

JOURNAL of the AMERICAN VIOLA SOCIETY

Chapter of
THE INTERNATIONAL VIOLA SOCIETY
Association for the Promotion of Viola Performance and Research

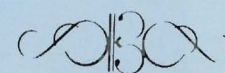
Vol. 4 No. 2

Summer 1988



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THE ACOUSTICS OF THE VIOLA

by

CARLEEN M. HUTCHINS

The viola has been characterized as "the ailing member of the violin family--too small for its tone range--to large to play comfortably under the chin." (Bessaraboff, 1964). Yet it is the viola which holds the string quartet together. It was the viola which Mozart preferred to play. It was the viola for which Brahms and Hindemith wrote so beautifully, exploring the rich low blending sounds and highlighting the characteristic upper tone-range.

In his book, *The History of the Viola* (1980), Maurice Riley has documented most effectively the early beginnings of the viola and its place in the musical literature of our culture.

My concern for many years has been to try to document and understand the underlying mechanisms which make for the differences in tonal qualities between the viola and the violin, and to discover the acoustical characteristics of the best violins and violas. After constructing and testing, both electronically and musically, over 150 violas of all sizes from 12 to 20 inches in body length as well as testing many famous violins and violas, I believe I have a few of the answers.

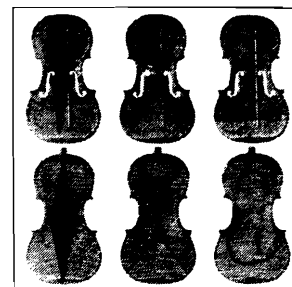
Taste In Viola Tone

Too often there seems to be a trade-off between the full rich wonderfully mellow low sounds of the viola and facility in playing in the higher positions. Since it is seldom possible to achieve the rich low tones of the big $16\frac{1}{2}$ to $17\frac{1}{2}$ inch violas in those around 16 inches or less in body length, each violist is confronted with a similar problem. The player has to work out a trade-off to suit his or her own physical

characteristics and tonal concepts in relation to playing demands.

During the three years in the early 1960s that I worked on constructing violas under Simone Sacconi's direction with the encouragement of Rembert Wurlitzer, I was privileged to follow Sacconi's drawings of the MacDonald Stradivarius viola, with comparisons to the patterns and tests I had already made of the Casavetti Strad viola in the Whittall Collection at the Library of Congress with the help of Boris Kroyt. Violas which I have made on this pattern have turned out to have good tone and playing qualities with especially fine sound in the higher register, but I have never been able to attain the full range of rich low tones that can be produced in the somewhat larger violas patterned after the work of Gasparo da Salò. The very beautiful, sophisticated C-bout curves and the narrow upper bouts of the Strad pattern viola make it very difficult to achieve the wide flat arches of the Gasparo pattern, which seem to cause the differences in tone qualities.

Early in my viola-making I was privileged to talk to Jay C. Freeman who had built up the Wurlitzer Collection during the first part of this century. He indicated that if I wanted to make violas with "real" viola tone, I should work from the Gasparo model (Hutchins, 1976). Fortunately, through my connections with F. A. Saunders, (then retired as head of the Harvard Physics Department where he had pioneered violin research in the USA) and Helen Rice, (founder of the Amateur Chamber Music Players), I had access to the beautiful Gasparo viola owned by Eunice Wheeler of Worcester, Massachusetts, which Saunders had tested many times in the Harvard Laboratories. Eunice was very generous in letting me make patterns from this instrument, as well as in comparing its tonal qualities to my own productions



Vibrational patterns of a pair of unattached top and back plates. (Courtesy Carleen M. Hutchins and *Scientific American*)



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over a period of thirty years. Eventually she purchased a 16½" viola of mine, patterned after the big 17½" Gasparo when she could no longer handle the big one with ease.

Coupling of "AIR" and "WOOD" Vibrations

in Violin Family Instruments

As in every type of stringed instrument, especially those of the violin family, there are a multitude of interrelated factors to be considered. Almost any generalization about how a violin or viola works is apt to be wrong in some respect. There is one generalization, however, that has emerged in my work that so far holds good for any sized violin family instrument, namely: *The more evidence there is of coupling, or close cooperation between the vibration modes of the wood of the box and those of the air modes inside the cavity the better the tone and playing qualities.* This statement is based on electronic tests of a wide variety of instruments of the violin family as compared with the judgments of fine musicians, both players and listeners over the last 30 years.

Air Cavity Vibrations

For a long time it was thought that

there is only one effective "air" mode in instruments of the violin family, namely, the so-called Helmholtz mode (here often referred to as the *A0 mode*) which radiates strongly through the low-string-side f-hole and reinforces the tones in the violin around C-C# near the open D string and those in the viola around B-B^b-A on the low G string depending on size. We now know, however, from some very ingenious experiments done by Eric Jansson in Stockholm (Jansson, 1973), that there is not only the Helmholtz mode, but also air modes at higher frequencies inside the cavity which do not radiate strongly through the f-holes.

Jansson showed that the next higher cavity mode—referred to as the *A1 mode*—is caused by air vibrations moving from one end of the box to the other somewhat like the air in a closed tube with a pressure maximum first at one end and then the other with a node in the middle. The frequency of this mode is controlled primarily by the length of the box—a very important factor in the acoustics of the viola. Jansson also worked out the geometry and approximate frequencies of still higher cavity modes of the violin as shown in Figure 1.

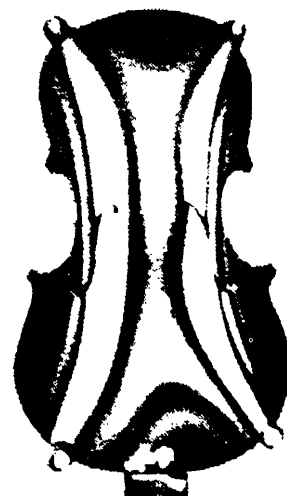
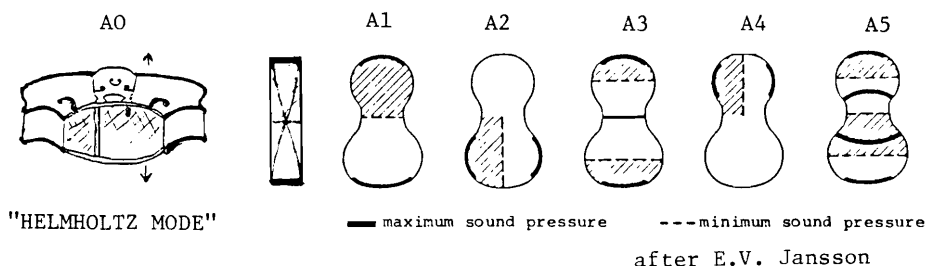
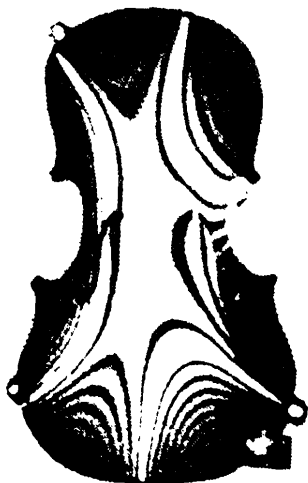


Figure 1

Violin "air" or cavity modes. The A0 or "Helmholtz" mode at the left is a breathing mode of the whole corpus with the top and back acting like a bellows, particularly on the bassbar side, with the soundpost acting as the fulcrum of a rocking lever. It has been estimated that the air moves in and out of the f-hole on the low string side at about 10 miles per hour. The higher cavity modes, A1, A2, etc. are similar to closed tube modes and radiate out of the f-holes depending somewhat on their geometry.

VIOLIN "AIR" OR CAVITY MODES





Viola cavity modes are similar to those of the violin, but have lower frequencies because the cavity is larger.

Since the length of an air column is one factor in controlling frequency, it can be seen that the dimensions of the box--the overall length--as well as the dimensions of the upper and lower bouts, are important in the frequency placement of these higher cavity modes. In contrast, the A0 mode frequency is largely dependent on the volume of air inside the box and the size and characteristics of the f-holes. All of these "air" modes, however, are also affected by the flexibility of the walls of the cavity, the top, back and sides of (ribs) of the instrument. The more flexible the walls, the lower the frequency of the vibrations. Thus a viola with relatively thick stiff wood will have cavity modes that are higher in frequency than a viola of the same pattern and size, but with somewhat thinner more flexible wood, other elements being equal.

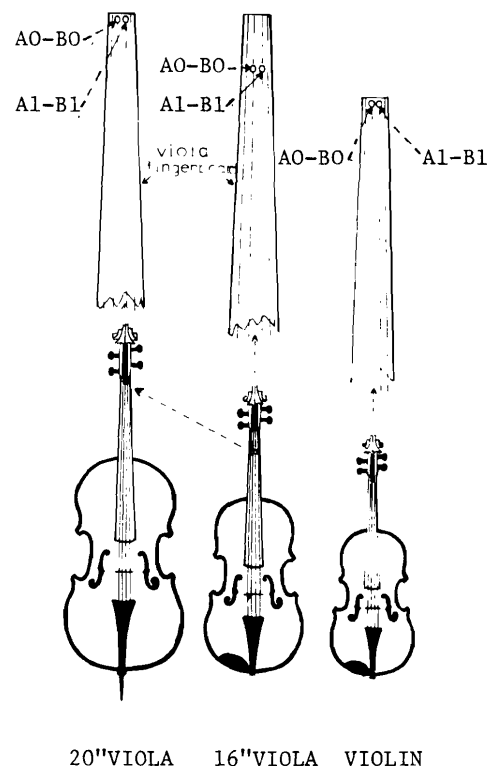
The Two Lower Cavity Modes Compared in Violin and Viola

In the violin, the two lower cavity modes, the A0 mode and the next higher in frequency, the A1 mode, lie within a semitone of the two open middle strings, the D and A. In the viola, they are higher in relation to string tuning, namely, up around B-B^b-A on the G string and F-F[#] on the D string. *This placement of these cavity modes in relation to string tuning has been found to be the most critical factor in tone quality between the violin and other members of the violin family* (Figure 2).

Evidence for this statement has come from work on many sizes of violins and violas as well as from the development of the eight "new" instruments of the VIOLIN OCTET (Hutchins, 1962, 1967, 1984).

Figure 2

This shows the approximate placement on the fingerboards of the violin and viola of the A0 and A1 cavity modes, and the B0 and B1 body modes. The downward shift of these modes to the two open middle strings of the 20 inch viola is also shown. This shift is the result of the longer body and increased cavity volume.



20"VIOLA 16"VIOLA VIOLIN

It has also been found desirable for evenness of tone to keep these two cavity modes, the A0 and A1, approximately a musical fifth apart. Just how the early violin makers worked out this relationship (among others) is nothing short of a miracle!

There is also a strong wood resonance, or body mode, here called the B1 mode, which lies fairly close to

the A1 cavity mode. In the violin, the combined sound from these two strong resonances is found near the open A string, while in small violas it is found on the low D string around F-F# and in large violas somewhat lower around E-F on the D string. In over 100 tests of violins and violas, I have found that the better the tone and playing qualities are rated by owner-players, the closer in frequency are the two strong resonances, the A1 cavity resonance and the strong body resonance, the B1 mode (Figure 2, see box #1 for how these tests are made).

The "Wolf-Note"

Some violas are plagued with a wolf-note in this E-F# range, particularly when these notes are fingered on the mid-G string or upper C string where the A1 and B1 strong resonances lie. The reason for this is usually that under certain conditions the combination of the two big resonance modes, A1 and B1, creates more energy than the bow can handle, causing an unsteady, warb-

ling tone. The more successful "wolf eliminators" function to absorb some of this energy at the frequency of the strong A1-B1 resonance combination, thereby making it possible for the bow to better control the tone. Players who cope with a wolf-tone are well aware that the wolf-note changes in both frequency and character with temperature and humidity. Such changes occur because the A1 air mode and the B1 body mode are affected differentially by changes in temperature and relative humidity.

Effects of Humidity on Wood

It is helpful for string players to realize that wood absorbs moisture slowly over a period of months, but will dry out in one or two days (Figure 3, Fryxell, 1965). This means that instruments going from a dry to a moist ambient will change slowly, but when going from a moist to a dry one will change rapidly. Experiments show that the modes of the wood are distorted during the drying process when just the

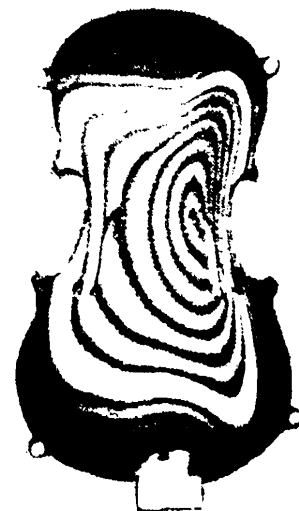
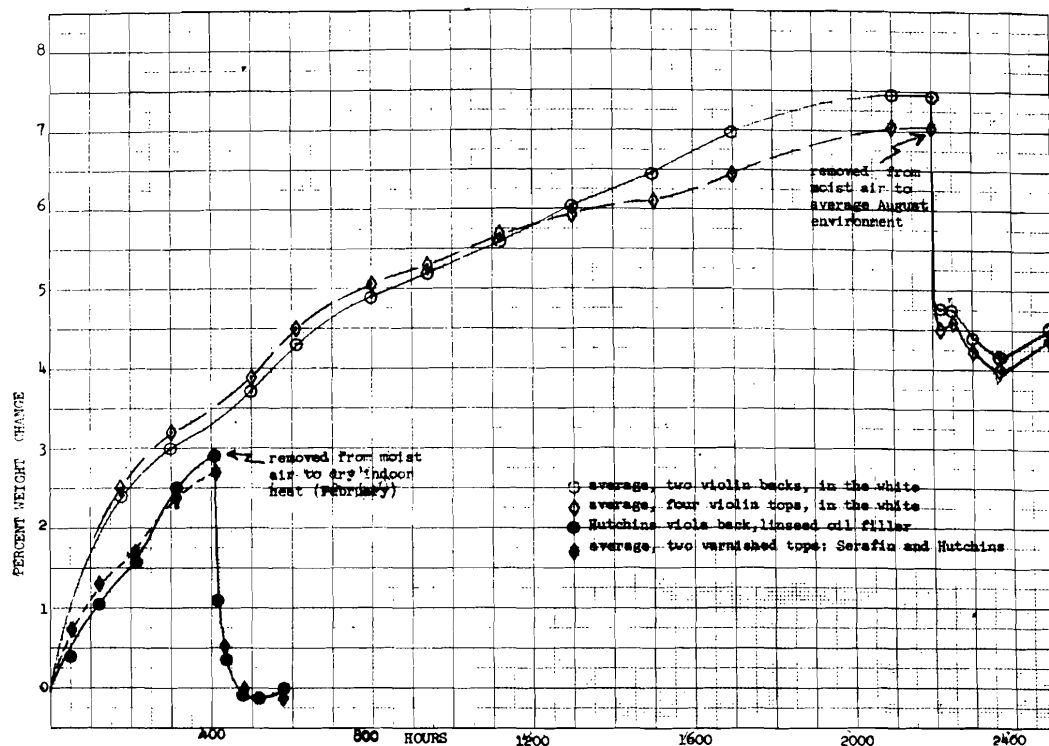


Figure 3

Moisture pickup in an atmosphere of 100% relative humidity referred to dry indoor heat. Notice that the moisture pickup is gradual over a long period, but drops suddenly when the wood is exposed to dry indoor heat. (Courtesy of R. E. Fryxell).





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surface is dry and the inner portion of the wood still moist. This is why it is well to let an instrument be in the playing environment for at least an hour or so before a performance.

Effects of Changes in Viola Dimensions

Since the A0 mode frequency placement depends largely on the volume of enclosed air (other factors being equal), while the A1 mode placement is controlled largely by the length of the box, changes in either rib height or body length of an instrument will alter their frequency placements. Thus a shorter viola will have a higher A1 mode, while one with deeper ribs will have a lower A0 mode. If both these changes are made in constructing an instrument, instead of these two modes being a musical fifth apart (as in the violin and normal violas), they will lie nearly an octave apart. In such a viola, the A0 mode moves down to A-G# or even G on the C string and the A1 mode moves up from its usual placement around F-F# on the D string to G-G#. This arrangement produces two very strong tone ranges about an octave apart with a relatively weak area in between (Figure 4).

I got into great trouble with Lionel Tertis years ago when he asked me what I thought of his violas with the shortened body length and deeper ribs. When I tried to explain the relationships of these two big resonances and the effects of moving them, he said: "Young lady, I don't care what you think of my physics, I know what I want in a viola!"

In working with F. A. Saunders during the 1950s and early 1960s, I made various experimental violas to check the musical effectiveness of changing the frequency placement of some of these resonances. We tried playing Mozart two viola quintets on violas with shallow ribs ($\frac{1}{2}$ " high) (higher "AIR" frequency) and with extra deep ribs ($2\frac{1}{2}$ " high) (lower "AIR" frequency). Also short violas and extra long ones to raise and lower the frequency of the A1 (body-length controlled) air mode.

We found that Mozart had written so well for the strong tones in the viola as he knew it, that when these two big resonances were moved away from their conventional placements, the quintets did not sound well! Mozart had

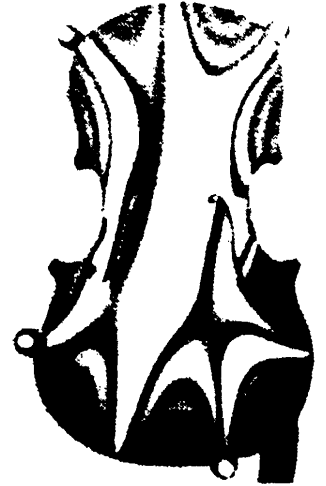
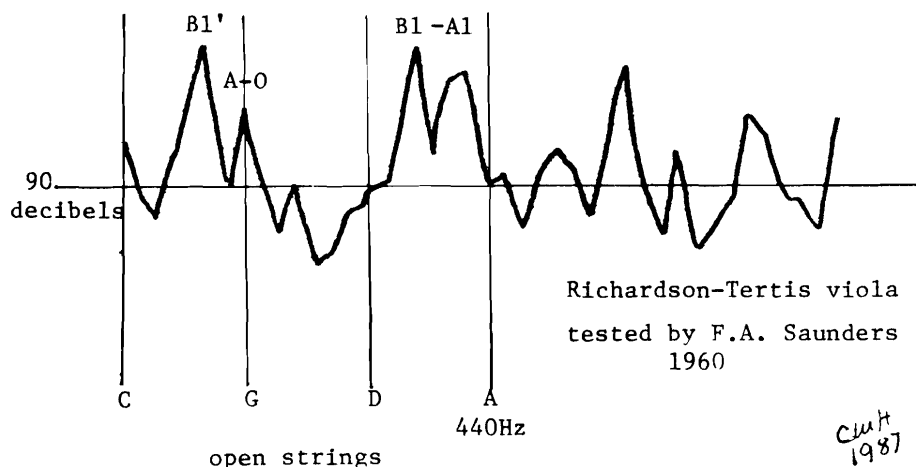


Figure 4

In this hand bowing test of a Tertis Model viola, made by Arthur Richardson in 1957, note that the two strong areas of resonance are about an octave apart, leaving a relatively weak area between.



intuitively written the solo parts for the first viola around the strong tones of the A1 air mode and the solo parts for the second viola around the strong tones of the A0 mode!

Matching the A0 and the B0 Modes

One of the lowest strong body modes in both violins and violas usually lies fairly close in frequency to the A0 cavity mode that reinforces the B-B^b range on the G string of the viola. This body mode, now called the *B0 mode*, consists of a bending of the corpus and the neck with a scissors-like motion between the end of the fingerboard and the top. Figure 5 shows the geometry of this mode which has three nodes

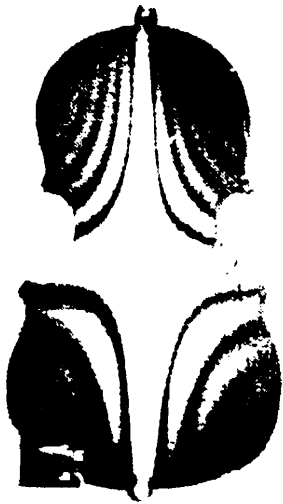
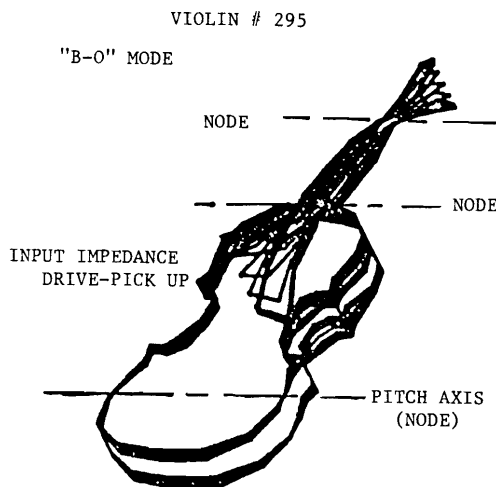


Figure 5

This first bending mode of the violin neck and body is visualized in a computer-created diagram based on a measurement technique known as Modal Analysis, which is being widely used to analyze the modes of vibrating structures from the Golden Gate Bridge to airplanes, truck bodies, tires and now violins.



FIRST BENDING OF NECK AND BODY
Courtesy of Kenneth Marshall

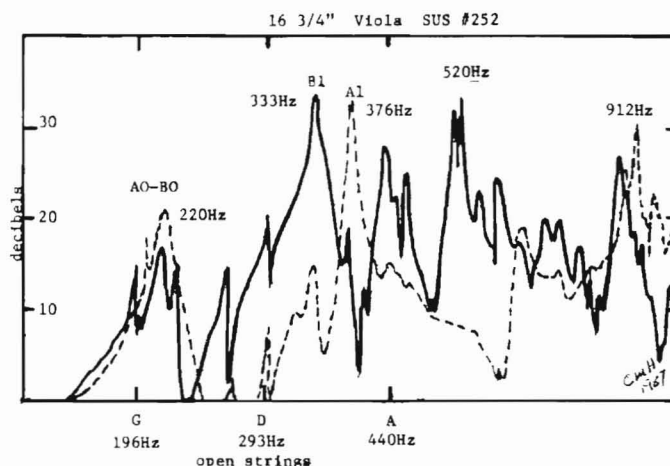
(points of no motion): at the nut, near the heel of the neck, and across the widest part of the lower bout (Marshall, 1985). *It has been found that when the A0 and the B0 modes can be adjusted to come at approximately the same frequency, there is increased clarity and enhancement of the tone of the whole instrument.*

The pitch match or mismatch of these two modes can be heard if one holds the instrument in thumb and forefinger at the node across the widest part of the lower bout and then taps lightly on the scroll alternating with a quick air blow into one f-hole. Both these sounds are very complex, but with practice their pitches can be identified. Sometimes they are as much as a third apart, or a tone or a semitone apart, or very close together. I tried this on a number of violas at the XIII International Viola Congress held in Boston in 1985. The only two of these in which the A0 and B0 mode pitches matched were the violas of Burton Fine and Walter Trampler (Figure 6 and Box 1).

Several violin makers who have worked with me have become expert at adjusting the dynamics (the mass and stiffness of the fingerboard as well as the mass of the pegs and the chinrest), which can alter the frequency of the B0 mode. Early writings on the violin indicate that violin makers over the years have found it desirable to have the "wood and the air" at the same tone. Now that we know the mechanisms which affect this mode matching, adjustments can be made without opening the instrument to alter wood thicknesses or rib height to achieve this mode matching in almost any violin, viola or cello. Details of this process can be found in *Catgut Acoust. Soc. J.* (Hutchins, 1985; Spear, 1987).

Figure 6

So-called "transfer function" or "response" curves of a 16 3/4 inch viola, that has fine sound and playing qualities, show the frequencies and placement relative to the open strings of the A0, A1 cavity modes and the B0, B1 body modes. A detailed description of these tests is in Box #1.



BOX #1

Tests for both the cavity modes inside the violin or viola as well as tests for the wood-body modes are made with the instrument hung vertically on five rubber bands--one around the scroll and one at each of the four corners.

For the cavity modes (A0 and A1) a tiny loudspeaker is suspended inside the box through one f-hole and a tiny microphone through the other in such a way that neither touches the wood. A single frequency (sine wave) signal is fed through the speaker, sweeping from 20Hz to 20,000Hz, from an audiogenerator. The response inside the box is picked up by the microphone and displayed on an oscilloscope and a chart recorder.

Tests for the wood-body modes (B0 and B1) are made with a tiny accelerometer (0.68 gram) which is extremely sensitive to vibration, waxed to the surface of the top over the bassbar near the foot of the bridge. A small (0.7 gram) high-strength magnet is waxed to the top of the accelerometer and a coil placed over, but not touching, the magnet. Vibration from the coil-magnet transducer and pick-up-display from the accelerometer are similar to the above tests. These so-called "transfer-function" or "response" curves for a 16 3/4 inch viola are shown in Figure 6.

Child-Size 12 Inch Viola

In developing a child-size viola we were able to get strong tones on the low C strong by having the A0 mode up around the open D string where it would reinforce the D range on the low C string an octave below (See box #2).

Figure 7 shows the resonance placements for the child size 12 inch viola. This small viola was constructed with ribs shallow enough to create a small enough air volume to bring the A0 frequency well above the open D string. Also, the body needed to be



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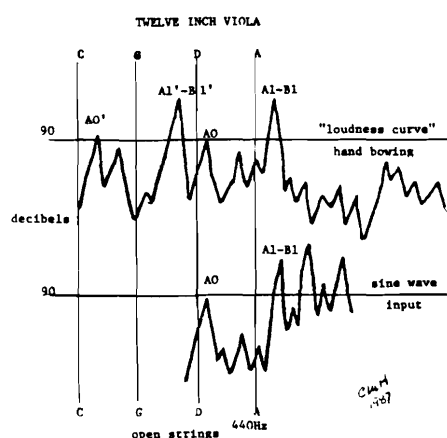
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Figure 7

Placement of the body and cavity resonances of a 12 inch viola relative to the open strings. Note that the upper curve made by hand bowing shows the peaks made by "second harmonic reinforcement" which are not present in lower test made with a single frequency sine-wave input, since there are no fundamental tones below the A0 mode. The A0¹ and the A1¹-B1¹ peaks are caused by the strong resonances an octave higher. See Box #2.



BOX #2

It is well known in acoustics that when there is a strong sound or resonance, the ear will create the impression of a strong tone an octave below using the strong resonance as its second partial when there is no strong fundamental present at that frequency. See "Sine wave input" curve of Figure 7. Also, in the bowed string tone, which contains all the harmonics of the fundamental, the strong resonance an octave higher acts as the second harmonic actually adding measurable resonance to the octave below. This is known as "second harmonic reinforcement." See "loudness curve" of Figure 7.

In normal violas, the strong A0 (Helmholtz) mode around B-B^b on the G string acts as the second harmonic of the B-B^b an octave below which falls below the open C string frequency. Violists can tune the C string down to this range and hear the effect of second harmonic reinforcement, but it is not much help with the viola tuned normally.

short enough and the wood thick enough to raise the A1 (body length mode) high enough to maintain the desirable fifth-apart relationship of these two modes. I have made several small violas based on these principles with good results. But, alas, economic factors hamper their general production!

The 20 Inch Viola

In 1956, Henry Brant, then composer in residence at Bennington College, asked me for instruments that would carry the sound of the violin into seven other tone ranges covering approximately the range of the piano keyboard. A search through several hundred tests of violins, violas, cellos and basses showed one outstanding characteristic of the violin as different from the other instruments. This was that the two biggest resonances, AIR and WOOD, as we then called them, in the violins were approximately on the two unstopped middle strings, D and A. In contrast, all the other instruments had these two resonances higher in frequency as related to their tunings. Luck was with us, for this characteristic proved to be the clue to violin quality tone, giving the clarity and power of the violin tone on all four strings (Figure 2).

The 20 inch viola was the first of the new instruments to be developed on this principle, which took several years of cut and try with comparisons to calculations and to available instruments. A small child's cello was found to have the A1 resonance at D# just above the open viola D string, but the A0 mode was much too low with the deep cello-like ribs. Since calculations of rib height as related to the resulting frequency of the A0 mode are very unreliable, we decided to take progressive slices off the height of the ribs until the desired higher frequency was attained. Each time a slice was sawn off, the instrument was assembled and tested. Finally we got the A0 mode



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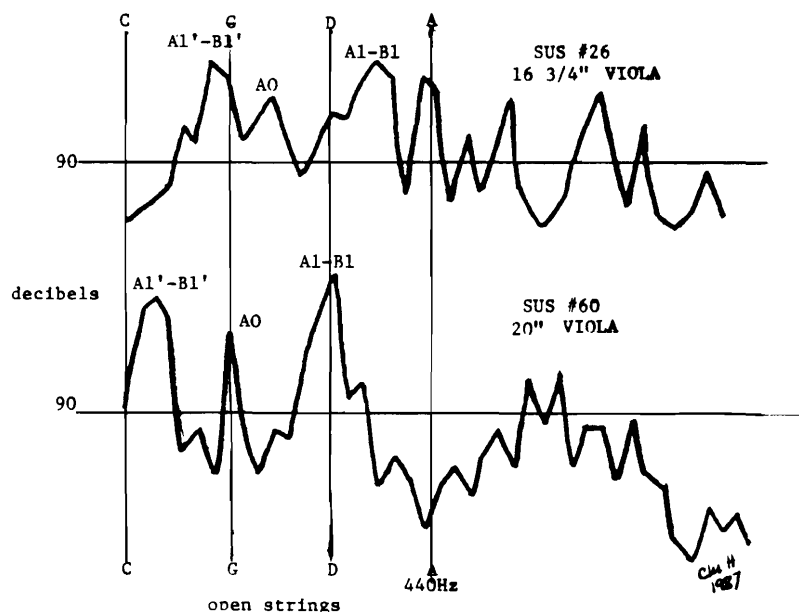
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frequency up near the open viola G string. The instrument with the two big resonances close to its two open middle strings proved most satisfactory with the full rich sound and the clarity of the violin in the viola range that we were after. The only problem was that the A1-B1 mode was still a bit too low. So we decided to make an instrument slightly shorter than the 22 inch body of the little cello-turned-violas, thus getting the A0 mode on the open G string and the A1-B1 mode combination on the open D string (Figure 8).

it is called, in concert in 1965, he said "That is the sound I have always wanted from the violas in my orchestra." Lillian Fuchs commented that "it is exciting, but somewhat frightening since it takes the viola out from under the chin." William Berman, violist of the New York Philharmonic and then Oberlin Conservatory, was so delighted with the tone and playing qualities that he did learn to play the big viola under his chin, and has used it exclusively in orchestras and chamber music groups all over the world for

Figure 8

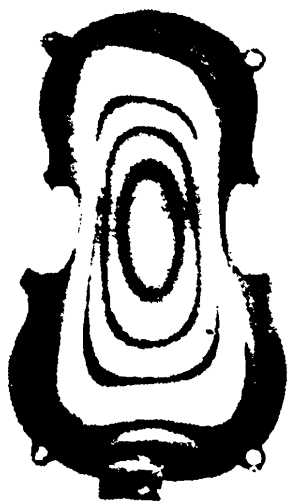
"Loudness curves" made by hand bowing compare the placement of strong body and cavity resonances relative to the open strings of a 16 3/4 inch viola and a 20 inch viola. As in Figure 6, the A1¹ and B1¹ peaks are caused by the strong resonances an octave higher.



A body length of 20 inches and a rib height of 4.5cm has proved most satisfactory for the instrument we wanted, giving a full powerful clear violin-type tone on all four strings with ease of playing and a wide dynamic range from *ppp* to *fff*. When Leopold Stokowski heard the first alto violin, as

over 20 years. The Catgut Acoustical Society has produced nearly two dozen of these 20 inch violas, many of which are in the hands of cellists who want to play viola in chamber groups and orchestras. Randall Vemer, a young man with extra long arms, who studied with William Berman, got his first job as





principal violist in the Portland Oregon Symphony playing the "big one" under his chin. Walter Trampler has used one of them with five strings, including the violin E, to record the Bach Viola Pomposa Sonatas.

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It is considerably easier to tie down the range of desirable frequencies for violin plate modes than those for violas due to the variations in viola size. Although fine sounding violas in all size ranges have been made, we are still experimenting to document this information more completely. Since the vibration modes of the free plates are largely an indication of plate stiffness and do not appear as such in the assembled instrument, much further research is

needed to understand WHY the free plate mode frequencies and their amplitudes are such controlling factors in the tone and playing qualities of the final instrument. WHAT happens is fairly well known, but the search goes on for WHY free plate modal characteristics are such controlling factors in the tone and playing qualities of the finished instrument, especially of violas.

Carleen Maley Hutchins has been making and testing violins, violas and other violin family instruments since 1950. She worked with Professor Frederick A. Saunders (1875-1963), who pioneered violin research in the USA, and has spent many years researching the acoustics of the viola. She has given over 200 lectures, published nearly 100 papers, many of them in the *Newsletters/Journals of the Catgut Acoustical Society*, an organization founded in 1963 with 20 members, which has grown to over 800 in 29 Countries. She has edited 2 Benchmark volumes of collected papers in violin acoustics as well as the "Physics of Music" for *Scientific American*.

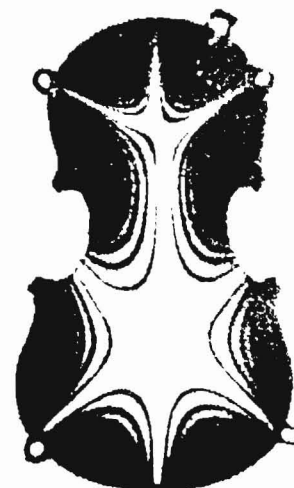
To date, Hutchins has made over 150 conventional violas, 50 violins, 10 cellos and with the help of her associates in violin making, over 100 instruments of the Violin Octet.

She has received many awards including 2 Guggenheim Fellowships, 4 grants from the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music, and Honorary Doctorate of Engineering from Stevens Institute of Technology, Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from Hamilton College and the Silver Medal Award in Musical Acoustics from the Acoustical Society of America.

She says, "I still enjoy playing the viola for my own amusement. If I had been a better musician, I might not have gotten into all this!"

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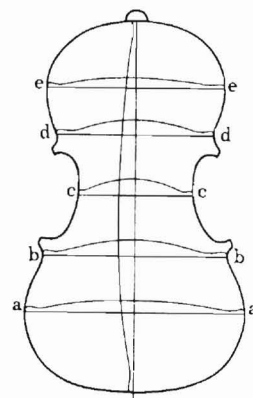
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BACH'S CELLO SUITE NO. 5: A NEW APPROACH

by

RICHARD R. EFRATI

The original manuscript of the Bach cello suites is lost. Most modern editions of the suites are based on a copy by Anna Magdalena, Bach's second wife. This manuscript contains, however, a number of inconsistencies and notational errors. Fortunately, Bach transcribed the Fifth Suite for the Lute (Suite No. III *pour la luth*). This manuscript is still in existence, and is considered to be a more accurate rendition.

I started to play the viola relatively late in life. It was only natural that I became interested in the Suites for Solo Cello as soon as I felt myself proficient enough to play them. At first glance, this music seemed to me quite simple, especially when compared with the sonatas and partitas for solo violin. Hardly did I know what was in store for me!

The suite that fascinated me most was Suite No. 5. Still, after having played it for some time, a few places sounded quite unsatisfactory to me. This all started with one note:

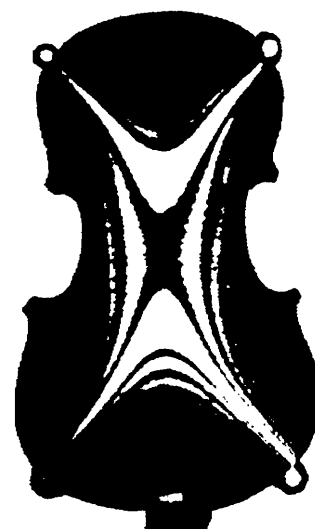
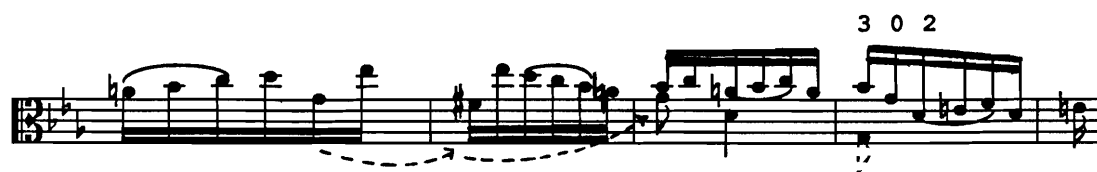
Allemande



For me it was obvious that the lower voice constitutes an imitation of the initial theme, and I could not help playing the low D which is not in Anna Magdalena's copy. How happy I was when I got hold of Bach's version for the lute, and found that the note was included! Soon other variations became apparent.

A nice story is told about Beethoven (it might also be true of some other composer). Beethoven gave a lesson while lying in bed. His pupil, wanting to annoy him, struck a dominant seventh chord on the piano before leaving. After awhile, the composer could not restrain himself, got up, and played the final tonic chord. In the following examples, the final chord is missing, but strangely enough, nobody has ever taken notice of it.

Prélude, bars 40-43:



Bars 55-56:



Compare bars 62-63:



These errors of omission make one suspect that Anna Magdalena's copy is in fact a transcription, and that Bach conceived the Suite for a smaller instrument than the cello on which the execution of polyphonic passages and chords would be much easier. Maybe it was the violoncello piccolo which, like the viola, was held on the arm.

In the critical commentary in Bärenreiter's edition of the cello suites, mistakes in Anna Magdalena's copy are pointed out, but no mention is made of missing notes. Using Bach's version for the lute, I completed the voice-leading wherever I deemed it to be essential. I feel this is a more accurate rendition of the composer's original intentions.

Here are still other passages to consider.

Bars 183-189:



The chord in bar 219 is notated in Anna Magdalena's copy as follows:



There appears to be a missing link in the voice leading, and the chord could be completed as written in Bach's version for the lute.

Bars 216-220:

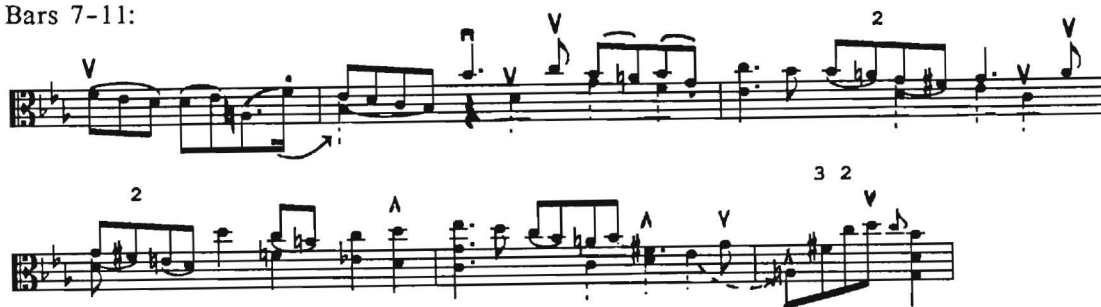


Allemande.

Bars 4-5. The notes added are written with dotted stems.



Courante.
Bars 7-11:



Bars 18-19:



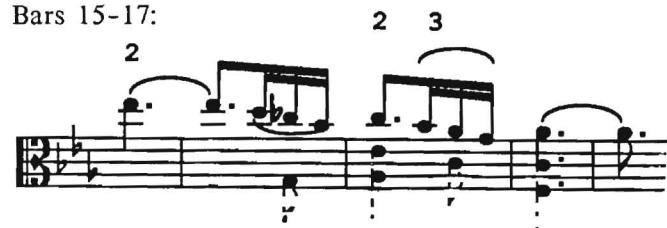
Gavotte I
Bars 1-4:



Gigue.

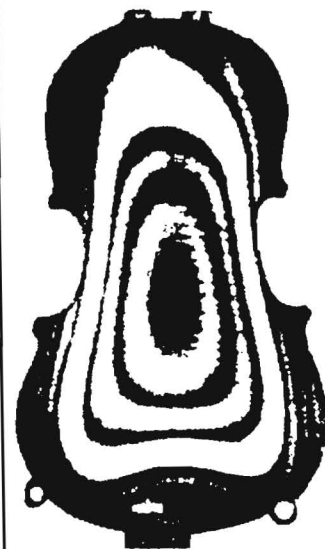
Although many editors have not accepted the possibility of the D-flat in bar 16, it can easily be justified by comparing Bach's lute harmonization.

Bars 15-17:



By comparing the holograph of the lute version of the Fifth Suite with Anna Magdalena's manuscript, we can arrive at a more satisfactory interpretation of Bach's original masterpiece.

Richard R. Efrati lives in Switzerland and is a regular visitor to the IVS sponsored International Viola Congresses. He has devoted many years to the careful study of the unaccompanied works for violin and cello by J.S. Bach. His book *The Interpretation of the Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin and the Suites for Solo Cello* (Atlantis Musikbuch-Verlag, Zürich, 1979) is a penetrating and absorbing study of the subject.



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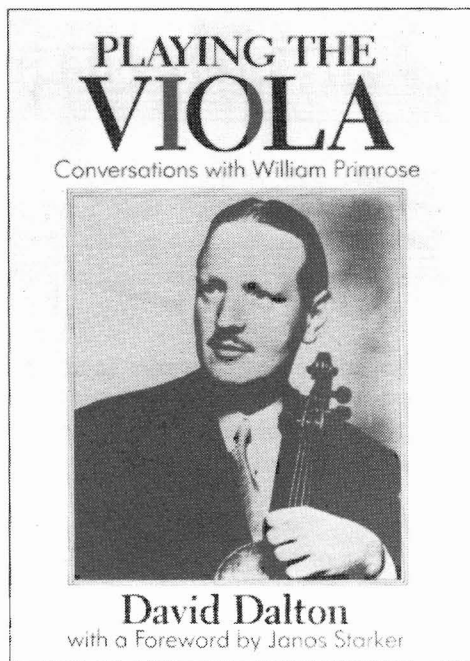
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Playing the Viola

Conversations with William Primrose

DAVID DALTON, *Brigham Young University*
Foreword by JANOS STARKER

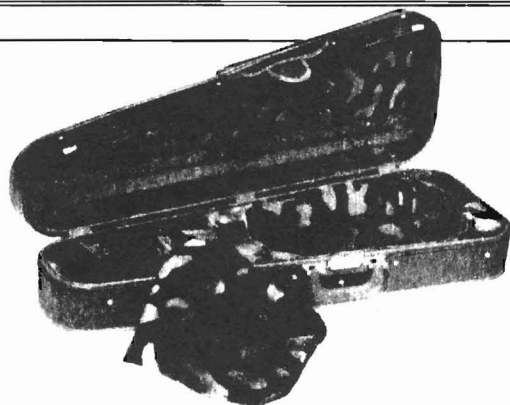
Before the death, in 1982, of the renowned violist William Primrose, David Dalton engaged the musician in a lively series of conversations that touched on almost all aspects of viola technique, performance, repertoire, recording, and history. This book is a transcription of that dialogue, containing illuminating advice on holding the viola, bowing, tone, fingering, and practicing, all supported by copious illustrations and musical examples, as well as insights on repertoire for the viola—"an instrument without tradition"—and on performances of the great concertos by Bartok and Walton. Punctuated with frankness and humor, this book is a tribute to one of the great artists of this century.

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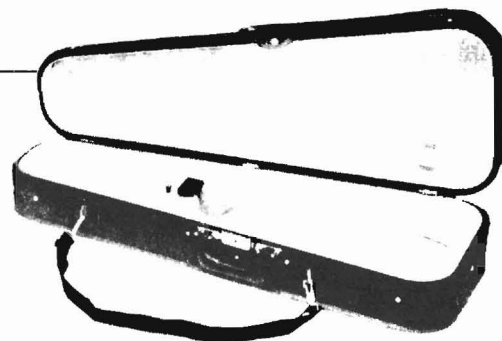


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THE KASSEL CONGRESS-- A 20-YEAR JUBILEE

by

DWIGHT R. POUNDS

Violists from Europe and the United States returned to the site of the founding of the *International Viola Society*, Kassel, Federal Republic of Germany, for its Jubilee Celebration, International Viola Congress XVI, on June 16-19, 1988. It was in this city in 1968 that Franz Zeyringer, with Dietrich Bauer, Dr. Francois de Beaumont, Wolfgang Sawodny, Berta Vulda and others, formed the original "Viola Research Society," with no thought in mind that in a relatively short time the organization would have international branches in 10 member sections around the world.

The organizer for this congress, Mrs. Uta Lenkewitz-von Zahn, had foreseen that the celebration would be somewhat restricted and wrote, "The congress in Germany will not be the great meeting centre of all violists, as should be expected. There are too many festivals, courses, congresses, 'days of...' during the summer, where many good musicians have to attend to earn their money." Still, the congress featured some outstanding recitals, lectures and demonstrations.

In his welcome address of the opening ceremonies before a gathering of 300 congress delegates and local citizens, Mr. Hans Eichel, Mayor of Kassel, briefly reviewed the city's long and rich musical history. It was specifically noted that the Bärenreiter Music Company, responsible for several IVS publications, was a local organization, and that Heinrich Schütz, Louis Spohr, and Gustav Mahler each had connections to the city.

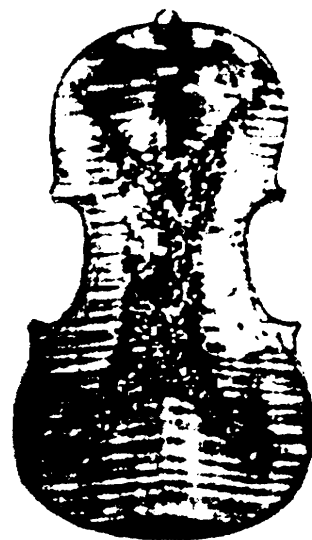
Mr. Eichel's remarks were followed

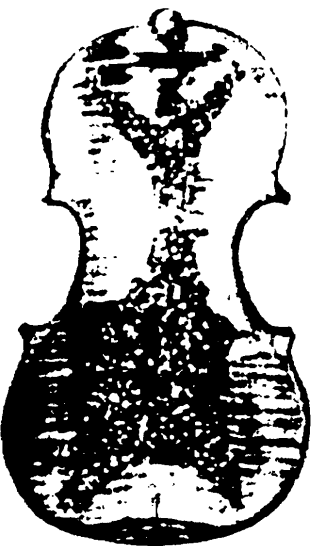
by a recital played by Hariolf Schlichtig, viola, and Georg Friedrich Schenk, piano. Featured selections included both Brahms sonatas, Penderecki's "Cadenza per viola solo," Britten's "Lachrymae," and Milhaud's "4 Visages."

Chamber music was very much in evidence during this congress with both string and viola quartets, quintets and duos programmed in addition to the solo recitals. Some of the youngest performers, college students who formed the Düsseldorf Viola Quartet, paradoxically played the oldest music performed at the congress, with two sonatas for four violas and cello by Clemens Thieme (1631-1668) and two trios by Florian Leopold Gassmann (1729-1774). Illustrating that their repertoire was not limited to pre-18th century music, the Düsseldorf Quartet later played a program featuring selections by Telemann, Xaver Thoma, Violeta Dinescu, Max von Weinzierl, Eduard Pütz, and York Bowen.

Professional chamber groups appearing at the congress included the Schönberg Quartet from the Hague, Netherlands, the Pfeifer and Verdi Quartets from Germany, and the Concilium Musicum from Vienna. The Schönberg Quartet displayed stunning virtuosity and amazing precision in their performances of Berg's String Quartet, op. 3, Webern's String Quartet, op. 5, and Schönberg's Second String Quartet, op. 10. The Pfeifer Quartet played a moving rendition of Schubert's Quartet in G Major, Op. 161, and the Verdi Quartet performed the Mozart "String Quintet, KV 516," the Shostakovich Quartet No. 3, Op. 73, and the Brahms "String Quintet, op. 88" in the final concert of the congress.

The Concilium Musicum, under the direction of Paul Angerer, presented a program with works by Carl Stamitz, Johann Hummel, Mozart, Franz Krommer, Holzbauer, Destouches, and Adolph





Jensen for various combinations of violin, viola, viola d'amore, cello and two types of bassoon--all on original instruments and each selection beautifully played. Two lovely sisters, Susanne Marguerre and Anette Marguerre, played violin-violita duos by Wolfgang Günther, J.S. Bach, Mozart, and Martinu.

Solo Recitals

Solo viola recitals were performed at Kassel by Ulrich von Wrochem, Günther Ojstersek, Jerzy Kosmala, Barbara Westphal, Bernd Rinne, and Martin Staakholder. Von Wrochem performed the Hummel Viola Sonata, op. 5/3, Stravinsky's "Elegy" for solo viola, and Felix Draesecke's Sonata No. 1 for Viola, Op. 56/1. Günther Ojstersek selected works by Herbert Blendinger, Miroslav Miletic, Xaver Thoma, and Maurice Gardner. Jerzy Kosmala's program featured George Rochberg's Sonata, Paul Ben Hain's "Three Songs Without Words," Bloch's "Suite Hebraique," and his own arrangement for viola and piano of Szymanowski's "Dance for Harnasie." Barbara Westphal presented an all-Hindemith program with very strong performances of the Op. 11/4, Op. 25/1, and Op. 25/4. Bernd Rinne, after an earlier lecture-demonstration on contemporary Czech composers, presented selections by Miroslav Istvan, Otmar Macha, Richard Klein, and Jarmil Burghauser. Martin Staakholder played Charles Koechlin's Sonata pour Piano et Alto, Op. 53.

Americans were well represented at Congress XVI. In addition to Jerzy Kosmala's recital, AVS President David Dalton, Dwight Pounds, Franco Sciannameo, and Anne Woodward gave prepared lectures. Dalton showed two documentaries on William Primrose and discussed his own newly released book, *Playing the Viola: Conversations with William Primrose*; Pounds lectured on "The Development of the Viola Congresses" and showed slides of the American and Canadian Congresses.

Sciannameo, editor of *The Violexchange*, addressed "Unprinted Italian Viola Music." And, Dr. Woodward discussed "Violists of the Classical Period." Other lecturers included Mr. Martin Smith, who reviewed "South African Viola Music," and Franz Zeyringer, who discussed some major points from his most recent publication, *Die Viola da braccio*. Prof. Zeyringer also announced the formation of EDITION PAX, a series of publications which will be dedicated to original viola music in a lighter vein, much like his popular "Viola Fox."

Zeyringer Resigns

In the General Assembly meeting which preceded the closing concert, IVS President Franz Zeyringer submitted his resignation, citing his age, desire for family time, and his other research projects as reasons. Since its inception, the International Viola Society has bestowed upon some of its members a Silver Alto Clef as its highest award. Perhaps beginning a new IVS tradition, outgoing President Zeyringer was presented with the *first* Gold Viola Clef by his successor and incoming IVS President, Günther Ojstersek.

Uta Lenkewitz is to be commended for putting together a congress rich both in content and variety, despite the fact that she was obliged to rearrange her program when illness forced the cancellation of one scheduled soloist and a guest string quartet. There was a great deal of activity during the two and one-half days of recitals and lectures. Some participants occasionally missed programs, most likely because their threshold of absorption had been exceeded.

It was disappointing that more violists from the international sections could not or chose not to attend Congress XVI. Visitors from South Africa, Yugoslavia, Poland came under considerable financial sacrifice. But

France, England, and Italy had no representatives despite their geographic proximity. The English were host to excellent Viola Congresses in London and Isle of Man, but in recent years, their IVS participation has been compromised by their own Tertis International Viola Competition and apparently other concerns. One must unfortunately conclude that, despite *profoundly* important English IVS contributions in the past, and because of relative apathy in many of the international sections regarding the parent organization, the International Viola Society in 1988 appears to be *primarily* a West German/Austrian--American/Canadian affair.

Dwight Pounds is a professor of music at Western Kentucky University and a member of the AVS Executive Board. He has done extensive research on the development of the International Viola Society and its international congresses. Dr. Pounds took his degree in Music Education at Indiana University where he also studied with William Primrose.

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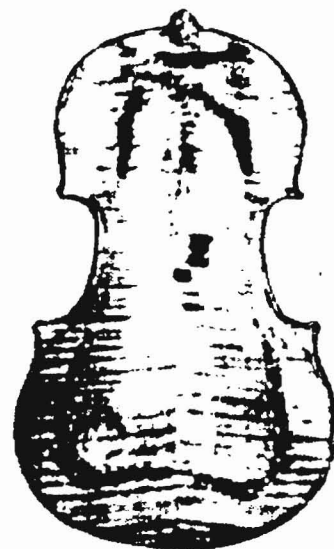
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From the Presidency

Photo courtesy Dwight Pounds



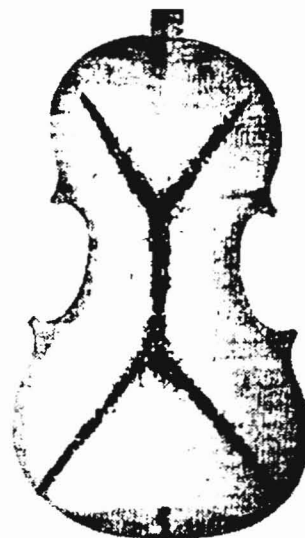
David Dalton, president AVS, presents a plaque of recognition to Franz Zeyringer, president IVS, on his retirement. Günter Ojstersek, Zeyringer's successor, is in background.

Danke, Franz!

The idea of a fraternity of violists is not a recent one. Wilhelm Altmann (1862-1951) attempted in 1929 in Leipzig to bring together such an organization of like-minded musicians under the name of *Bratschistenbund*. His first newsletters stood bore the title *Die Bratsche*, of which only five were produced before the organization, hardly surviving its infancy, died out. In 1965, Prof. Franz Zeyringer and Herr Dietrich Bauer met in Zeyringer's hometown of Pöllau in Austria to formulate plans and ideals for a viola society. These were laid down in an agenda called the *Pöllauer Protokoll*. Three years later at Kassel, the time was ripe to attempt the formation of another society of violists, called together by Zeyringer with the name, International Viola Research Society, consisting of a modest number of interested violists from German-speaking

countries. The American Viola Society became a chapter of this parent organization, which later dropped "Research" from its title.

In 1968, the aspirations of the IVS, as put forth in the *Pöllauer Protokoll*, might have appeared to an outsider as visionary--in a negative sense: too inflated, too lofty. With the advantage of twenty years' hindsight, one can view the successes or shortcomings of the society with greater passivity. While there may have been some disappointments, accomplishments during the intervening twenty years must have exceeded even the expectations of Zeyringer and the small group of idealistic founders. Notable is the fact that the IVS has existed far beyond the few years of Altmann's *Bratschistenbund*, and has twelve chapters in various parts of the world with a membership of about 1500.





Most of these successes--it is safe to say--are attributable in large measure to the iron will of Franz Zeyringer, who stepped down as president of the IVS at the Kassel Jubilee Congress in June.

"Iron will?" Well, if that is a little strong, how else does one describe the almost superhuman effort that has characterized Zeyringer's pursuit of the objectives in his original Pöllauer agenda? "Indefatigable," "self-sacrificing," "uncompromising," are all apt when describing his single-mindedness. Some who have been associated with Zeyringer in influential positions in the society may, from time to time, have felt his impatience if matters did not move along, or were not resolved, according to the timetable that had been established. Nevertheless, he has surrounded himself with a loyal coterie of associates who have given much to the ideals of the IVS over these two decades. One of those associates is Günter Ojstersek who will succeed Zeyringer. We wish him well.

Important to the American chapter of the IVS, was the early friendship with Zeyringer of a fellow violist, Myron Rosenblum. Thereafter, followed close association with other American colleagues, such as Marna Street, Louise Goldberg, and Maurice Riley. Zeyringer and a few members of the original group of founders visited the first American Viola Congress in 1975 under Riley's direction at Ypsilanti. The impression gained by the European guests was staggering, and endures to this day. Namely, the numbers of participants (over 400), the setting on an American university campus (Eastern Michigan University), the strong representation of professionals, and the high standard of performance. It can probably be said that the North American congresses have offered biannually a transfusion of vitality into the society at large.

Franz Zeyringer was born and raised in

the village of Pöllau, population 2500, in the province of Styria in north-eastern Austria. Except for the war years and brief periods during his education, he has elected to spend his life in Pöllau, where he founded a music school and became its first director. For those of us who have drunk in the hospitality of this village, and the beauty and restfulness of the surrounding countryside, it is understandable why one who loves the outdoors equally as much as he does the viola would choose to spend his years outside a cultural center.

But if my observations are correct, Zeyringer's image in some professional circles is strictly that of a small town professor. "Viola Research Society? What is there to be researched!?" Can anything good come out Pöllau? "Pöllau? Wo!?" Zeyringer has had to reach out beyond his won national borders in order to find those supportive spirits who shared his passion for the instrument along the lines which he had envisioned and idealized. He found many of them among the Germans and Americans.

It would seem that most of us in the profession could be satisfied with having founded and directed a professional fraternity from infancy to adolescence, or having accumulated an archive of some 2500 examples (which, later joined with the Primrose International Viola Archive, holds in Zeyringer's words "the promise of a viola center unique in the world," or having produced the definitive lexicon for viola music (and without the aid of a computer!), or, most recently, published a book (*Die Viola da braccio*) which spans many of the questions regarding the history and production of the instrument. But Zeyringer has done all these things. And he probably won't rest until he sees the accomplishment of a final goal: the publication of a "viola encyclopedia."

But he will rest--at least a little more from his administrative and promotional efforts in behalf of the viola. After thirty-five years of preoccupation and devotion to the viola, Zeyringer, in common parlance, is burned out. Besides, the region around Pöllau abounds with good hunting and fishing sites, and Franz, nearing his 70th year, wants to pursue two of his favorite pastimes with more regularity.

He also feels a debt owed to his wife Linde, his three children and his grandchildren. He needs to devote more time to their interests having given so much of his time *and* means to professional demands which have exacted familial understanding, tolerance, and indulgence.

Those of us who are aware, and those not yet aware, of the resolve, energy, and ardor with which Franz Zeyringer has pursued and accomplished his professional objectives, stand in admiration of those accomplishments, and will remain in his debt.

David Dalton
President, American Viola Society

To the Chapters of the International Viola Society

My dear Friends!

In the general meeting in Kassel on June 19, 1988, I stepped down from the office of President of the IVS--of my own free choice and after considerable planning and reflection. The previous Vice President, University Lecturer (German: "Dozent") Günter Ojstersek, solo violist of the Düsseldorf Philharmonic, became my successor. His address:

Doz. Günter Ojstersek
Fritz von Willestrasse 17
D-400 Düsseldorf 30
West Germany

The reasons for my stepping down as president were mainly of a private nature. I am now in my 69th year of life and have to guarantee a more peaceful and healthy old age for myself--to the benefit of my family members, who have all too often had to go without my company on account of my thirty-two years of viola work. A further reason for my stepping down is that my nerves were no longer able to put up with the continually recurring problems in the IVS (some of the chapters, the yearbook, membership fees, among other things), that led to depression. Unfortunately, there is also a financial reason for why I gave up the office of president: with my small retirement I was no longer able to afford the many trips and related cash outlays.

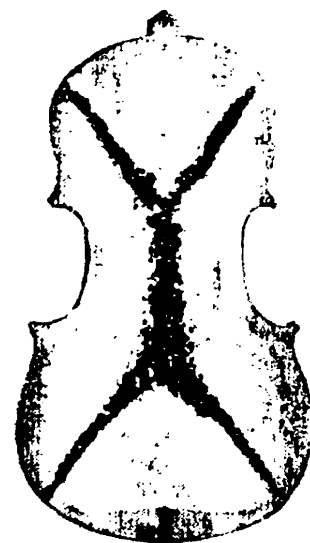
My term as president is thus ended and I now turn a last time to the chapters and to my fellow workers to express my gratitude. Sincere thanks for the good cooperation, for the friendship shown to me, and for the many honors which I received in the course of my twenty-year-long activity as president.

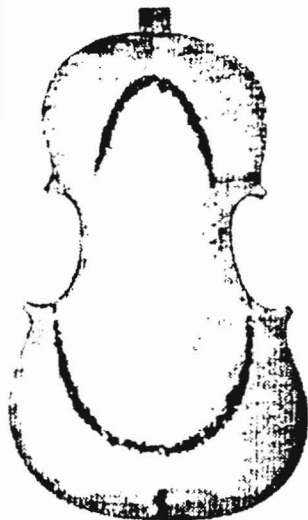
I will remain in the presidency as a counselor in order to continue to watch over PIVA and our colleagues in the East-Bloc countries. Likewise my musicological labors are continuing until the day they will be taken over by PIVA to carry them on.

I wish much success and a long life to the International Viola Society and its chapters. To its leaders I wish health and satisfaction. With repeated gratitude and heartfelt greetings I remain,

Yours

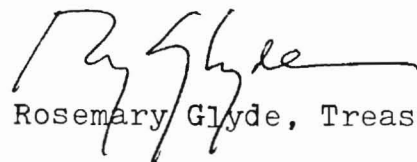
Franz Zeyringer
Past President
International Viola Society





**Treasurer's Report
American Viola Society
January 1 - December 31, 1987**

I. Money Market Account Year-end Balance: <u>\$5466.06</u>	Deposits Dues \$5494.50 Ads 523.00 Interest 320.67 *Other <u>800.00</u> \$7138.17 *from Primrose Account	Balances 4/30/88 <u>\$6575.09</u>
	Withdrawals AVS Journal \$2033.32 Office Supply 277.06 Solicitation 221.94 Labels Computer 929.17 Consulting Awards 800.00 Congress 1000.00 **Other 1305.20 CPA <u>277.75</u> \$6844.44 **Zeyringer, ASTA ad, etc.	
II. AVS Endowment Year-End Balance: <u>\$307.00</u> (\$2 taken from each \$15 membership, \$1 taken from each \$7.50 membership, also including special-order labels at \$50 an order)	\$334.00	<u>\$1245.01</u> (1988--\$3 taken from each \$20, \$2 from each \$10 and label orders)
III. William Primrose Scholarship Fund Certificate of Deposit Year-end Balance <u>\$5197.75</u> 1987 interest 153.84	Combined CD Nat'l Bank of North Carolina:	<u>\$5477.48</u>
IV. William Primrose Scholarship Fund Certificate of Deposit Year-end Balance <u>\$5144.99</u> 1987 interest \$144.99	<u>\$614.94</u> Interest	<u>\$5233.55</u>
V. William Primrose Scholarship Fund Savings Account Year-end Balance <u>\$552.44</u>		<u>\$590.08</u>


 Rosemary Glyde, Treasurer

Forum

From the *Newsletter of the Canadian Viola Society*

The following excerpt from Jacob Siskind's review of a recital by Ottawa violist Neal Gripp was published by the *Ottawa Citizen* on January 11, 1988.

"The viola is something of a stepchild in the string family. It fits in size and tone quality somewhere between the flighty acrobatics of the violin and the solid respectability of the cello, with few of the agreeable qualities of either of those instruments.

With several notable exceptions, few serious composers have ever taken the trouble to write music for the instrument, partly because in most hands it is indeed ungainly, if not surly, and partly because most people who play it would really much rather be playing the violin and treat the instrument as though having to play it is a penance for having wasted that youth in which they could have developed as virtuosi of its smaller sibling.

Neal Gripp is one of those rare violists who actually seem to enjoy playing the instrument."

The following letter from Ann Frederking was published January 28.

Voilà the Viola

"Why can't Jacob Siskind review a performance without presenting his unfounded biases about the instrument and/or music being performed?

Neal Gripp presented an interesting evening of contemporary music for the viola. Mr. Gripp appears quite comfortable as a recitalist--certainly he is one

of the most able in Ottawa, and the evening was most enjoyable.

I must take issue, however, with Mr. Siskind's statement that 'most people who play it (the viola) would really much rather be playing the violin...(see quote above).

Following is a portion of a poem written by Ralph Aldrich, professor of the viola at the University of Western Ontario:

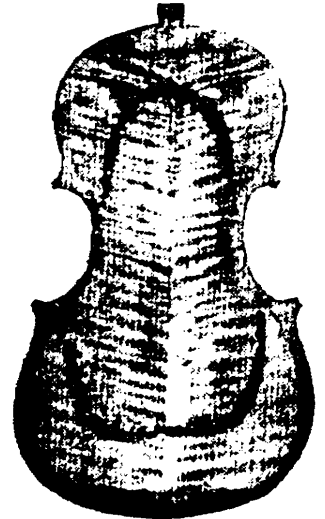
Eat out thy heart, O cello proud,
And violin go don thy shroud.
Pray Saint Cecilia's mercy mild
Forgive thy up and down-bows wild,
For she in sacred restitution
Bless'd VIOLA'S contribution
Paying IT the compliment
Of genius's favored instrument.
Mozart, Schubert, Dvorák, Britten,
All for orchestras have written.
Hear, O Man, and earth rejoice..
VIOLA played they all--by choice.

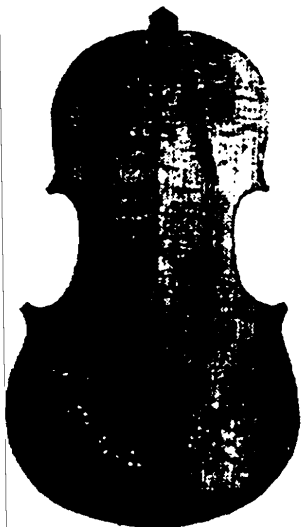
As secretary of the Canadian Viola Society, affiliated with the International Viola Society, I know many violists who are so by choice. We prefer the rich mellow sound of the viola to the thinner sound of the violin. We also prefer the pivotal, supporting role we play in the orchestra. As a teacher of viola and the violin, I have found that if given a chance to listen to both instruments, a large number of young people will choose the viola over the violin.

Mr. Siskind's views of the viola reflect the thinking of the 19th century. Surely it is time for him to join the 20th century."

Jacob Siskind replies:

"The mere fact that these unfortunate people have felt the need to band together and form a society* of their own proves my point."





**Editor's note: Does the same apply for the unfortunates who band together in the horn, clarinet, cello, violin, tuba, etc. societies?*

Recently, I traveled to Utah and had the pleasure of conversing with David Dalton. Although I am a violinist, I remember with fondness my association with Professor Dalton as he coached the BYU Honors Quartet, of which I was a member. I also studied viola with him for a short time.

Our conversation first centered on my schooling on the East Coast, but soon turned to Prof. Dalton's publication by Oxford University Press of *Playing the Viola*, a series of interviews with William Primrose. The importance of this type of work is evident in that the master himself is quoted in his own words, without an imposed editorial bias by the editor. This book is an enormously important document for probing and discovering Primrose's techniques, experiences, and attitude towards all facets of the instrument. The one lament that Dalton expressed was that the book is being currently marketed for more than \$45. To be sure, the book is of excellent quality, but the great disadvantage, paradoxically, is that the book was meant mainly for those people who now can least afford the price: students. We hope that OUP will bring out a paperback version fairly soon.

James Waite, a student, doctoral program for musicology at New York University

Of Interest

1989 Congress

The XVII International Viola Congress, to be held 21-25 June 1989 at the University of Redlands, California, is

taking shape at this early date. This is due to the efforts of Lucille Taylor, artistic director, and a planning committee of the AVS, Louis Kievman, chairman. Some of the performers and lecturers who are scheduled to appear are Karen Tuttle, Csaba Erdelyi, Nanie Jamieson, Roland Kato, Roberto Diaz, Paul Siefried, Lyndon Taylor, John Walz, Clyn Barrus, Hans Weisshaar, David Schwartz, Pamela Goldsmith, Alan de Veritch, and the Redlands Symphony Orchestra, Jon Robertson, conductor.

Selected presentation topics are "The Transition to the Tourte Bow," "What to Look for When Choosing a Bow," "Preparing Students for Competitions," "Viola making Today," and "Preparing for Orchestral Auditions."

Events to look forward to are a symposium on the recording industry in Hollywood, a mock orchestra audition, an exhibition of violas sponsored by the American Violin Society, master classes, concerts, and music and recording exhibitions. Once again, as at the Ann Arbor congress, a Primrose Scholarship Competition for young violists will be held in conjunction with the congress. Teachers and students should take note of this. Further details regarding this event will be given in the fall edition of JAVS.

For further information and housing reservations, contact:

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Director of Conferences
University of Redlands
P.O. Box 3080
Redlands, CA 92373-0999
Tel. 714-793-2121

JAVS

Some past copies of the Journal of the American Viola Society are available on request by members of the AVS at \$3.00 each. These back issues

can be ordered from the editorial office: Newsletter No. 28, April, 1985; JAVS editions: Vol. 3 No.1, April 1987; Vol. 3 No. 2, August, 1987; and Vol. 3 No. 3, November, 1987.

PIVA Duplicates

The Primrose International Viola Archive has accumulated over 1000 duplicates of published viola works. These titles are already in the collection and so will be sold beginning September. Patrons who wish to examine this list of pieces--mostly new, some antiquariat--should request the list including prices from:

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Editor's note: *Readers are reminded that any information pertaining to the viola or violists of general interest may be submitted to the editor for inclusion in JAVS.*

About Violists

Katims Honored

Milton Katims, a board member of the AVS, has been named the winner of the 1988 distinguished service award given by the American String Teachers Association. Katims is known internationally for his accomplishments as Music Director of the Seattle Symphony for twenty-two years, as a guest conductor of many of the world's great orchestras, as a viola soloist on recordings and in the concert hall, and as a publisher of numerous transcriptions and editions for viola. In 1976, Katims was appointed artistic director of the school of music at the University of Houston, and in 1983 hosted the XI International

Viola Congress. Katims has received a number of awards, including the prestigious Arturo Toscanini Artistic Achievement Award, given to him in 1986.

New Works

Reviews on Playing

Playing the Viola: Conversations with William Primrose by David Dalton. Available to members of the American Viola Society at a discount from Oxford University Press, 300 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, (212.679.7300)

"It is important to state that Dalton's work is not a glorified Primrose pupil's notebook. Over the years, notes and commentaries recorded by devoted students of the great violist have made their way into print. Dalton's book is a profound exploration of William Primrose the man, the artist and the violist. His narrative forms a galaxy of observations by a gentleman whose erudition is an enlightening, inspiring force for all string players."

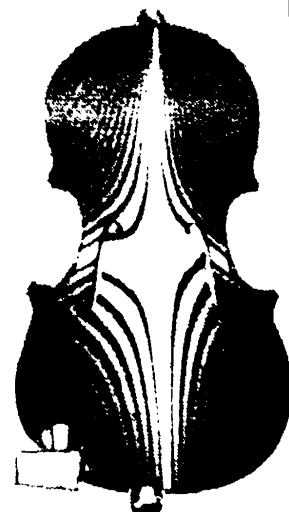
--Franco Sciannameo,
The Violexchange

"David Dalton's *Conversations with William Primrose* is a loving and brilliant composite of the man, his art, humanity, and a meticulously detailed analysis of his technique. His natural, healthy concepts encompass all art forms--including sports. A tremendous contribution and a much needed affirmation of our own best instincts."

--Karen Tuttle,
Curtis Institute and
the Juilliard School

Viola da braccio

Franz Zeyringer, past president of the International Viola Society, announ-





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ces the release of a new book (German text) entitled *Die Viola da braccio*, published by Heller Verlag, Munich. This volume has been five years in the writing in which the author addresses and finds solutions for important problems concerning the viola. Such subjects of general interest as the development of the instrument, history of viola performance, the problem of size, a small lexicon of viola terms, judging an instrument and the bow, etc. are handled. The first edition, clothbound, contains 280 pages written in German. Order forms can be acquired from: Rosemary Glyde, P.O. Box 558, Rt. 2, Golden's Bridge, NY 10526.

Lesser-Known Works for Unaccompanied Viola: An Annotated Reading

ANGERER, PAUL (1927-). *MUSIK* (1948).

Divided into three sections, *Bewegt*, *Langsam*, *Thema mit Variationen*, *Musik* is a practical work, not difficult and well-written for the instrument. Paul Angerer is a well-known Austrian composer, conductor and violist. In his *Musik*, he re-emphasizes Hindemith's lesson of writing functional music. The composition does not achieve much in terms of inventiveness; however, the final variations are rather engaging. Publisher: Doblinger, Vienna (1960).

BERKELEY, MICHAEL (1948-). *VARIATIONS ON GREEK FOLK SONGS* (1976).

Composed in Greece, *Variations* is a fluid work of medium difficulty. The setting provides a wide range of dynamics, using a plain musical language throughout. Double stops are sparsely used and melodic flow seems the strongest asset of this work. Publisher: Oxford University Press (1982).

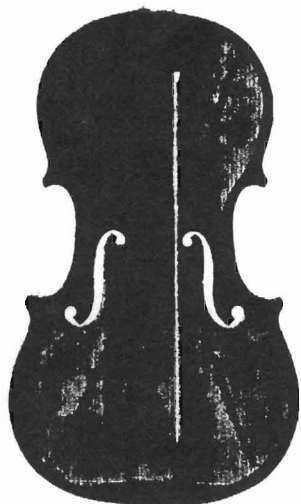
BIBER, HEINRICH VON. (1644-1704). *PASSACAGLIA IN C MINOR*.

Passacaglia is a transcription made by Walter Lebermann, after the violin work by Biber. The original work, regarded by most violinists as a historical curiosity, assumes particular importance when played on the viola. Very effective and majestic, *Passacaglia* is perhaps the most justifiable transcription of a work from the baroque period for viola. Walter Lebermann's idea, however, is not new. A previous viola adaptation of this piece was done by Max Rostal for Chester Music some years ago. Publisher: Litolf-Petters (1975).

BLOCH, ERNEST (1880-1959). *SUITE* (1959).

Bloch's contribution to viola literature is of great importance. Since 1919, with his *Suite for Viola and Orchestra*, Bloch has championed the expressive possibilities of the instrument. Bloch wrote an immense amount of music for all instruments and concluded his career by composing a *Suite for Unaccompanied Viola*, which he left unfinished. Strangely neglected by violists, Bloch's *Suite* possesses great qualities, even if deprived of its logical conclusion. There are only 25 measures of what would probably have been the last section. The player can end the piece with a C minor chord at the beginning of the unfinished section. (Raphael Hellyer has composed an effective closing.) Duration: 9 minutes. Publisher: Broude Brothers (1962).





BLOCK, ROBERT PAUL (1942-) *FANTASY* (1967, rev. 1973).

Block, an American editor and educator, has composed a fairly engaging work for solo viola. Although the writing itself is not innovative, it does present some theatrical gestures. Moments of immobility are suddenly interrupted by violent outbursts of sound, thus making this piece an interesting diversion for a player willing to be creative. Publisher: Musica Rara (1974).

BORISSOVSKY, VADIM (1900-1972). *FOUR ARTISTIC STUDIES*

Vadim Borissovsky is credited for founding the modern Soviet school of viola playing. Among his many publications, particular attention should be paid to the *Four Artistic Studies*. They are transcriptions from works of J.S. Bach, R. Schumann and F. Chopin—all done with taste and practical purpose in mind. The Bach Pedal Study could be used as an excellent encore piece. Publisher: International Music Company (n.d.).

BRUN, HERBERT (1918-). *SONATINA*.

Brun belongs to a small circle of composers who gathered around Stefan Wolpe in Jerusalem in the 1950's. His compositions employ serial technique mixed with oriental systems. The *Sonatina*, a remarkable piece of viola music, has been edited by Ron Golan, to whom the work is dedicated. Publisher: Israeli Music Publications (1954).

BRUNSWICK, MARK (1902-1955). *FANTASIA* (1932).

Composed in Vienna, *Fantasia* is dedicated to Marcel Dick. The work is a suite in four movements: Prelude, Toccata, Air, Finale. *Fantasia* presents challenging neo-classic angularities à la Stravinsky of the 1930's. Great bow arm dexterity is needed in order to smooth its texture, which is full of rhythmic incisiveness. Publisher: The Valley Music Press (1959).

BURKHARD, WILLY (1900-1955). *SONATA*, OP. 59

This sonata is a direct descendent of Max Reger's *Suites*, Op 131d. Written mostly in the middle register of the instrument, sonority does not seem to emerge easily from the viola, except in the finale, which is written in a perpetual motion style. Publisher: Barenreiter (n.d.).

DONATONI, FRANCO (1927-). *SONATA*.

Franco Donatoni, is viewed today as a chief exponent of avant-garde music in Italy. At age 25, Donatoni gained attention by composing this *Sonata for Unaccompanied Viola*. He composed in a style which he later rejected. However, the *Sonata* has survived its author's axe. It is a composition of strong individuality, full of ideas and sonorities of a definite Bartókian flavor. The *Sonata* is written in three movements: Allegro molto moderato, Largamente, Allegro non troppo (Fuga). Duration: 13 minutes. Publisher: G. Zanibon (1977).

DREW JAMES (1929-). *SOLO SONATA*.

Since the 1970's, American composer James Drew has been widely acknowledged as one of the most original representatives of the modernist movement. This solo sonata, 13 lines (no bars) in total, was completed in 1982. It is a free spirited piece with some sentimental moments. The sonata is not difficult and, for the enterprising violist, would be a good introduction to a different kind of music writing, although traditional notation is used. The work is dedicated to Walter Trampler. Publisher: Presser (1983).

DUKE, JOHN (1899-1985). *SUITE*.

Composed in 1944, the *Suite* has four movements: Aria, Scherzo, Cadenza, Finale. This version has been carefully edited by the late Louise Rood. *Suite* is a good example of American music unjustly overlooked by violists. The work is not difficult and is well-written. Publisher: The Valley Music Press (1944).

FERRARI, GIORGIO (1922-). *IMPROVVISAZIONE* (1979).

The composition has many ideas developed in a virtuoso fashion. The last section, Mosso-Agitato, is a frenetic three-page tour de force of great interest and effect. Duration: 12 Minutes. Publisher: Boccaccini and Spada (1980).

GENZMER, HARALD (1909-). *SONATA* (1957).

Genzmer's *Sonata* is divided into four movements: Moderato, Tranquillo, Burleske, Finale. The opening Moderato is an Intrada with a majestic marching feeling accentuated by dotted rhythm. The second movement, Tranquillo, is a long soliloquy played con sordino; the third movement, Burleske-prestissimo, is a very attractive perpetual motion. The finale is basically a summation of the previous movements, giving the piece a cyclical unity. Musically and instrumentally this work is derivative of Max Reger. Duration: 12 Minutes. Publisher: Litolf-Peters (1958).

HARTZELL, EUGENE (1931-). *MONOLOGUE 7, EXCURSIONS FOR VIOLA*

Composed in 1969, *Monologue 7* is an engaging piece. Written in a fairly modern style, this ten-minute work is actually a sequence of rapidly changing moods, providing good material for creative solo playing. Publisher: Doblinger (1972).

HOVHANNES, ALAN (1911-). *CHAHAGIR*, OP. 56A.

"Chahagir," meaning "torch bearer," is a 4:11 minute piece, subdued and mysterious in character. A short, controlled work, it is a good example of Hovhannes's poetic eloquence. It provides the violist with a very expressive solo work. Publisher: Rongwen Music (1945).

JACOB, GORDON (1895-1984). *VARIATIONS*.

Jacob's *Variations* are some of the most gratifying, though not difficult, pieces of unaccompanied viola music by a contemporary composer. Regarding this composition, Mr. Jacob says, "During the last fifty years, I have, from time to time, written various works for viola, an instrument of which I have always been fond on account of its highly individual and fascinating tone quality. These *Variations* were written in 1975 for John White to whom I am indebted for useful suggestions about the bowing of certain passages and other technical points." Publisher: Musica Rara (1977).



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KHACHATURIAN, ARAM (1903-1978). *SONATA*.

The date of composition and other details about this sonata are unknown. One would have expected a warmer, more intense piece of music from Khachaturian. Here we have not much more than an etude on grand détaché, musically rather lean. The sonata is in one movement. Publisher: Schirmer (1977).

MURGIER, JACQUES (1912-). *SONATA*.

The *Sonata*, published in 1983, is part of an ongoing collection of viola music directed by Serge Collot called "Musique pour l'Alto." The work is in four movements: Praeludium, Lento, Intermezzo and Bourlesque, all rather difficult. The composition's style reflects Bartók's influence in rhythmic articulation and sound. Duration: 13:30 Minutes. Publisher: Billaudot (1983).

PERSICHETTI, VINCENT (1915-1987). *PARABLE XVI*, OP. 130.

Published in 1975, *Parable XVI* is a nine-minute improvisational type of work containing many lyrical and elegant moments. The writing for the instrument is clear and idiomatic, a quality common to all Perischetti's instrumental music. Publisher: Elkan-Vogel (1975).

POLO, ENRICO (1868-1953). *STUDI-SONATE*.

Enrico Polo is known almost exclusively for his pedagogical works for both violin and viola. These *Studi-Sonate* present Polo as a composer. The volume contains two sonatas, both with a concluding fugue and one partita, all written in a neo-baroque style similar to Max Reger's. Unfortunately, they recall the German master too closely to be considered as original works. However, there is some merit in these rather academic pieces, especially regarding some interesting polyphonic situations on the middle strings. Publisher: Suvini-Zerboni (1950).

SAUTER, ERNEST (1928-). *SONATA*.

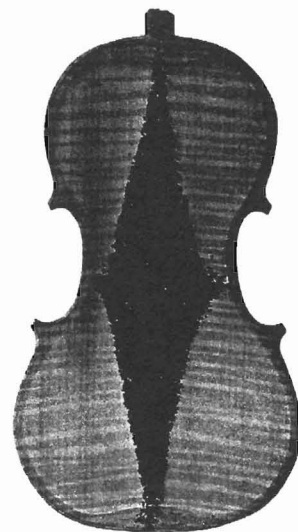
This work by German composer Ernest Sauter is graced by a conscientious writing for the viola. Never extravagant, this four-page piece deserves a reading. Publisher: Verlag Walter Wollenweber. (1975).

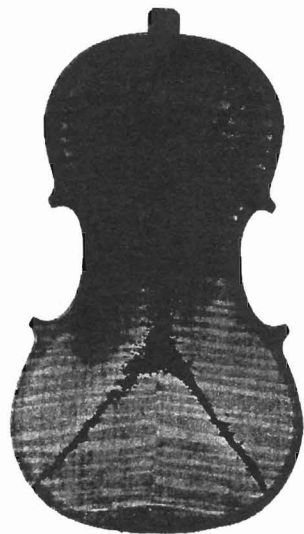
SCHONTHAL, RUTH (1924-). *FOUR EPIPHANIES*.

Four Epiphanies are among the finest contemporary works for unaccompanied viola. There is fantasy and originality in these four short contrasting pieces which benefit immensely from the editing and fingering of Paul Doktor. Duration: 10 Minutes. Publisher: Oxford University Press (1977).

SHULMAN, ALAN (1915-). *SUITE*.

Alan Shulman, the well-known cellist and composer, writes music only when inspired to do so. Regarding his *Suite* for solo viola, Mr. Shulman says, "The *Suite for Solo Viola* was completed in 1953 and is dedicated to my good friend Milton Preves, principal violist of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. The four movement suite has no program, but the second and third movements were influenced by sounds of nature." The movements are Allegro con brio, Alla Siciliana, Vivo and Allegro energico. Duration: 6 Minutes. Publisher: Templeton Publishing Company.





STADLMAIR, HANS (1929-). *SONATA* (1960).

A very light work, *Sonata* is composed in the Hindemith tradition. Apart from fluent writing, the last movement has an interesting syncopated rhythmical structure worth exploring. The *Sonata* is divided into four movements: Allegro con brio, Lento cantabile, Rubato, and Vivace energico. Publisher: Breitkopf und Hartel (1961).

VIEUXTEMPS, HENRI (1820-1881). *CAPRICCIO*.

Vieuxtemps, like other prominent 19th Century violinists, loved to play viola in chamber music and occasionally wrote for this instrument. His contribution is rather important in view of the scarcity of original viola music during the romantic era. The present *Capriccio* was found by German violist Ulrich Drüner in a collection of works published posthumously in Paris: *Six Morceaux pour violon seul, suivis d'un Capriccio pour Alto seul*, Op. 55, No. 9. This new publication has been edited by Ulrich Drüner. Publisher: Schott (1973).


VOSS, FRIEDRICH (1930-). *VARIATIONEN* (1962-1963).

Variationen is a viola work composed in a light mood. The alternation of arco and pizzicato (left and right hand) is cleverly distributed throughout the three-page composition. Publisher: Breitkopf und Hartel (1964).

WILLIAMSON, MALCOM (1931-). *PARTITA ON THEMES OF WALTON*.

William Walton's *Viola Concerto* is one of the masterpieces of the viola repertoire. Here, its many themes are quoted, transformed and paraphrased by Mr. Williamson. The result is a very attractive four-page solo work, not difficult and quite pleasant. *Partita* was commissioned by the British Broadcasting Corporation and first performed on BBC television March 29, 1972 by Yehudi Menuhin, to whom the work is dedicated. Mr. Menuhin has edited the piece for publication. Publisher: Oxford University Press (1972).


These reviews courtesy of Franco Sciannameo and the Violenxchange, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1988.



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