchestra textures found on most recordings.
- Unlike in a concerto, however, you do not have enough time to warm up or to draw the audience gradually into your musical world. With just a few notes you must instantly create a special atmosphere (🎵 Dicterow 2008). Practice and experiment so that you know what you want to express and how to achieve that goal from the first note of the passage. In order to do this, prepare solos as thoroughly and diligently as you would prepare a solo concerto. Study the full score so that you know what happens in the orchestra before and during your solo. Rehearse with a good pianist who can play from a full score (because piano reductions are available only for a few solos, listed in Table 11.4a, categories **(VP)** and **(P)**). Many vocal coaches, rehearsal pianists, and conductors possess these skills. Even playing with a music-minus-one recording might be helpful (🎵 🎧 Music Minus One 2006); use appropriate software if you want to change the tempo or fine-tune the pitch (Ch. 12.11).
- When performing concertmaster solos, you seldom have much say in matters of tempo and pacing. Prepare all concertmaster solos at different tempos—especially ballet solos, which are often played at a pace that is technically or musically uncomfortable, if not downright absurd. Tchaikovsky's *White Swan* solo, for instance, is often taken so slowly that violinists resort to moving the scales to the third eighth of every beat.
- **OMS** Prepare so that you can perform all solos perfectly from the very first note, even under adverse conditions (after a long, draining *tutti* passage, or at the end of a long opera). Simulate the conditions for playing solos that follow either strenuous *tutti* passages (for example, the final solo in *Scheherazade*) or a long waiting period (for example, about nine minutes before no. 31 of the *Christmas Oratorio*). Try the strategies suggested in Chapter 3.10 to cope with performance anxiety, and remember Gingold's advice: concertmasters should “look forward to their solos” (📖 Gingold 1979, 26).



Table 11.4a: Solo passages for the concertmaster

• A select list (including a list of piano accompaniments)

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<http://www.orch.info>



You always need to devote a substantial portion of your concentration and energy to **leading**. This means foremost that you are utterly reliable in all matters of counting and rhythm. But there are many other aspects of leading from the concertmaster's chair:

- Study the full score so that
 - you know who plays with whom
 - you know all the traps and pitfalls of rhythmically complex scores
 - you can support the conductor in tricky passages, especially in programs that are typically under-rehearsed, such as opera gala concerts.
- Listen to and keep visual contact with the other string principals, the wind and brass principals, the timpanist and percussionists, the conductor, the soloist(s), and—not least of all—the rest of your section. Often you need to adopt a “backward orientation”—that means you must listen to and feel how the section behind you plays.
- Everything you do must be *predictable*. Cuing the preparation for an entrance after a rest, for instance, must always be done consistently. After a very long rest use a staggered signal: *one*, time to get ready and to pick up your violin halfway; *two*, raise your violin and bow all the way.
- You develop a sense for the fine line between playing so far ahead that it is clearly audible and waiting so long that you make the other section members very insecure and afraid to come in ahead of you. Leading means playing with the orchestra. In fact, most of the time the other players *should* not even be aware that you are leading.
- The basic principle behind a concertmaster's motions is that he or she must “conduct” with his or her body and instrument. (This is one reason why concertmasters should study conducting.) Motions should be smooth and organic, never jerky or pointed. They must always come out of the momentum of the music, like the upbeats and impulses a good conductor gives. As a conductor would do, you should match the style and size of your motions to the size of the orchestra, the difficulty of the rhythmic challenges, and other circumstances. As the concertmaster of a large orchestra you will need larger, clearer motions than you would as the concertmaster of a chamber orchestra, even if these motions might occasionally seem exaggerated to the players sitting directly behind you. It can be frustrating for the other musicians if, in an uncomplicated and well-rehearsed passage, the concertmaster flails around with theatrical motions but if he or she “hides” during tricky passages. The section and orchestra need your leadership especially at the beginnings of movements, at transitions, in passages with *rubato* (particularly in solo concertos), in operatic performances throughout (especially recitatives), and in performances with inexperienced or inept conductors.
- You must adapt your aural presence to the situation, too: when a performance begins to lose its way, the string section needs to hear the concertmaster. But a recording might be ruined if the concertmaster's sound sticks out. Even in chaotic situations you should never use aggressive sound or motions and never excessively accent the beats.