



## The Language of the Violin:

*Violin bowing according to 16th, 17th and some 18th-century evidence in violin and general music treatises: a close look at Michel Pignolet de Montéclair's Methode acile pour apprendre a Jouer le Violon (1711) and the implications of these bowings for general bowing techniques (Prima parte)*

Susanne Scholz

### A Short Introduction

Speaking about bowing indications for the violin means much more than just making rules to determine the direction of the bow-stroke - it reveals much about the language, the rhythmical possibilities and the art of violin playing as a whole and shows why this instrument was so much en vogue in the Baroque era, where word and articulation was given such special emphasis in music.

This article aims to present the evidence of bowing indications that can be found in 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>-century treatises on violin playing and on music in general. It is additionally intended to encourage violinists to not only read the information provided, but also apply it in order to gain new, enlightening insights on the performance practice of this period.

It is a simple fact that we do not have available to us endless evidence of bowing rules from written sources. There are some important ones, however, and reading these sources provides a clear picture of different styles and their reflections in bowing and bowing technique.

On the following pages, I will present all the evidence on this that is known to me, beginning in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century and moving up to the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The emphasis will be on French sources, which indications pertaining to bowing are not only the most numerous, but also the most detailed.

Among these, I will pay special attention to the tutor of Michel Pignolet de Montéclair—the information it provides about bowing is exceedingly revealing, and the examples therein demonstrate explicitly this information's application within the musical context.

A brief excursus will contain a cursory overview of various bow holds described in the written sources, as well as a word about the connection between bow hold, bow model and bowing.

After briefly summing up the section on bowing evidence in the treatises, there follows a section about the implications of the quoted bowing indications for general bowing techniques. A concise conclusion will end this article, which will hopefully prove to be a source of enlightening information for the gentle reader.

### General evidence for bowing practices in treatises from Silvestro Ganassi (1545) to John Playford (1665)

Why is the issue of bowing so important to violin playing?

In our day and age, we for the most part want to know how to arrange our bowing, how to get our bowing patterns “right” again. “Right” does entail taking a down-bow on important beats. But why do most violin players feel instinctively that the down-bow is the good one, to be employed on important notes? This instinct goes back to the early days of the violin, to the aesthetic of the Renaissance, when music was divided into good and bad notes and the bow in use was neither straight nor balanced in its weight.

The first violin bows were actual “bows”, being of a convex form, and they very soon grew heavier at the frog than at the tip. The consequence is unequal bow strokes, dividing the sequence of down-bow, up-bow into good and bad notes.

The various bow models were to share the same general shape—convex in form and unequal in weight—for quite some time. This can be seen as late as in the treatise of Leopold Mozart<sup>1</sup>, and we will return to this matter for a more detailed discussion later on.

The binary nature of this system is the origin of all questions regarding bowing. This is why bowing has been, is, and always will be a main subject in violin playing. Whether we want it to or not, simply drawing the bow in one or the other direction influences the music in a powerful way. Of course, this is more easily felt playing with a baroque bow that possesses the abovementioned properties than with later models, which grew more and more straight and equal in weight.

This article deals with the various historically valid possibilities of handling this inequality and the consequences of choosing one or the other. It is not about articulation marks such as slurs, but will rather concentrate on evidence for bowing rules given in historical sources as basic and rather objective information on historical violin techniques with which to inform violin playing.

The evidence available to us is not infinitely vast, and I would first like to take a look at why this is case:

In the writings authored around the time at which the violin family was born, violin playing is clearly classified as professional work—in contrast to viol playing, which is viewed as a noble way in which to spend leisure time. In 1556, **Philibert Jambe de Fer**<sup>2</sup> described this basic difference quite colourfully:

On the viol:

“We call viol that with which gentlemen and merchants and other people of virtue pass their time.”<sup>3</sup>

On the violin (always meaning the whole family):

“The other kind is called violin, and it is this one which is used for common dancing, and for a good reason: because it is the easiest to tune, because the fifth is smoother to hear than is the fourth .... I have not given you a picture of this violin because you can imagine it as being like a viol, and because there are few people using it apart from those who are living off of it through their labour.”<sup>4</sup>

This distinction between the two instruments provides us with the key as to why few treatises explaining the violin instruments (and especially their playing techniques) were written prior to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and why we always have to exercise care in reading what was written: it was mostly intended not to teach but to discuss—or, in the case of general music writings, it was very basic.

We have to assume that violin playing was done by professional players who would often have played several instruments and, in the first decades of violin playing, also actually made their instruments themselves. After its modest initial role in dance ensembles and outdoor music, the violin was quite soon allowed to assume more prestigious duties such as playing indoors to entertain gentlemen, and it was even admitted into churches. Nevertheless, violin playing remained a craft which was passed on from master to student, the knowledge being the treasure and the property of the former. Other crafts such as instrument building and string making, which are also quite important to historically



informed performance, remain so difficult to reconstruct because of similar circumstances.

Due to the lack of information concerning the violin family just explained above, the first source to quote here is **Silvestro Ganassi's** tutor for the viola da gamba<sup>5</sup>, written at a time when the difference between the two instrument families of the viola da gamba and the violin was not as obvious and distinct as it would be just a few decades later. Ganassi's indications for the bowing are very basic, starting with the single-most important, omnipresent first rule: always begin with a down-bow. On the other hand his description of the feeling when playing with the "wrong bowing" (playing a strong note or beat with an up bow) is so very expressive and colourful, I would not want to withhold it from the reader: He compares it to a swordsman using his left arm due to the loss of his right arm, and advises the player to also exercise this "wrong way"—as in some cases its use might be unavoidable when playing several "groppe<sup>6</sup>" one after the other<sup>6</sup>.

If we turn to the sources on violin playing which emphasise our theme of bow strokes and bowing in general, we receive our first glimpse of historical practices in what **Riccardo Rognoni** wrote in 1592<sup>7</sup>:

He presents rules for viol AND violin playing distinct one from the other, the first being the most important one of always beginning with a down bow. Further on, he explains how, when playing a long note in the midst of small notes, one should play the small notes after the long one with a second down-bow in order to have the "correct" bowing for the fast "diminution" notes—especially if there are many of them.

His son **Francesco Rognoni**<sup>8</sup>, writing in 1620, tells us first of all about the importance of lovely bow strokes in tempering and smoothing out the sound of an otherwise raw and acid instrument, by which he of course means the violin.

He gives us explanations on bowing technique which will be cited later on, after which he comes to bowing pattern indications.

He states that after a "whole" rest there has to be a down-bow, whereas a shorter rest must be followed with an up-bow. The same is to be done if it is not a rest, but then he adds that notes of the same value should be begun with a down-bow, whereas if there is a longer note at the beginning it can be taken with an up-bow. "And this should be its nature in all kinds of pieces."

This seems to be congruent with Riccardo Rognoni, and as we shall see later on: in these two descriptions, we already have the principle questions: where do I change the bow to get it "right" again? Do I retake the bow at the moment at which it would otherwise "go wrong", or do I think further in advance and begin the passage differently?

The solutions offered by Rognoni father and son remained relevant for a long time, still being found, for example, as late as Leopold Mozart in 1756<sup>9</sup>.

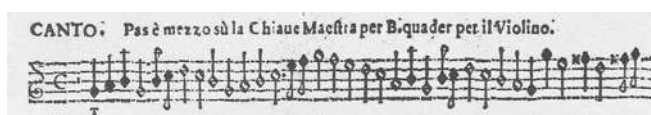
The next treatise to be mentioned is a general one: the *Harmonie Universelle* of **Marin Mersenne** (1636)<sup>10</sup>, which contains descriptions of music and musical instruments with the aim of explaining everything. Even so, Mersenne's writing about the violin family is rather extensive and also includes some indications for bowing. Mersenne is the first to write about the first note in a bar (with the use of standard-length bars being a rather new convention): he states that every first note in a bar must be played with a down-bow, while the following note is to be taken as an up-bow—meaning that within a regular bar, the bow should be played down-up, down-up and so on. Then he goes on to become the first to mention the problem-of-all-problems for string

players: how to bow a bar of three beats. He states that it is to be played down-up-down, up-down-up, down-up-down and so on. This contradicts the first rule, of course, but this inconsistent manner of thinking is exactly what we are going to see more of in the following pages and statements. Before leaving Mersenne, we should take good note of his statement that, in France in 1636, the first beat in a bar of three beats could be played with an up-bow. This would be different in France some decades later.

Returning to Italy we come across a very special piece of evidence which indicates bowings for violin instruments: Gasparo Zanetti, whose violin treatise (and such it is called) contains "Arie, Passi e mezzi, Saltarelli, Gagliarde, Zoppe, Balletti, Alemanne, & Correnti accompagnate con tutte le quattro parti cioè Canto, Alto, Tenore, & Basso" (all written in four parts). The description continues: "con una aggiunta d'intavolatura de Numeri non più datti alla Stampa" (with the addition of a tablature in numbers not anymore given to print). All the dances are written on the left page in common practice notation and on the right page in tablature. Both notations contain indications for bowings: a "T" for tirare and a "P" for pontare.

About half of the 88 dances include bowing indications, most of them for the first note, often for the beginning of the following parts and some on special occasions.

If we take a closer look at these indications, we can observe the following: primary Zanetti indicates a down bow for all first notes starting on a strong, a "good" beat. (All indications are given in all parts and in both notation systems)



Example from page 6



Same example in tablature notation on page 7

Upbeats are to be played with an up bow, even if a whole bar of three is meant to be an upbeat.



Example from page 8

Sometimes in writing an up bow Zanetti suggests that an otherwise "good" note is to be played as an upbeat - in special cases this occurs in only one part whilst the other parts start with a good note and corresponding down bow as in the following example:





Example from page 10

As we can see in the above example, looking at the "Canto", Zanetti uses a second down bow for two smaller notes after a longer one. We can also assume that he does not indicate all the necessary bowings. For example the last "T" in the line above would not need to be indicated if it were not for the additional change of the bow before (which might probably happen after the second half note with a point).

In the following example we see that the second "P" would only be necessary if it followed earlier bow changes not indicated by the author. We also discover a second possibility for getting on the "right" bow again, as the second "P" most likely indicates a second up bow for a short note after a long note which occurs to be on a strong beat.



Example from page 8

This example is even more significant because all voices contain a similar rhythm and the same bowing solution.

As stated above, Zannetti's book deserves its own article, but we can conclude that he uses down and up bows to indicate "good" and "bad" notes, not only in order to obey the dance rhythm but also to indicate different rhythmical patterns. Further on he uses a second down bow for at least two smaller notes after a longer one, and also indicates a second down bow for the first strong beat in a bar of three beats.

For the next treatise we go to England, where **John Playford** published several editions of *The Musical Companion*<sup>11</sup> (which was another general treatise on music with a small section addressing the violin). Reading the edition of 1667, we learn the following: "Fourthly, In the moving your Bow up and down observe this Rule, when you see an even number of Quavers and Semi-quavers, as 2,4,6, or 8, tyed together, your Bow must move up or forwards, though it was up at the Note immediately before; but if you have an off number, as 3, 4(corr.5), or 7, (which happens very often by reason of a prickt Note or an odd Quaver Rest) there your Bow must draw back at the first Note."

From a present-day point of view, this is a far from clear statement. However you read it, the indications all seem to be the wrong way round: instead of down it says up bow. We could try to interpret it in many different ways but a closer look at the part of Playford's collection which describes how to play the Viol offers the most probable solution: Playford most likely copied the bowing indications from the viol, without realising that on the violin by that time a "viol down bow" is an "up" and vice versa (we remember Riccardo Rognoni<sup>12</sup>).

If we invert all the bowing indications, we get a result very similar to the indications given by Gasparo Visconti<sup>13</sup> some years later.

At any rate this example makes obvious just how difficult and subjective reading such primary sources can be, and just how much the reading is left to our interpretation wether we want it or not!

**A brief excursus on the topic of various bow holds described in written sources from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as well as on the connection between bow holds, bow models and bowings**

Before we come to more bowing examples written into the music of Bismantova (1677), Falck (1688), Merck (1695), Muffat (1698), Visconti/Preleur (1705/1731), and then continue with Montéclair (1712), also giving some idea of what was stated in treatises published later than Montéclair's such as those of Dupont (1718), Corette (1738), Majer (1732/1741) and finally Geminiani (1751), I would like to mention a topic closely related to bowing patterns: the bow hold and, in connection with this, the national styles which affected music and bowing techniques themselves.

If we survey the vast iconographic evidence, we can distinguish various bow holds from different times and places.

Generally, the possibilities for all instruments of the violin family are:

1a. bow hold with four fingers on the stick and the thumb below the frog

1b. the same hold as above, but with the thumb below the hair so as to be able to alter the tension of the hair

With these two bow holds, the little finger could be on the stick or—as is sometimes described—placed on the side of the stick (see Corette, below)

(Both the bow holds are also referred to here as the French and/or German bow hold)

2. bow hold with the four fingers on the stick and the thumb gripping the stick from below, sometimes at a distance to the frog

(also referred to here as the Italian bow hold)

And only for instruments held somewhere other than on the left or right shoulder or breast (for which the three possibilities given above are all valid) the following bow holds were also possible:

- a viola da gamba bow hold with either the middle or ring finger regulating the tension of the hair

- a bow hold still in use today by Viennese-school contrabass players in which the inner part of the (higher) frog is grasped by the middle and ring fingers.

Since there exist only few written descriptions of playing violin instruments other than the soprano violin, and since it is often stated that the soprano violin's rules are to be applied on bass instruments as well<sup>14</sup>, we will concentrate on the first three of the aforementioned possibilities, for the most part keeping close to the treatises quoted within this article. We shall do so first in an overview (see Table 1) and then proceed to a more detailed explanation:

Coming back to the texts which include indications concerning the bow hold itself, we must note that the early treatises by Jambe de Fer, Riccardo and Francesco Rognoni, Mersenne and Zanetti, quoted above, are silent on this issue<sup>15</sup>. Playford<sup>16</sup>, being the first to mention it, writes in 1667:

"...and the Bow is held in the right hand, between the ends of the Thumb and the 3 first Fingers, the Thumb being staid upon



	Bow hold 1a (4 fingers on the stick, thumb below the frog)	Bow hold 1b (4 fingers on the stick, thumb below the hair)	Bow hold 2 (4 fingers on the stick, thumb below the stick)
Playford (London 1667)		☼	
Prinner (? Austria 1677)		☼ (all "artists and masters")	☼ (Italian, and near the middle of the bow)
Falck (Nuremberg 1688)		☼	
Muffat (Passau 1698)		☼ (French and German for the violin; French, also for the bass)	☼ (Italian for the violin, thumb position not specified)
Montéclair (Paris 1712)	☼		
Majer (Nuremberg 1732/41)		☼	
Corette (Paris 1738)	☼ French (little finger beside the stick)	☼ French (little finger beside the stick)	☼ (Italian at three quarters of the bow's length)
Geminiani (London 1751)			☼ (at a small distance from the nut)

the Hair at the Nut, and the three fingers resting upon the Wood: Your Bow being thus fixed, you are first to draw an even stroke over each string severally, making each String yield a clear and distinct sound." He is clearly describing a French/German hold with the thumb being on the hair.

Bismantova<sup>17</sup> and Merck<sup>18</sup> give no description of how to hold the violin or bow, while Falck<sup>19</sup> recommends pushing with the thumb onto the hair near the frog to get a full-sounding (*satter*) stroke, and holding the bow with the first two segments of the fingers. Again, this is a bow hold with the thumb being on the hair.

In the foreword to his instrumental suites, Georg Muffat<sup>20</sup> provides very detailed information about how the French musicians playing with J. B. Lully, the so-called "Lullists", played and how they performed. He describes that most of the Germans agreed with the French in pressing the hair with the thumb and placing the other fingers on the stick of the bow. This was also how the bass players in France were, in general, holding their bows. By way of contrast, he describes the bow hold of the Italians ("*Welschen*"), who do not touch the hair, and he states that the bass players (albeit not the French ones) and the viola da gamba players put their fingers in between the stick and the hair.

So from Muffat we learn about two bow holds for the violin: a French one which is identical to what we have just learned from Playford, Bismantova and Falck, and a second possibility used by the Italians which would either be with the thumb on the frog (No. 1 on the table above) or a bow hold close to that of the present day, with the thumb on the stick (No. 3 on the table above).

To present the most complete picture possible, I would also like to quote Jacob Prinner<sup>21</sup> (1677), whose rather vulgar manuscript contains no bowing examples but does describe two possible bow holds similar to those in Muffat, but with a slight difference: Prinner gives a rather strange description according to which the Italians held the bow only between the thumb and the "other" finger, and nearly at the middle of the bow. He tells us that real Masters and artists do not approve of this bow hold, admonishing the reader to instead hold the bow closer to the frog with the thumb on the hair and the other fingers on the stick<sup>22</sup>.

So again, two possibilities with geographical associations.

We now take a big step in order to have a look at a third source describing two ways of holding the bow: Michel Corette in his *L'Ecole d'Orphée*, which is a violin treatise (Corette published

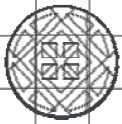
around twenty treatises on how to play all sorts of instruments). He likewise describes the two main bow holds: the Italian one holding the bow with four fingers on the stick at about three quarters of its length, and the French hold on the frog-end, putting three fingers on the stick and the little one on its side. In contrast to Prinner, who makes the Italian bow hold appear ridiculous, Corette describes them as being equally good, with the choice between them depending on which maître was teaching.

To complete the list of sources, Montéclair (1712), Majer (1732/1741)<sup>24</sup> and Geminiani (1751) also give advice on how to hold the bow. Dupont<sup>25</sup> does not mention it, nor do two additional English sources by Visconti (1706)<sup>26</sup> and Prelleur (1731)<sup>27</sup>; these last two do contain other indications regarding bowing, however, and will therefore be quoted later on.

In his *Simple Method of Learning to Play the Violin*, Montéclair adheres to the French bow hold with the thumb beneath the frog. Majer remains very close to Falck (as in the rest of his treatise; both are generic, encyclopaedic works)—this means that, according to Majer (writing in Germany in 1741), the violin bow was at this time still held with the thumb below the frog to regulate the tension of the hair<sup>28</sup>. Geminiani<sup>29</sup> states in his violin treatise that "The Bow is to be held at a small Distance from the Nut, between the Thumb and Fingers, the Hair being turned inward against the Back or Outside of the Thumb, in which Position it is to be held free and easy, and not stiff."

This clearly indicates an Italian bow hold, and the precise way he describes it already reflects the Age of Enlightenment.

According to this brief survey, we can clearly see a gradual shift from the bow hold generally used in the violin's early days—with the thumb on the hair—to the clearly divided customs at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, with the French still using the "old" bow hold with the thumb on the hair or the frog, and the Italians using a "new" bow hold with the thumb on the stick, in most descriptions also holding the bow at some distance from the frog. The "old"—now called "French"—bow hold continued to be used in France during the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. And throughout most of Germany and England, the new Italian bow hold cannot be found at all until the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Then, however, the Italian bow hold slowly took over everywhere—even in France.



Of course, this description brings us to another very important question: what kind of bows were the violinists holding? We can roughly assume that the bow developed parallel to the changing bow hold, or the other way round: that without changing bows, there would have been no change in bow holds.

Compared to the huge number of surviving violins (especially from the 18<sup>th</sup> century), there are unfortunately only very few bows left, and these are for the most part very difficult to date. This is due not least to the fact that most bows were made of inexpensive, easily available local wood species and were simply thrown away following their relatively short playing lives.

According to new research and the study of iconographic evidence, however, we can assume that a more-or-less typical baroque bow had a convex stick like the one which still appears in the treatise by Leopold Mozart (picture), as well as a clip-in frog. The new Italian bow model, on the other hand, became straighter, already pointing toward the classical/transitional models up ahead. Also, the space between stick and hair at the bow's tip slowly grew until the tip reached the height seen in the hammer-tipped "Cramer head" bows and other so-called "transitional" models that arose around the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

This development coincides perfectly with the descriptions of the bow hold: it seems logical that an Italian bow model would correspond to an Italian bow hold, the earliest written mention of which was made in 1677. The same goes for the French, who in 1738 were still using the "French" bow hold and therefore also used a bow model that harkened back to earlier times.

All this must, of course, be viewed in a wider context that includes music, as well: there were several French composers who shifted masterfully between the Italian and French styles, Leclair being a famous example. It can therefore be considered certain that there were different customs being followed at the same time.

But what is really surprising is that the Germans remained so close to the French custom, with a description from as late as 1741 indicating the "French" bow hold as being the only one. Even so, this must also be viewed in a musical context: while most of the solo literature for the violin (soprano instrument) was modelled after Italian influences, it is often forgotten nowadays that the main application for violin instruments was dance music, in which the French were quite dominant.

There is no space in this article for a serious attempt to get a closer look at this matter, but it is important to realise that this topic should at least be taken into consideration in order to arrive at a more complete impression.

## Notes

1. Leopold Mozart (1719–1787), *Versuch einer gründlichen Violinschule*, Augsburg 1756, Fig. I. (frontispiece), Fig. II<sup>da</sup>, (opposite p. 53), and Fig. III. (opposite p. 54), Fig. IV. and Fig. V. (opposite p. 55), and Fig. I–IV (pp. 102–104).
2. Philibert Jambe de Fer (1515–1566), Lyons, 1556 *Építome musical des tons, sons, accordz, es voix humaines, fleutes d'Alleman, fleutes à neuf trous, violes & violons*, p. 61
3. idem, translation by the author, orig.: "Nous appellons violes c'elles desquelles les gentilsz hommes, marchantz, & autres gens de vertuz passent leur temps."
4. Philibert Jambe de Fer (1515–1566), Lyons, 1556 *Építome musical des tons, sons, accordz, es voix humaines, fleutes d'Alleman, fleutes à neuf trous, violes & violons*, p. 61, translation by the author, orig.: "L'autre sorte s'appelle violon & c'est celuy duquel lon use en dancierie communement, & à bonne cause: car il

est plus facile d'accorder, pour ce que la quinte est plus douce à ouyr quen n'est la quarte..... Je ne vous ay mis en figure le dedit violon par ce que le pouvez considerer sus la viole, ioint qu'il se trouve peu de personnes qui en use, si non ceux qui en vivent, par leur labeur."

5. Silvestro di Ganassi dal Fontego (1492–ca. 1550), *Letterione seconda*, Venice 1543
6. Silvestro di Ganassi dal Fontego (1492–ca. 1550), *Letterione seconda*, Venice 1543, Capitolo VI. "Modo di muovere mani e braccia": "Si deve fare attenzione a tirare la prima nota in giù quando si ha un passaggio tutto di crome, o altra minuta: in questo modo l'effetto sarà appropriato, perché se si cominciasse la prima tirata in su si andrebbe al contrario. ....tuttavia non si deve tralasciare di praticare entrambi i modi, come lo spadaccino che non potesse usare la destra caduta nel combattere impara ad usare la sinistra. Come ancora può accadere di fare più groppetti uno dopo l'altro: se il primo avrà la prima nota in giù il secondo l'avrà in su, e così questo è un caso simile a quello dello spadaccino. Perciò è molto utile praticare tanto un modo quanto l'altro."
7. Riccardo Rognoni (?–before 1620), Venice 1592 *Passaggi per potersi esercitare nel diminuire terminatamente con ogni sorte d'Instrumenti*: translation by the author, orig.: "Ai Virtuosi Lettori" (To the Gentle Reader), "... Essendo li Stromenti d'Archi difficili per il tirare, & pontar nel cominciar a Sonar, si deve sempre tirar l'Arco se sonerai di Viola da Gamba, & ancora di Viola da Brazzi; però il groppezar di groppetti corti si fanno in pontar, e tirar come si vuole, & ancora ripigliar l'Arco quando si trova Semiminime nel mezo delle Crome, ò Crome nel mezo delle Semiminime, ò far due note in una Arcata; perche non si può far una Diminution, che sia longa, se l'Arco non vò al dritto; perche della Viola da Gamba l'Arco va nel pontar alle Crome, & Semicrome; & il Violino da Brazze nel tirar alle Crome, & Semicrome s'intende sempre à far una Diminutione longa, perche l'Arco sopra il tutto ha d'havere il suo dritto."
8. Francesco Rognoni (?–before 1626), *Selva di varii Passaggi...*, Milan 1620, parte seconda, p. 3
9. Leopold Mozart (1719–1787), *Versuch einer gründlichen Violinschule*, Augsburg 1756, p. 72 "Das Vierte Hauptstück: Von der Ordnung des Hinaufstriches und des Herabstriches" example §2, p. 73 §3 etc., especially p. 75 §9
10. Marin Mersenne (1588–1648), *Harmonie Universelle*, Paris 1636, 3. Tome: "Livre quatriesme des Instrumens a chordes" p. 185
11. John Playford (1623–1686), *The Musical Companion*, London 1667, p. 95
12. Riccardo Rognoni (?–before 1620), Venice 1592 *Passaggi per potersi esercitare nel diminuire terminatamente con ogni sorte d'Instrumenti*.
13. Gasparo Visconti (1683–1731), *Nolens volens, The third Book for the Violin, Being an Introduction for the Instruction of Young Practitioners on that Delightfull Instrument.... By Seignr. Gasperini*, London 1705, p. 2 and p. 7 ff
14. A detailed description of possible bow holds for bass instruments would exceed the scope of this article, but two well-known particularities should be mentioned: first, that the bow hold for the French basse de violon up to the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was identical with the second violin bow hold discussed above (also described by Muffat in his preface to the Florilegium). Second, there is much evidence for the violoncello (meaning a small violin-family bass instrument held in da gamba position) having been played with a viola da gamba bow hold in Vivaldi's time and environment.
15. Nor do other treatises where the violin or something compa-



- rable does appear, such as Lanfranco (1533), Ganassi (1543), Agricola (1545), Gerle (1545), Zacconi (1592), Virgiliano (ca. 1600), Agazzari (1609), Banchieri (1605/1611) and Praetorius (1619) (see Bibliography)
16. John Playford (1623–1686), *The Musical Companion*, London 1667, p. 94
  17. Bartolomeo Bismantova (1675–1694), *Compendium musicum*, Ferrara 1677, “Regole per accordare e suonare il Violino” p. [111] ff
  18. Daniel Merck (1650–1717), *Compendium Musicae Instrumentalis Chelicae. Das ist: Kurtzer Begriff, welcher Gestalten die Instruemntal-Music auf der Violin, Pratschen, Viola da gamba und Bass gründlich und leicht zu erlernen seye*, Augsburg 1695
  19. Georg Falck (1630–1689), *Idea bona Cantoris*, Nürnberg 1688
  20. Georg Muffat (1653–1704), preface to *Florilegium secundum*, Passau 1698
  21. Jacob Prinner (1624–1694), *Musicalischer Schlüssel*, manuscript, 1677
  22. idem “Das Dreyzehndte Capitl. Von allerhandt geigen” (“The Thirteenth Chapter. On all manner of Violins”) on the first page of the chapter, speaking of all “viola instruments” also da gamba ones: “Die rechte Handt, einen schenen langen strich ganze tact im fall der nott auszuhalten, und nicht, wie es die brätlgeiger machen, aus einer notten zwen strich zihen,” (“The right hand drawing a beautiful long bow stroke sustained, if the note demands, for the whole bar, and not, as do the beer fiddlers, drawing two bow strokes for one note”)
  23. Michel Corette (1709–1795), *L'Ecole d'Orphée*, Paris 1738, p. 7
  24. Joseph Friedrich Bernhard Majer (1689–1768), *Neu eröffnete Theoretisch und Praktischer Music-Saal*, Nuremberg 1732/1741, p. 96 §2
  25. Pierre Dupont (?–1740), *Principes de Violon par Demandes et par Réponse Par lequel toutes Personne, pouront aprendre d'eux memes a Jouer du dit Instrument Par Sr. Dupont Maître de Musique et de Danse*, Paris 1718
  26. Gasparo Visconti (1683–1731), *Nolens volens, The third Book for the Violin, Being an Introduction for the Instruction of Young Practitioners on that Delightfull Instrument.... By Seignr. Gasperini*, London 1705
  27. Peter Preleur (before 1728–ca.1755), “The Art of Playing on the Violin” in *The Modern Music-master, or the Universal Musician*, London 1731
  28. Joseph Friedrich Bernhard Majer (1689–1768), *Neu eröffnete Theoretisch und Praktischer Music-Saal*, Nuremberg 1732/1741, p. 96 §2
  29. Francesco Geminiani (1680–1762), *The Art of Playing the Violin*, London 1751, Preface, p. [ 2 ]

(Continua da pagina 1)

Ma veniamo a quello che per noi è l'impegno maggiore, la 43<sup>a</sup> edizione dei Corsi e del Festival di Musica Antica di Urbino. Anche quest'anno sta per ripetersi la magia, nonostante, devo dire, le difficoltà di ordine finanziario che toccano sia chi organizza questo tipo di eventi sia chi ne è utente: gli allievi iscritti ai corsi superano le duecento unità e come sempre provengono da tutto il mondo. Da parte nostra si cerca di migliorare per quanto possibile sia l'offerta sia l'organizzazione. Quest'anno ad esempio si è pensato di concentrare maggiormente gli appuntamenti concertistici: nelle giornate del 20, 21, 24 e 27 si terranno due concerti, uno alle 19,00 e uno alle 21.30. Sarà così possibile lasciare ai partecipanti ai corsi alcune serate libere ma cercheremo in questo modo di coinvolgere i turisti che raggiungono Urbino proponendo loro un'offerta maggiore di appuntamenti musicali nell'ambito della loro visita alla città rinascimentale. Come sempre ci saranno i concerti degli allievi delle classi di musica da camera, le cosiddette Armonie al crepuscolo, che stanno diventando sempre più appuntamenti di notevole interesse musicale. Quest'anno inoltre si terranno alcune conferenze curate da Giovanni Cappiello e Diego Fratelli.



Passando poi al festival credo che il rapporto qualità/costi abbia addirittura qualcosa di miracoloso. Giocando su una sottile alchimia consistente nel far ruotare nel festival gli insegnanti dei corsi e aggiungendo alcuni musicisti ospiti siamo riusciti col direttore artistico Claudio Rufa a mettere in piedi un cartellone che comprende tra gli altri musicisti del calibro di Dan Laurin, Enrico Gatti, Guido Morini, Hopkinson Smith, l'ensemble Zefiro, Rinaldo Alessandrini e Sara Mingardo.

Ma non ci fermiamo qui: le produzioni che si realizzano grazie al lavoro degli allievi e degli insegnanti ad Urbino saranno due. La prima, il 26 luglio nel cortile di palazzo ducale sarà un concerto dedicato a Gerd Lünenbürger, il flautista tedesco recentemente scomparso il cui legame con tutti noi e con la città rimarrà come uno dei ricordi più belli di Urbino, che tra l'altro aveva ospitato il suo ultimo, memorabile concerto il 20 luglio 2009. Il concerto proporrà il frutto del lavoro delle classi di flauto dolce e sarà coordinato da Ludovica Scoppola e Han Tol. Il secondo appuntamento sarà il concerto dell'orchestra barocca, un'esperienza questa che continua a sorprenderci: la composizione di questo gruppo creato con gli allievi dei corsi è nuova ogni anno ma nel tempo sta enigmaticamente acquisendo una sua fisionomia: misteri di Urbino!

Andrea Damiani  
Presidente FIMA