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NEWSLETTER
Autumn 2018

LONDON CELLO SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

The Cellos of the Venetian Baroque

• *Valerie Walden*

In August 1770, Charles Burney wrote of arriving in Venice, his first musical experience coming from 'an itinerant band of two fiddles, a violoncello, and a voice'. Remarking that such a group was as common in Venice 'as small-coal men or oyster-women in England', he noted that the 'two violins played difficult passages very neatly, the bass stopped well in tune', and that in any other country, 'they would not only have excited attention, but [would] have acquired applause, which they justly merited'.

In the Venetian Republic, music was an essential element to all aspects of daily life; as Burney noted, the geography of the city denied its citizens of 'walking, riding, and all field-sports'. Gondoliers sang, the churches supported orchestras and religious festivals, the opera houses entertained the public, the orchestras of the four orphanages trained young musicians, there were numerous private and public concerts, and, since the mid-seventeenth century, cellos have been indispensable to this music making.

Cello playing in Venice was, and is, a communal activity, with ensemble and orchestral playing providing the foundation of the cellist's life. It's not completely clear when cellos were used instead of viols or bassoons to play bass lines in the city's ensembles, sixteenth-century nomenclature being rather unreliable, but business licences confirm that violin makers existed in Venice in 1580. St. Mark's employed a *violone* player as early as 1593, with violins being hired in 1603, and a *contrabasso* player in 1614. The four *Ospedali Grandi*, of which Vivaldi's *Ospedale della Pietà* is the best known, also began using instruments, with professional musicians being hired as teachers, beginning in 1630. This included instruction on lower stringed instruments, which had an increased

importance because they covered the lower registers missing in the female choirs. Musical examples from Cavalli operas suggest that cellos were a normal part of opera orchestras by the midpoint of the century. Music requiring the cello meant that players needed instruments and by the second half of the seventeenth century, there was a huge market for violin-family instruments and bows, and the craftsman who could build and repair them.

Venice had been a lucrative city for instrument makers since the fourteenth century. Early stringed instrument builders focused on plucked instruments, but by the sixteenth century, Venetian luthiers had also developed a unique approach to viol construction. Tieffenbrucker, Kaiser and Sellas are the best-known names, these patriarchs being three of the numerous Bavarian craftsmen who emigrated and established workshops in Venice. The sixteenth-century restrictions of the guild system that developed in Füssen, the hub of southern Bavarian instrument making, resulted in a continuous exodus of talented luthiers to European cities. By the high baroque, the economic and artistic energy of Venice created an environment that stimulated an explosion of violin-family instrument building, the quality of the instruments rivaling that of northern Italy.

The first notable cellos come from Matteo Goffriller (1659-1742), who moved from the Tyrolean town of Bressanone to Venice in 1685. He apprenticed to Martin Kaiser, married Kaiser's daughter Maddalena, and then became head of the family business in about 1690. One must assume that this was a happy arrangement, as twelve children resulted from the marriage and he became a prosperous businessman. To date, there are more than forty known Gofriller cellos extant, built between 1689 and 1735. The cellos vary significantly in size, with a length of 72 to 79 cm., reflecting the fact that Goffriller didn't use a mould, and that the recipients of his instruments may have varied in size themselves; the girls at the *Ospedale* required smaller instruments than the professional musicians of the church and opera orchestras. So, too, his later instruments may reflect the size needed to use the cello as a solo instrument, rather than as an accompanying bass. Gofriller's instruments are known for their varnishes; some instruments are coloured the 'Venetian red' that he may have developed from working with fellow Tyrolean luthier Matteo Albani, and others are an amber yellow. The scrolls tend to be wide at the neck and narrow gracefully to the volute.

From 1610-1760, four generations of the Sellas family built, sold, and repaired stringed instruments in Venice. While there are no labels that indicate that cellos were built in their *botteghe*, several of their apprentices became masters of cello construction; Francesco Gobetti (1675-1723), Domenico Montagnana (1686-1750), Pietro Guarneri (1695-1762) and Carlo Tononi (1675-1730). I consider the most beautiful cellos in the world to be those of Domenico Montagnana. I decided this at age twelve, watching Willie Van den Burg drop cigar ash over the face of his Montagnana as he made the most beautiful cello sounds. Born in Lendinara, Montagnana came to Venice at sixteen, apprenticing in the Sellas workshop until 1712, when he established his own business. His cellos are known for being short and wide, with a strong, muscular sound. As with Willie's cello, many have a rich, deep red colour. Ralph Kirshbaum credits his cello with giving his playing 'more warmth and core – particularly in the bass. And given the overtones, the warmth and core also carry on into the treble. It possesses a stunning range of beautiful warm sound.'

Pietro Guarneri was the last luthier of that family lineage. He came from Cremona to Venice in 1717 and worked in the Sellas *botteghe* until 1733, with Matteo Sellas standing as godfather to his first child. He then established his own business, while raising his eleven children. Guarneri favoured smaller sizing for his cellos, with a variation of lengths from that of a 1725 instrument, 27 ¾", to that of a 1739 cello, 29 ¾".

Carlo Tononi was a fellow workmate of Guarneri's at the Sellas establishment, likewise arriving in Venice in 1717. He came to Venice from Bologna, where his family were luthiers. He was apparently close to Francesco Gobetti, who also had an association with the Sellas business, and took over Sellas' independent activities five years later. It is likely, though, that Tononi continued to sell his instruments through the Sellas establishment, as did Gobetti. Tononi's cellos sometimes display artistic flair, a 1720 cello having a painted floral design underneath the tailpiece. He also made bows; a stamped snakewood bow of 1725 is in the Ashmolean Museum collection.

The most elegant and consistently-styled instruments came from the workshop of Sanctus Seraphin (1699-1776), suggesting an elite clientele that made his business one of the most financially successful in Venice. The consistently smaller sizing of his cellos also suggests that his instruments were designed for players focused on solo playing. He moved from Udine to Venice in 1721, registered his own business in 1733, and, probably annoyed by the high taxes that the instrument makers' guild imposed, closed his business in 1744, working thereafter as an artisan until his death.

Despite the vitality of its entertainment, Venice's economy had been gradually shrinking since the sixteenth century. By the late eighteenth century, the spread of Turkish power and changing trade routes to European colonies altered the business environment. Ambitious luthiers began to choose other locations to set up their establishments and Venice's golden age

came to an end. Even the cellos began to leave, one by one, as nineteenth-century foreign buyers became enamoured of Italian instruments. Venetian cellos now live all over the world, continually reminding their owners and their audiences of the beauty and richness of the Venetian baroque.

An active cellist and teacher, Valerie Walden's publications about the cello and its history include One Hundred Years of Violoncello; a History of Technique and Performance Practice, 1740-1840; thirty-two entries in the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians; a chapter in The Cambridge Companion to the Cello; and book reviews for Early Music America. She is currently preparing an edition of the Caprices and Exercises, op. 15 of Robert Lindley for Bärenreiter, to be published in 2019.

Glories of Venice, the Society's main opening event of the season, celebrates the art of Venetian cello-making on Sunday November 25th 2018 at the Royal Academy of Music.
To book, please go to www.londoncellos.org

Of Special Interest

Don't Be an Urtext Victim

• Jeffrey Solow

Today's performers want their interpretations to reflect a composer's intentions, which are conveyed via the score. It is also well documented throughout most of musical history that composers have wanted their works to sound alive in performance, which necessitates at least a certain amount of freedom on the part of the player. As the great violinist Eugene Ysaÿe stated: 'Observing the markings is not all—one must do it well. And sometimes one should even disregard them.' In order to accomplish both of these goals, an interpretation must start from a musical text whose accuracy can be relied on with confidence.

Modern editions can generally be divided into two broad categories: **performance editions** and **urtext and/or critical editions**.

Performance editions offer interpretive and technical suggestions that reflect the experience and musical philosophy of the editor—usually a well-known teacher or performer. These suggestions may substantially add to or change the composer's original dynamics, expression markings, articulations, or even notes. Because editorial contributions in performance editions are not always distinguishable from composers' markings, it is wise for users to have another source closer to the original for reference. At their best, performance editions are like having a lesson from the editor *in absentia*.

Musicologists, the customary editors of **urtext** ("original text") and **critical editions**, attempt to present the music as they believe the composer wished it to look on the page. Strictly speaking, urtext editions require the existence of the composer's manuscript or other primary sources; in their absence or when sources or information irreconcilably conflict, only a critical edition is possible (many, if not most, editions labeled 'urtext' are really critical editions).

Urtext and critical editions often add fingering and bowing indications and give these editorial additions in parentheses, brackets, or an identifiable type-face. Ideally, the edition should include information on sources, divergent readings, and the work's compositional and publication history. Urtext editors adhere to different philosophies; some try to reconcile all existing sources and offer their view of the 'best' text, while others strictly follow the last source with which the composer had any demonstrated personal involvement.

When Günter Henle (1889-1971) founded Henle Urtext Editions in 1948, he launched a revolution as to how performers realised their interpretations in sound from the printed page. These days, most players favour urtext editions and teachers direct their students to buy them. Unfortunately, Henle's revolution also spawned many 'urtext victims,' players who treat every marking on

the page (or the absence of a marking) as biblical writ, forbidden to be changed under pain of not being true to the composer's intentions.

Before discussing 'urtext victimisation' in greater detail, allow me to explain why I started to explore the relationship as it currently exists between text and performance. Several years ago I asked myself why many performances of baroque music—Bach in particular—did not slow down at the end of fast movements. Instead, the performers charged towards the end, inserted a pause, and played the final chord. It occurred to me that a likely reason was because *ritardando* was not specifically written in the score, and the players had been well schooled in the philosophy that 'if it is not written, don't do it!' This idea, in turn, led me to inquire who notated the first explicit *ritardando*—a question that I often ask students and colleagues and seldom get the right answer. The answer, as far as I have been able to discover, is Beethoven, in 1797. The middle of the *finale* (m. 93) of his Piano Sonata, op. 7—*Rondo Poco Allegretto e grazioso*—has *ritardando* followed by *a tempo*. A 1710 hand-written copy of Henry Purcell's 1691 opera King Arthur—most certainly reflecting Purcell's original manuscript—has a single marking of *slentando*, and Clementi used *calando* in the 1780s, but both words seemingly indicate a combined slowing and softening. Beethoven's 1797 Sonata, as well his 1795 Trio in G, op. 1, no. 2 (which ends with a simultaneous *calando* and *rallentando*), and the finale of his first Cello Sonata, op. 5, no. 2, (which similarly has *ritardando* and *calando*), appear to be the earliest printed uses of a word that specifically directs the performer just to slow down.

The *ritardando* in the piano sonata is especially significant because it comes in the middle of a movement, an unusual place to slow down, and not at the end, the usual place. It cannot be that no player ever made a *ritardando* before 1797; it must be that slowing down at the end of a movement was so commonplace that no composer before Beethoven had ever felt the need to write it!

In order to avoid being an urtext victim, one must consider what such an edition is and what its limitations and pitfalls are. Many users of urtext editions often forget, or do not realise, that all editions have editors. Even the first edition of a new work required a copyist, an engraver, and a proofreader, any of whom (including the composer) could, and frequently did, commit errors. Regarding urtext editions, two recent commentators have observed:

> '…modern Urtext editions based on the early sources are only as reliable as the visual acuity and the musical experience of their engravers and editors.' William S. Newman (*Beethoven on Beethoven*)

> 'The purpose of a critical edition is…to transmit the text that best represents the historical evidence of the sources. That evidence is open to interpretation, and so two editors will, in all likelihood, produce two different editions of the same work.' James Grier (*The Critical Editing of Music*)

In addition to recognizing the possibility of actual mistakes or misprints, users of urtext editions must avoid or confront many other potential pitfalls, some textual and some historically based. Below are the major sort of traps with some general examples. Following these, I will conclude this discussion with a few specific examples (among many!) from the repertoire.

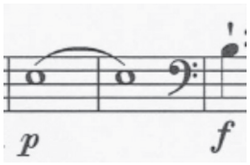
Potential textual problems with urtext editions:
• Lost or incomplete autograph sources (*Bach Cello Suites, Haydn C Major Concerto, Dvorak Concerto, Schubert Bb Trio, Ravel Trio, Lalo Concerto*)
• Mistakes or unclear intentions in manuscripts (*Debussy Sonata, Beethoven A Major Sonata, Brahms F major Sonata*)
• Mistakes or misprints in original printed editions (*Debussy Sonata, Brahms F Major Sonata, Beethoven Sonatas, Arpeggione Sonata, Dvorak Concerto*)
• Conflicting sources—i.e. autograph manuscript vs. fair copy vs. first edition (*Beethoven C Major Sonata, Chopin Sonata, Lalo Concerto, Dvorak Concerto*)
• Newly discovered sources making older urtext editions obsolete (the *stichvorlage*—engraver's copy—for *Beethoven A Major Sonata*)
• Obsolete or faulty urtext editions still circulating (*Beethoven Sonatas, Dvorak Concerto*)
• Editorial 'executive decisions' for variant, unclear, or mistaken notations in sources (*Dvorak Concerto, Schubert's 'long accents' in Bärenreiter edition*s)
• Urtext editions that conflict with each other (*Bärenreiter vs. Henle*)

Potential performance problems with urtext editions:
• Distinguishing between a composer's expectations and a composer's intentions (*the need to add slurs and articulations in Haydn and Bach*)
• Implied markings (*many dynamics in Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven*)
• Inconsistent or ambiguous markings (*Dvorak's slurred triplets in his F Minor Trio, Schubert's triplets vs. dotted rhythms in the Bb Trio*)
• Impractical markings (*very long slurs, impractical metronome markings, impossible double stops or harmonics, dynamics that must be adjusted for balance*)
• Slurs that may indicate either phrasing, articulation, or bowings (*Beethoven*)
• Meaning of markings changing though time (*Beethoven's use of 'espressivo' between his early works and his late works*)
• A composer's personal meaning for markings (*Brahms's use of 'tranquillo' as a change in tempo or as an indication of character*).
• Evolving and changing performance practices (*ornaments, bowing techniques, etc.*)

Specific musical examples:

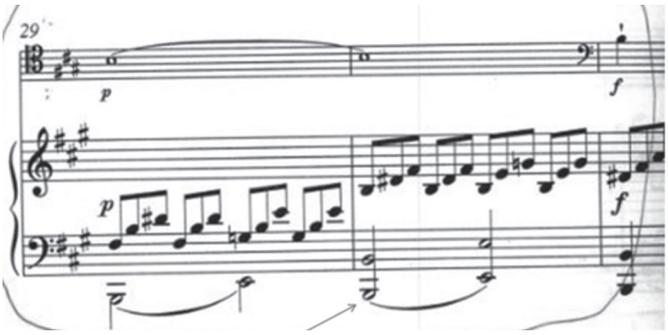
Beethoven *Cello Sonata No. 3 in A major, op. 69* (probable implied crescendo)
In measures 29-31 of the first movement, the cello part (Example 1) appears to intend a *subito forte*, which is how virtually all cellists play it today.

Example 1 Bärenreiter

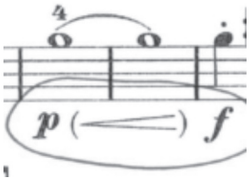


However, in m. 30, the addition of octaves in the left hand of the piano part implies a crescendo (Example 2), and since Beethoven was composing the sonata in score, he did not see the need to write a crescendo in either part.

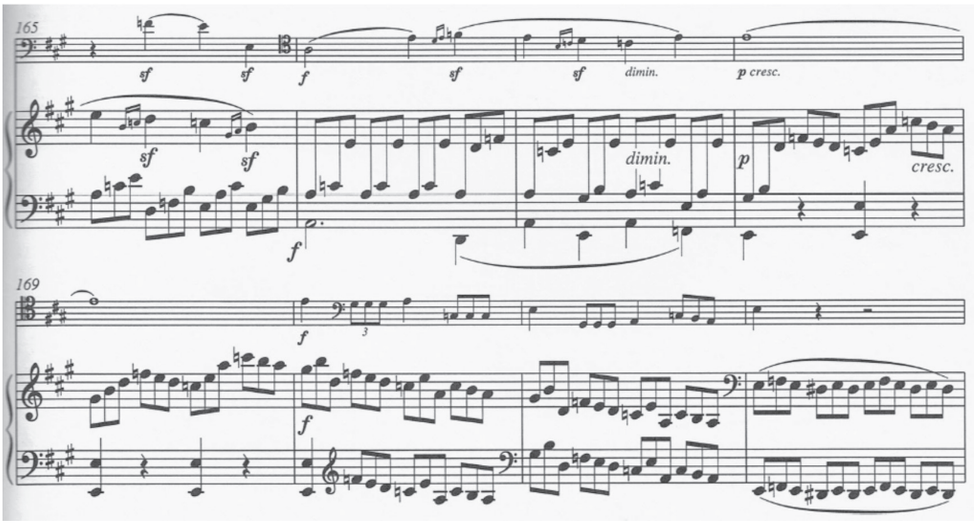
Example 2 Bärenreiter



Example 3 The editor of the 'classic' C. F. Peters edition, Walter Schulz (former principal cellist of the Berlin Philharmonic), recognised Beethoven's intention and added the crescendo.

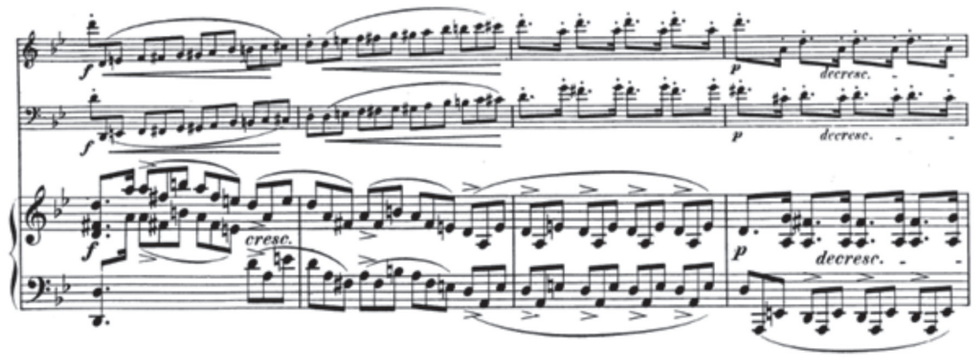


Example 4 The piano part is notated differently in the equivalent spot of the recapitulation, so Beethoven himself wrote a crescendo (Bärenreiter).



Schubert *Piano Trio in Bb major, op. 99* (probable incorrect placement of a subito piano)
At m. 20 of the first movement, urtext editions follow the first edition showing a subito piano at the bar line (Example 5) instead one note later (Example 6), which makes more sense musically.

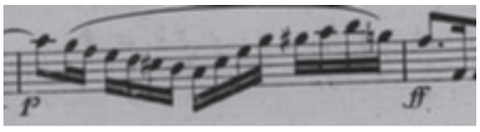
Example 5 Breitkopf & Härtel, Complete Schubert Works (1886)



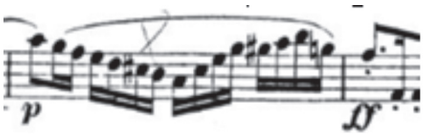
Example 6 C. F. Peters (1931), edited by Ernst Cahnbley

Unfortunately, the autograph manuscript of the Trio is lost so we must look for an analogous spot in another work to show what Schubert most likely intended. The first movement of the Octet, op. post. 166, D. 803, provides an example in the clarinet part at m. 127.

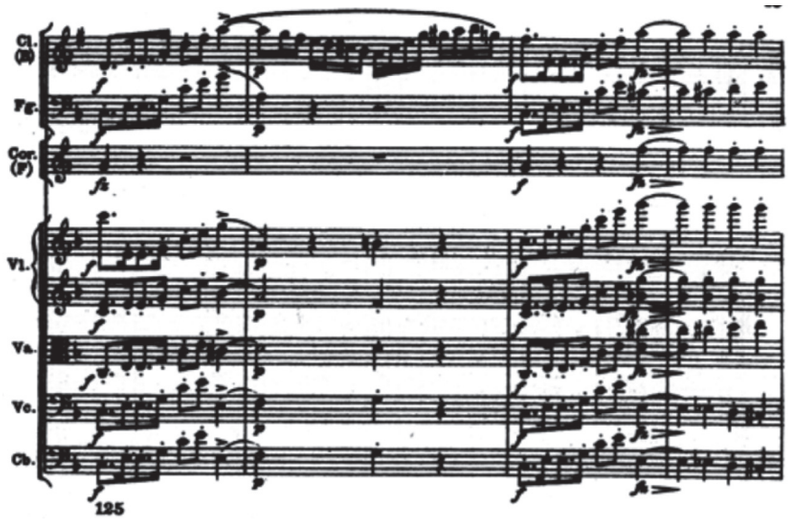
Example 7 The editor of the first edition (c. 1853) placed the *subito f* at the bar line (mistakenly printed as *ff*), to align it with the *forte* in the other instruments. (N.B. The first edition was not published with a full score)



Example 8 C. F. Peters (c. 1875) follows the first edition exactly (including the ff).

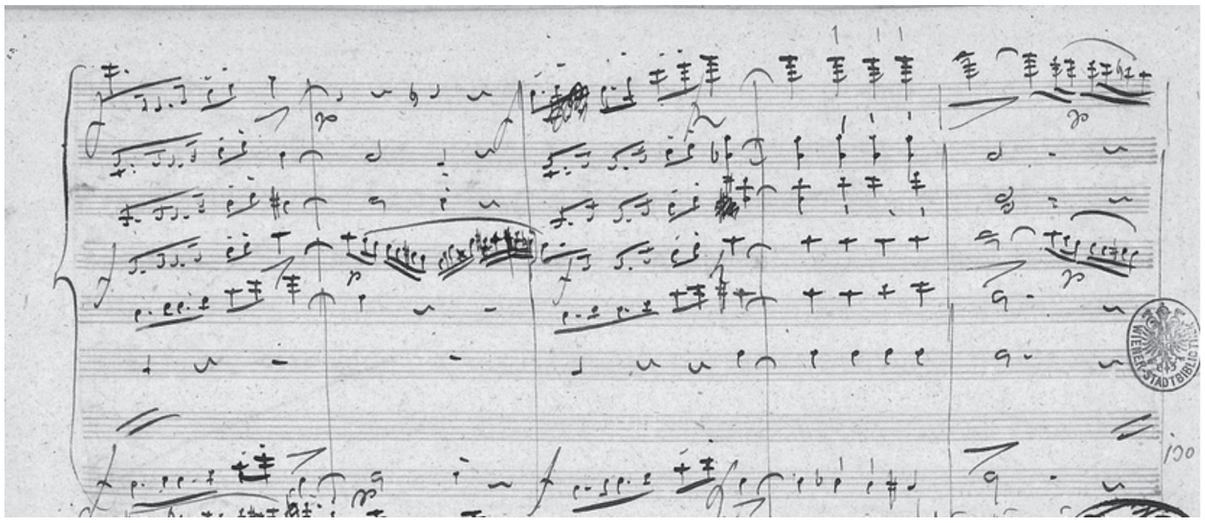


Example 9 The Eulenberg score (1895) corrects the *ff* to *f* but leaves it at the bar line.



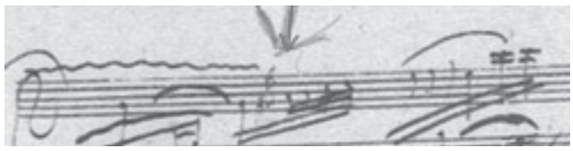
Example 10 Bärenreiter follows Eulenberg with a *subito f* at the bar line.

Example 11 However, the autograph score unequivocally shows that Schubert's intention, which is not reflected in any of the published editions, was that the *f* in the clarinet part should come after the completion of the phrase even though the other instruments are *forte* on the first beat.

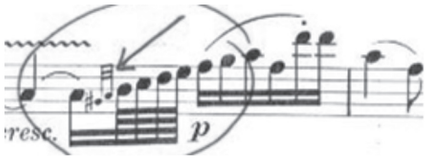


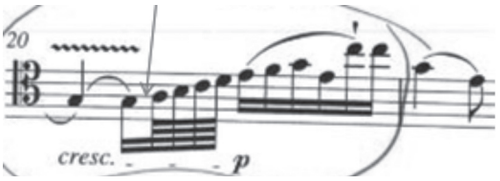
Beethoven *Cello Sonata No. 4 in C Major, op. 102/1*
(conflicting urtext editions)
In m. 20 of the first movement, Beethoven certainly meant for the cellist to play the grace-notes at the end of the trill, as shown in the autograph (Ex. 12), however Wenzel Rampl, the copyist of the *stichvorlage*, left them out (Example 13).

Example 12 Autograph. **Example 13** *Stichvorlage*



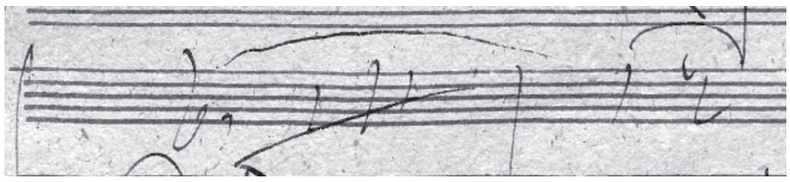
Example 14 Henle follows the autograph. **Example 15** Bärenreiter follows the *stichvorlage*



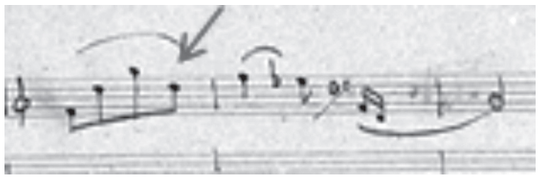


Beethoven *Cello Sonata No. 5 in D major, op. 102/2* (unresolvable conflict between sources)
In m. 71 of the 2nd movement, should the last note be an F or a D? Both Bärenreiter and the new Henle edition follow the autograph (Ex. 16) and give an F. This is certainly possible, but if so, it is puzzling that Beethoven did not notice and correct copyist Wenzel Rampl's D in the *stichvorlage* (Ex. 17) or the engraver's D in the first edition (Ex. 18).

Example 16 Autograph.



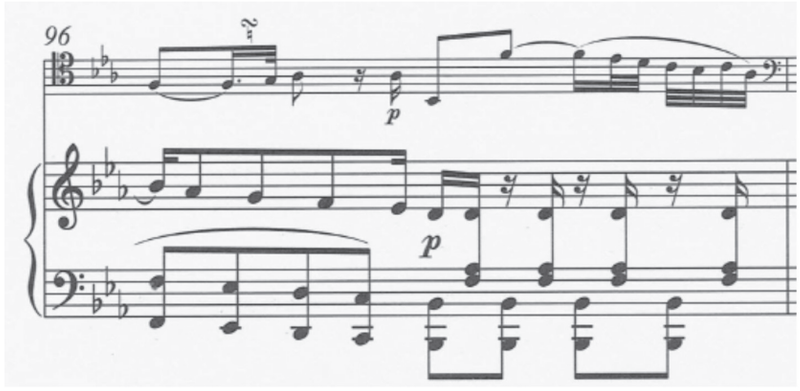
Example 17 Stichvorlage



Example 18 First edition

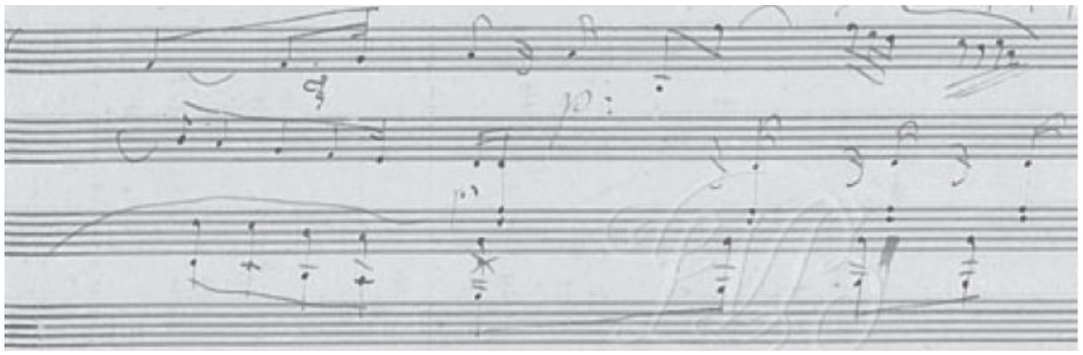
Beethoven *Seven Variations on "Bei Mannern, welche Liebe fuhlen" from Die Zauberflöte, WoO. 46* (probable incorrect placement of a subito piano)
In m. 96 of Variation 6, the subito piano should certainly be on the ninth 16th note in both the piano and the cello parts.

Example 19 Bärenreiter



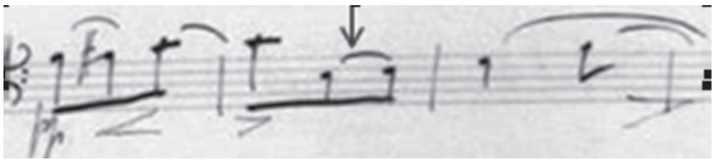
However, the parts are so badly misaligned in the autograph score that even Beethoven became confused as to where the *p* should fall in the cello part.

Example 20 Autograph score showing the cello's notes stretched out past the piano's *subito p*



Elgar *Cello Concerto in E minor, Op. 85* (performer's bowing conflated with composer's intention)
Elgar hand-wrote a cello part for Felix Salmond in advance of the premier performance. After the concert Elgar asked Novello, the publisher of the first edition, to incorporate into the printed music the bowings that Salmond had written into his part. Although Elgar was certainly trying to be helpful to cellists by offering bowing suggestions, this was an unfortunate decision because many of what were simply Salmond's bowings now look like Elgar's intended articulations.

Example 21 Elgar's autograph sketch has a slur before the end of the third movement.



Example 22 Salmond crossed out Elgar's slur so he could reverse the direction of his bow.

Example 23 Both Novello and Bärenreiter now show articulated 8th notes, which was not Elgar's musical intention.

Jeffrey Solow has performed throughout the US, Europe, Latin America, and Asia as recitalist, soloist, and chamber musician. His editions are published by Breitkopf, Peters, International Music Company, Ovation, and Henle and he has received two Grammy Award nominations. He is professor of cello at Temple University and past president of the American String Teachers Association and the Violoncello Society, Inc. of New York.

On the Edge

The Comedy Yin to the Cello Yang

• Kate Shortt

I'm walking down the road. 'That a body in there, mate?' … 'Yeh, it's my boyfriend. It keeps him quiet'… 'Ha! You got me there' 'Give us a tune darlin'… 'Sure, give us a tenner'…'I bet that's heavy'…' Only after an argument'… There's a comedy song in there somewhere, I think.

I'll go back to pre-street heckles. It's 1971 (ish) and I'm fortunate enough to be born into a musical background. My mother has been given a cello by a musician friend. I walk into the room and there it is, a strange looking, quite fascinating thing. 'This is it,' my mother says and explains how it works. A professional pianist who once played cello for a short while, she will help, and so we give it a go. After a year, it doesn't occur to me not to carry on. It feels so very natural! I like this (except having to practise when not in the mood!). My mother practises with me and eventually I have lessons from a family friend who is a cellist. As I become more proficient and climb the rungs of differing skills, I wonder where the top is. I have other fish to fry too. What about the acting, singing, composing and piano? I'm not sure when these other 'bits' start to slip in between the classical life but they are certainly seeds for what will become a future show.

I now perform my songs at the piano in competitions and concerts. I discover jazz through Louis Armstrong and am smitten. I discover musicals such as The Wizard of Oz, West Side Story, Annie Get Your Gun, and more. All this music is starting to creep into my veins alongside Bach and Mendelssohn. I am now playing by ear - Oh no! Don't make it up, read the music!! At school I start to develop comedy, making classmates laugh with accents and impressions. Mmm, that feels addictive. Then comes the crunch point… (drum roll…) Choosing! Drama or music? The cello has trotted alongside me throughout all like a faithful friend. We have our ups and downs, she goes into a strop when I'm in drama productions, the case staring in the corner saying in a stern voice, 'think of all those musicians who haven't had the opportunity!' I pay her back faithfully. I love her really.

So now it's 1985. I'm being professionally orchestrally trained at music college. Those poor desk partners, I'm turning them into audiences for my impressions. I perform crazy sketches and characters in the foyer to entertain my friends - I'm 'the naughty cellist'. Besides learning how to play and become a better musician from the inspirational examples all around me, including my fantastic and open-minded cello teacher, I have a job to do: it's to be a little bit bonkers! And what better place to develop this than within the walls of a conservatoire. The mixture of formality with the excitement of being surrounded by like-minded/very unlike-minded (!) people, and students from the world of jazz, theatre and composition, is a perfect recipe for a creative soufflé.

I discover the world of jazz on a deeper level. Jazz singing and piano become prominent. I start learning jazz cello. The classical me grapples with the other half and I simply can't choose between the two. I realise they could bounce off each other and I must teach them to live in harmony. After two courses - orchestral/chamber music/solo training and then creative leadership - I emerge from the chrysalis and rub my independent hands together! 'Right! Show time!' Alongside wonderful opportunities in the teaching and freelance world experiencing a wider musical palette than I've previously known, my show 'Shortt and Sweett' is born.

A college friend said to me a few years ago, 'Oh, thank God you managed to find an outlet! We did sometimes worry about you!' Very amused, I explained that I've since realised I was practising a future show on everyone! At first, 'Shortt and Sweett' is mainly straight ballads at the piano plus the odd comedy song sandwiched between some patter, but over a period of time this begins to develop and be honed. Someone says 'Why don't you use the cello more in your show?' I'm not sure if I can, but I give it a whirl and it seems to make an impact. The show morphs into cello-comedy (including rap, opera and jazz) with a small section of piano. I follow its path and in 1997 I take the show to Edinburgh. The (sports journalist) critic hates me (whatever!), I perform on BBC Scottish Radio, win Jewish Performer of the Year, appear on terrible TV shows (pulled off air quite soon after) and perform around London in cabaret theatres. All the while, I'm still networking away in the cello world and loving that too.

My show is now a moveable feast. It is the comedy yin to the straight cello yang. It's the moment when I see an audience has a sense of recognition, or when they laugh simultaneously, giving an incomparable feeling of Yes! Jackpot! Checkmate! Snap! It's a delicious, defining, freewheeling-a-bike-down-a-hill high. It's me.

Kate Shortt is a London based cellist and teacher, playing in the worlds of jazz, Portuguese fado, improvisation, contemporary, classical, theatre and session work. As a comedienne/singer songwriter her show Shortt and Sweett is often featured in festivals, the London comedy/cabaret scene and public events.
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Cello Talk

Growing a Teaching Practice

• Josh Salter

The possibility of continuous growth is surely one of the appeals of working as a cellist. We can constantly refine our technical apparatus, adding new ideas, movements, subtracting unnecessary tensions and tapping into deeper levels of listening and imagination. For many of us, the practice of teaching is a natural extension of this thirst for growth and an opportunity to both share what we have discovered along the road so far, and to discover new truths and ideas about our craft through the challenge of understanding how a young player learns. I've been putting a lot of work into growing my teaching practice over the last couple of years and have had some really great results and joyous moments along the way.

We all know what the ultimate aim for our students is—to become capable of showing their love of music, and their musical understanding, through a free and dynamic style of playing. The interesting, challenging, and deeply personal part of teaching is how we get them there. We can start with introspection, remembering what our own teachers showed us, by analysing how the component parts of our playing work, and thinking about how to explain this. But here the real adventure begins—does something that resonates well with us make sense to a six year old beginner, or a sixty year old late starter (my class includes both of these!)? Do the subtle feelings that I have in my six foot tall body work for a small teenage girl who has just moved onto a full sized cello? We need to use creativity and patience to bring ideas from inside our mind to the student. As a teaching practice grows, we can begin to draw on our own experience, reusing and adapting our tried and tested methods, but we always need to refine and reshape these ideas.

Our materials are an important part of our practice—our repertoire of studies, exercises, scales with myriad bowings and last but not least pieces–-but I would also like to include here our imagery and metaphors, and the inevitable cello gadgets which help reinforce technical ideas both with and away from the cello. My bag of gadgets has recently expanded to include a piece of plumbing tube to practice opening and closing the right elbow and a toy car which can be driven up and down the well balanced left arm.

One of my chamber music professors whilst at the RNCM, Emma Ferrand, used to often say that 'without experimentation there can be no discovery', I don't know whether she got this from somewhere or she made it up! I've been really enjoying getting to know the available wealth of material for students and experimenting with what I give to students when, and in the process finding out what resonates with different students. Obviously there is a right time and a wrong time to give someone a piece in terms of how difficult it is, but I've really noticed the importance of making sure a student really likes the piece. Some unusual choices (including pieces that were new to me) have reaped unexpected rewards. I'd particularly like to sing the praises of 'Fingerprints', a collection of fourteen pieces by living composers published by Faber. I think it's good to know from the early stages that we aren't just playing works from several hundred years ago. Using YouTube and other platforms to find good recordings of repertoire is useful (quality control is important here) and often if a student can get a piece they really like in their head quickly, then they can quickly rise to the challenges presented by the piece.

Several of my students have their own personalised Spotify playlists with carefully chosen highlights of the cello repertoire that come from questions and conversations in the lessons. 'Do the strings of the cello *have* to be A D G C?' was the incentive for the Kodaly Solo Sonata appearing on one student's playlist. I think the use of technology can really help engage some students, somehow bringing cello a bit more into the 21st century.

Our colleagues are a wealth of inspiration and conversations about the experiences of teaching can give many useful nuggets of information. Recent exchanges with colleagues have brought me to the work of Irene Sharp and Rudolf Matz, and further investigation of the work of these two great pedagogues has been greatly rewarding, adding another opportunity to expand the collection of materials.

Bringing the students together once a term for a concert has brought a real sense of community to my class. Having a concert date to prepare for certainly ups the amount of practice that happens between lessons, but this event also brings the chance to learn from each other. The younger students get to see older, more advanced ones, and to hear the repertoire they have to look forward to; the older students get a sense of how far they have come. And I have found that these opportunities to just sit back and listen to the students play is where I really notice the ways in which the learning process is developing. We can consider how the students have grown, what they are still struggling with, what has really helped them and what hasn't resonated so much, and then we can start the process again, with new pieces, goals and challenges.

Josh Salter studied at the Royal Northern College of Music, and as a postgraduate at the Royal Academy of Music. He now teaches for Camden Music Service, Northbridge House Preparatory School and privately, and performs on modern and period instruments with groups including the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Academy of Ancient Music, City of London Sinfonia and his string quartet, the Calgary Quartet.

The London Cello Society thanks our member Kathy Weston for her expert assistance with our newsletter preparation.

From our Members

• From Erica Simpson
In 2017 I set up an annual Derek Simpson Bursary Award of £1,000 to a Post Graduate cellist at the Royal Academy of Music. The aim is to assist with the funding of a possible 2nd year Post Graduate course. My father Derek died 10 years ago and I wanted students at the Academy to know of him and of me, and to keep his name alive. This year the 2nd Derek Simpson Bursary Award took place on Monday June 25th at the Royal Academy of Music. The winner was Leah Leong. The panel was Erica Simpson, Ben Davies and Clare Thompson.

• From Noel Moffat
I'm an older learner and I would just like to encourage other mature age beginners to take up this difficult but beautiful instrument. The amount of support available to beginners at very reasonable prices is just astonishing! City Lit, Ellso in East London, Mary Ward in Holborn to name but a few plus lots of amateur orchestras scattered around all welcoming aspiring cellists!
Thank you cello London.

• From Ros Kane
I have recently joined the Hackney Community Orchestra which meets in term time on Thursdays from 6.30-8pm. Anyone can turn up with any instrument. We play reasonably easy pieces of all genres, conducted by the lovely Chris Harrison. There is a relaxed friendly atmosphere. We need a few new members to break even. It is not expensive. See it on Facebook or contact me. And we gave a concert!
Email: roskane@btinternet.com
Telephone: 0208 555 5248.
Occasionally, emails do not reach me. Please phone if I have not responded within a few days.

• From Robert Max
What chamber music do you play when you have not one but two cellists? First choice for most would be Schubert, but what do you play next, or instead? Until a few years years ago I would have said Glazunov's String Quintet in A, op.39 which is idiomatically written and, barring the frequent tempo changes in the first movement, immediately graspable. More recently I have relished playing Taneyev's String Quintet in G, op.14, less straightforward on first hearing but increasingly so once you grasp the composer's fascinatingly idiosyncratic idiom. Players emerging unscathed from the finale's triple fugue earn my full admiration. A more recent discovery is Georgy Catoire's luscious String Quintet, op.16. The complexity of the writing suggests that this may be for the most intrepid readers but the fabulous sonorities that result when all is as it should be make it well worth the effort. I'd suggest avoiding Cherubini's and Zolotarev's quintets but would be pleased to hear if this is poor advice. And I'd rather explore Boccherini than Onslow. If one of the violinists turns up late then there's time to play Arensky's fabulous Second String Quartet, op.35. I'd love to hear further tried and tested suggestions.
www.frintonfestival.com
email: robertmax3@gmail.com

• From Rachel Mai Jones
For sale: Three-quarter size cello, bow and case. Cello Prima 200. Both bow and cello bought from Bristol Violin Shop, which set up the cello. Case – Tom and Will (well-padded soft case). Paid £1000 in total originally. Will accept any reasonable offer. Rachelmaijones@outlook.com or 07989433951. Cello currently in SE3.

• From Caroline Shaw, West London Strings
We are delighted to announce that cellist Susanna Wilson will be taking over the reins of West London Strings from Robin Wedderburn in September. Robin helped establish the West Kensington based orchestra nine years ago in response to demand for a string orchestra aimed at adult learners and returners in West London. Under his dedicated leadership the orchestra has gone from strength to strength. Following her studies with Florence Hooton at the Royal Academy of Music and post-graduate study with Raphael Wallfisch, Susanna has had an extensive career as soloist, chamber musician and freelance orchestral musician. Her teaching portfolio is primarily with adults which she finds very rewarding. She pays tribute to the fantastic work Robin has done setting up and developing West London Strings and looks forward to continuing his work encouraging and developing adult musicians in a friendly, supportive environment. Susanna has devised an exciting repertoire of music all linked by a particular theme. The orchestra meets at St Mary's Church Hall on a Monday evening at 7.15 pm. Term starts on Monday 17th September 2018 and new members are welcome.
For more information please go to www.westlondonstrings.org.uk.