

THE PEDAGOGICAL BENEFITS OF PLAYING VIOLIN DUETS: A HISTORIOGRAPHY,  
PEDAGOGICAL DISCUSSION, AND ANNOTATED REPERTOIRE LIST

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## ABSTRACT

Although duets exist in abundance, they are less taught and performed than other chamber music subgenres, and there is limited historical study and scholarly research about them. This project will explore the didactic advantages of incorporating violin duets into the regular violin study curriculum. The manuscript will include a concise historiography of the pedagogical benefits of violin duets, a pedagogical discussion of selected works for a recital, and an annotated repertoire list of violin duets. The discussion includes pieces that represent diverse musical styles, eras, and levels of difficulty. The elementary level is represented by a selection of pieces from *44 violin duets*, by Béla Bartók; *23 Stücke für eine und zwei Geigen*, by Paul Hindemith; and *Duetti per due violini*, by Luciano Berio. For the intermediate level, the discussed works are Canonico Duo No. 3 in D major TWV 40:120, by Georg Philipp Telemann; and two arias from *Don Giovanni: für zwei Flöten oder Violinen nach einer Ausgabe um 1809*, arranged after the opera by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Finally, the advanced level is represented by Duo concertant in G Minor, Op. 57, No. 1, by Charles Auguste de Bériot; and Sonata for 2 Violins in C Major, Op. 56, by Sergey Prokofiev.

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## INTRODUCTION

### **History of Violin Duets**

Duets or duos (both terms have been used interchangeably throughout history) originated in vocal music around the thirteenth century. The first instrumental duets appeared during the Renaissance and they were mainly composed for pedagogical purposes.<sup>1</sup> Even though sometimes the term has also been applied to sonatas for piano and another instrument, in this manuscript the term duet or duo, will solely refer to a piece composed for two instruments other than piano. The only piano repertoire that will be included are piano duets, both for four hands and for two pianos.

Although duets exist in abundance, they have not been subjected to much historical study. Moreover, scholarly research is especially limited in the realm of same-instrument duets.<sup>2</sup> The annotated bibliography *Chamber Music: A Research and Information Guide*, by musicologist John Baron, does not mention violin duets at all, while same-instrument duos are barely mentioned (some clarinet duos and not much more). Contrastingly, different-instrument duos are extensively mentioned (violin-cello, violin-piano, etc.).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Tilmouth, "Duet," *Grove Music Online*, accessed July 24, 2020, <https://doi-org.libdata.lib.ua.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.08263>.

<sup>2</sup> Eva Lundell, "The Ensemble Étude for Violins: An Examination with an Annotated Survey of Violin Trios and Quartets and an Original Étude for Four Violins" (DMA diss., Arizona State University, 2011), 26.

<sup>3</sup> John H. Baron, *Chamber Music: A Research and Information Guide*. Routledge Music Bibliographies (New York: Routledge, 2010).

Throughout history, the duet has been one of chamber music's less composed, taught, and performed subgenres. Even though violin duets were extremely popular during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, particularly in the French violin school, the body of literature is rather small when considering the entire violin repertoire.<sup>4</sup> One reason for the lesser popularity of duets, compared to other chamber music combinations, is their harmonic restrictions. A two-voice texture is rather limited compared to the denser chordal and harmonic palette that a violin and piano combination can offer, for instance. Although string instruments can play chords, and therefore make the texture of a duet thicker, most of the duets written during the subgenre's most prolific era were for amateurs that were not able to play double stops, or for student-teacher collaborations.<sup>5</sup> In both cases, the texture would remain rather thin to adapt to the technical limitations of the performers. Conveniently, the classical style favored clearer musical textures anyhow, making the violin duet an excellent option.<sup>6</sup> However, the stigma of being a genre for amateurs has also contributed to the lesser prevalence of violin duets.

According to William Henley,<sup>7</sup> the first unaccompanied violin duet is Pepusch's "Aires for two Violins made on Purpose for the Improvement of Practitioners in Consort" (1709). However, there were many duets written for no specific instrumentation prior to that date, and many are suitable for violin. Over 450 violin duets had been composed by the late 1700s, with violinists like LeClair, Viotti, Rode and Kreutzer among the most prolific composers of that

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<sup>4</sup> Peter Allsop, "The Violin as Ensemble Instrument," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Violin*, edited by Robin Stowell, 210-23. Cambridge Companions to Music (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 217-18.

<sup>5</sup> Gretchen Madson Sherrell, "The Violin Duets of Louis Spohr" (DMA diss., The University of Texas at Austin, 1996), 57-58.

<sup>6</sup> Leonard Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form and Style* (New York: Schirmer, 1980), 120.

<sup>7</sup> William Henley, "Duets for Strings," in *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music*, 2nd ed. Walter Willson Cobbett and Colin Mason (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), 3:340.

time. Most of the duets composed during the classical era were for an instructor-pupil combination or for amateurs, since less challenging pieces found a good market among nonprofessional music lovers.<sup>8</sup> Music historian Christina Bashford writes about duets in the late eighteenth century: “Duets for two melodic instruments, typically two flutes, two violins or violin and cello, were particularly popular among amateurs...much of the repertory was technically simple and musically lightweight.”<sup>9</sup> In his book *An Encyclopedia of the Violin*, Alberto Bachmann includes a list of violin duets of which the large majority were composed by violin pedagogues, corroborating that duets have long been considered a valuable teaching tool.<sup>10</sup>

The first half of the twentieth century was marked by a new proliferation of violin duets, many of which were intended for professional musicians, including higher technical demands. Composers like Ysaÿe, Prokofiev, Bartók, Milhaud, Honegger, and Górecki, created violin duets during that time. Finally, there has been yet another revival of the genre in the last twenty-five years, primarily promoted by performers that are making a career as established professional violin duets. Duo Gelland, established in 1994, was one of the pioneering duos, and other groups such as Miolina, Duo Prima, Kawada Tomoko Duo, and Archimie duo, have followed into their footsteps.<sup>11</sup> Some of those groups have been actively promoting the expansion of the violin duet

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<sup>8</sup> Sherrell, 56.

<sup>9</sup> Christina Bashford, “Chamber music,” *Grove Music Online*, accessed March 24, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.05379>.

<sup>10</sup> Alberto Bachmann, *An Encyclopedia of the Violin* (1925; repr., New York: Da Capo Press, 1969), 457-9.

<sup>11</sup> Fredrik Hagstedt, “Duo Gelland.” liner notes for *Sinfonia per due violini* (Jämtland, Sweden: Nosag, NOSAGCD192, 2012, compact disc); Miolina, “Liner notes” for *Miolina* (Chicago, ILL: Composers Concordance Records, COMCON0042, 2018, compact disc); Duo Prima, *Duoism* (Tokyo, Japan: Muse Entertainment Inc., MECO-1007, 2011, compact disc); Kawada Tomoko Duo, *Voi che sapete* (Japan: Meister Music, MM3077, 2016, compact disc); Paolo Geminiani, “Archimie Duo,” liner notes for *Sei duetti a due violini, op. 2* (Bari, Italy: Tactus, TC 710702, 2019, compact disc), 9.

repertoire, commissioning and premiering pieces. The group “The Twiolins” has gone even further, creating their own violin duet composition competition. The event happens every three years and the winner of the “Progressive Classical Music Award” receives prize money and the publication of their violin duet. Their idea is to create music that overcomes genre boundaries and covers a broad musical spectrum.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The Twiolins, “Liner notes” for *Secret Places* (Mannheim, Germany: Profil, PH17002, 2017, compact disc), 3-19.

## BENEFITS OF VIOLIN DUETS

### **Pedagogues' View on the Benefits of Duets**

Pedagogue Johann Joachim Quantz described the benefits of duets as early as 1759, emphasizing that duets improve the student's sense of rhythm, harmony, and tempo. In the foreword to his *Six Duets for Two Flutes*, Quantz writes that all the habits of rushing, dragging, or other tempo issues are more easily overcome if the students get used to playing duets early on, because they adapt to hearing a counter-motion part while playing.<sup>13</sup> According to Quantz, these skills cannot be learned playing solo pieces or concertos.<sup>14</sup>

This view has remained among music teachers. Violin instructor James Reel believes that duets help string students to listen to vertical intonation. In his opinion, listening to more than one line at the time also helps to improve their sense of rhythm and relative intonation.<sup>15</sup> According to violin pedagogue Frank W. Hill, "A duo is half of a string quartet and the benefits of duet playing enhance the standards of quartet work. Intonation problems, issues of tone quality, balance, and rhythmic integrity are all easier to detect with just two players."<sup>16</sup> Klement Hambourg says that "Duets introduce elements of musical form and are excellent vehicles for the

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<sup>13</sup> Serge Flaumont, trans., *Six Duets for Two Flutes* (Boca Raton: Masters Music Publications, Inc., 2003), 4.

<sup>14</sup> Edward R. Reilly, "Further Musical Examples for Quantz's 'Versuch,'" *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 17, no. 2 (Summer 1964): 162-3.

<sup>15</sup> James Reel, "Strings 101: Music and Musicians—Vertical Climb," *Strings* 20, vol. 7 (February 2006): 22.

<sup>16</sup> Pierson A. Wetzel, "The Pedagogical Benefits of Duet Playing: A Vannetelbosch Companion" (DMA diss., The Ohio State University, 2007), 40.

development of bowing plus left-hand and sight-reading skills. These techniques in turn promote good tone, intonation, and a sense of style.”<sup>17</sup> Even though violin lessons include a variety of material that needs to be covered (scales, etudes, concertos, etc.), Hambourg believes that “Duets should have a high priority,” since they introduce the essence of chamber music, and all the skills learned from it, without having to put together a group and find a time outside of the violin lesson to experience it.<sup>18</sup>

Pedagogues also value the element of fun and mutual enjoyment that duet playing adds to the lesson. Violin teacher Eileen Davis-Brown claims that “lessons go easily when pupil and teacher can make music together.”<sup>19</sup> Her colleague Michael Knapp states that playing together is one’s “treat at the end of a lesson, the greatest joy of music-making.”<sup>20</sup> The violinist Gerard Kantarjian summed up the importance of duets succinctly: “It is the best way to develop listening capabilities and enhance awareness of musical phrasing, emphasizing the importance of courteous dialogue.”<sup>21</sup>

### **Benefits at Elementary, Intermediate, and Advanced Level**

Duets provide diverse benefits for musicians of different levels. However, an observation regarding terminology needs to be done before discussing those benefits in detail. The violin pedagogy literature commonly classifies students into three main categories according to their level of playing: *beginner*, *intermediate*, and *advanced*. Within this grouping, the term *beginner*

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<sup>17</sup> Klement Hambourg, “Focal Point: Private Teaching—Enhance Your Teaching Effectiveness with a Second Violin: Chamber Music in the Studio,” *American String Teacher* 50, vol. 4 (November 2000): 66.

<sup>18</sup> Hambourg, “Focal Point,” 66.

<sup>19</sup> Lundell, “The Ensemble Étude for Violins,” 30.

<sup>20</sup> Lundell, “The Ensemble Étude for Violins,” 34.

<sup>21</sup> Hambourg, “Focal Point,” 69.

needs to be revised as it can be misleading. Some pedagogues use this word referring to students that are just playing their first notes and acquiring basic skills, like holding the bow and violin, while others use it to describe students that are learning elementary repertoire and technique, a process that usually takes a few years. Some repertoire labelled for beginners requires several years of violin instruction to be performed successfully, making parents wonder why their student is still considered a beginner after years of violin lessons. It seems that the term *elementary* would better describe the level of repertoire and technique that a student is acquiring within the first few years of instruction. In that case the term *beginner* can be saved for those who are having their first few violin lessons.

In this manuscript, the term *elementary* will be used for students that have a playing level equivalent to Grades I and II as defined in the *String Syllabus Volume One* of the American String Teachers Association (ASTA).<sup>22</sup> *Intermediate* level will include Grades III and IV, and *advanced* Grades V and VI. It is important to understand that in some degree these categories overlap when moving from one level to the next one. For example, *Suzuki Book 4* is within Grade III according to ASTA, thus intermediate level. But some of the repertoire in that book is also part of Grade II, thus the end of elementary level. Finally, the term *beginner* will still be found throughout this manuscript when using direct quotes, in which case the reader will have to interpret its meaning according to the context. However, the term is usually employed for students that already can play violin, thus referring to *elementary* level students.

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<sup>22</sup> American String Teachers Association, and David Ault Littrell, *String Syllabus. Violin, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass, Alternative Styles Volume 1* (Fairfax, VA: American String Teachers Association, 2009), 1-23.

## Elementary Level (Grades I and II)

In the opinion of the internationally acknowledged expert in the teaching of beginners, Martha Beth Lewis, duets offer several benefits at the elementary level:

Beginners and duets are a natural combination since they are fun and musically gratifying. Duets stress the importance of careful counting and maintaining a steady tempo. Playing duets teaches cooperation, tolerance, and musical leadership. For older beginners, duets are great because they create a fuller sound and make the student feel like they are playing a more difficult repertoire than they really are. Duets are also crowd pleasers at a recital and they can offer an opportunity for the student's family to participate as accompanists. The only advice is that beginners should learn their part thoroughly before putting it with the other part.<sup>23</sup>

Piano pedagogue Kim Nagy also believes that duets are a tool to enhance tempo and rhythmic accuracy:

Duets offer students a chance to make music with someone else and the teacher is the best partner for a beginner student. This allows the student to learn correct duet playing technique since the greatest problem duet players encounter is rhythmic inaccuracy. The teacher should play very steadily to strengthen the students' internal rhythm. Practice with a metronome is also helpful.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, both pedagogues agree that playing duets promotes steady tempo, careful counting, and more rhythmic accuracy. Lewis also adds that duets serve as a tool for musical cooperation.

Sometimes elementary level students have a hard time learning to read music. This is common when trained in the Suzuki method, which focuses on aural training at the beginning. Using duets and ensemble playing to introduce note-reading skills to students is a good alternative. It encourages the pupils to keep moving through the music while still relying on their developed aural skills. Playing duets and small ensemble pieces allows students to learn both note reading and ensemble skills at the same time.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Martha Beth Lewis, "Introducing Beginners to Duets," *Clavier* 31, no. 6 (July 1992): 34.

<sup>24</sup> Kim Nagy, "Introducing Students to the Joys of Duets," *Clavier* 34, no. 8 (October 1995): 12-14.

<sup>25</sup> Karla Philipp, "Ensemble Playing Leads to Note Reading Skills," *American Suzuki Journal* 23, no. 3 (Spring 1995): 63-66.

### **Intermediate Level (Grades III and IV)**

Intermediate level students benefit from playing duets as well, allowing them to develop sight-reading skills, acquire stylistic knowledge, and develop musicality.<sup>26</sup> For this purpose, the chosen duets should be relatively sight-readable, in order to focus on musicality rather than technique. If students have the tendency to pause as they play or lag behind during sight reading, duets are good since the ongoing part of the partner does not allow for a pause. With respect to stylistic knowledge, duet study allows students to explore music of various styles and periods, something particularly relevant for intermediate level students. Regarding musicality, duets promote the balancing of parts and blending of tone, vibrato, and bowings.<sup>27</sup> Students become more aware of the changing musical roles in their part, from solo, to accompanimental, or equal to the other part. They also learn how to give cues and coordinate tempo changes. Since the perception of tempo can be subjective, it is advisable to use the metronome markings to avoid conflicts with the duet partner.

### **Advanced Level (Grades V and VI)**

Advanced students also benefit from duet practice since they develop “general social and specific non-verbal communication as they practice timing and phrasing together. In addition, the co-performer interaction and negotiation that occurs during rehearsals promotes a deeper understanding of the piece” and the emotions that should be communicated.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Bruderer, “Twentieth-Century Violin and Viola Duos,” 13.

<sup>27</sup> Rider, “The Violin Duet,” 79.

<sup>28</sup> Aaron Williamon and Jane W. Davidson, “Exploring Co-Performer Communication,” abstract, *Musicae Scientiae* 6, no. 1 (March 2002): 53.

### **Benefits Shared at All Levels**

Finally, some of the benefits cross all levels. Duets teach vertical intonation, the tuning of simultaneous notes, as opposed to horizontal intonation, which is the tuning of consecutive single notes. They also promote relative intonation, that is the tuning of a given note compared to a reference note, as opposed to absolute intonation. This encourages the listening of harmonies instead of only melodic lines. Hearing a second part requires being a more active listener, which also improves sound awareness. Duets also require paying close attention to the ensemble, identifying rhythmic unisons, and places where the articulations need to be match. They promote teamwork, since the goal of both players is to have a successful performance. That shared responsibility can motivate the students to practice more, in order to support their duet partner to the best of their ability. Having someone else supporting you on stage also strengthens your own confidence, reducing stage fright.

Even if there is not a second violin part available, improvising it during a lesson can still present benefits to the students. For example, Corelli, Mozart, or Handel sonatas can be accompanied by the teacher by combining treble and bass lines from the piano part. Even though accompanying the student on the piano is encouraged, using the violin presents some advantages as well, since the student can imitate and get confidence from the teacher's sound. This will allow the instructor to more easily focus on the student's performance and avoid being distracted with the piano score.<sup>29</sup> This is also an option if the teacher is not a proficient piano player.

Technology has been widely incorporated as a pedagogical tool to teach violin. The Suzuki Method uses audio recordings to aid the learning process.<sup>30</sup> The students imitate the

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<sup>29</sup> Hambourg, "Focal Point," 69.

<sup>30</sup> Li Gu, "Violin Performance Teaching and Learning: the development of technology and its role in violin pedagogy" (M.M. thesis, University of Sydney, 2018), 8.

recording of a given piece and repeat it until they have mastered it. However, even though there is a second violin part to some of Suzuki's pieces, there is not an audio recording to play along with, like there is for the piano accompaniment.

YouTube is another technological resource that can be used as a pedagogical tool. Through this platform, students can access masterclasses and performances of most of the pieces that they are learning. YouTube also has many videos with the piano accompaniment to most of the standard violin repertoire, including the Suzuki books and most of the standard violin concertos from elementary to advanced level. Nonetheless, to this date (2/2/2021) the only available video of a standard violin duet to play along with is Bach's Concerto for Two Violins in D minor, BWV 1043.

The Zhang Method is another tool that uses audio and video technology to teach violin, using demonstration as the key element to learn. The students imitate the videos and repeat them until they have mastered a given task. This online platform includes a collection of violin duets and sonatas for more advanced students.<sup>31</sup> In the videos, an accompanist plays the second violin or piano part with a click track, so that the students can play along more easily. Recording the second violin accompaniment can be done very easily these days, allowing for the students to play along the recording while practicing at home.

### **Research Studies Promoting the Advantages of Playing Duets**

A study measured the brain activity of two violinists while playing a duet. The goal was to determine if there was a difference in the brain activation when playing the leading role (violin I) versus the follower role (violin II). Even though the chosen piece (Bartok duet No. 37,

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<sup>31</sup> Li Gu, "Violin Performance Teaching," 10.

“Prelude and Canon”) has similar technical demands on both parts, the first violin has more of a leading role because it begins the phrases and has more rhythmic activity than the second violin. “Results indicated that musicians playing the Violin II part had greater oxy-Hb activation in temporo-parietal ( $p = 0.02$ ) and somatomotor ( $p = 0.04$ ) regions than those playing the Violin I part.”<sup>32</sup> These findings suggest that ensemble cohesion during a musical performance may impose particular demands when musicians play the follower role, especially in brain areas associated with processing dynamic social information and motor simulation. This study, being the first to use fNIRS hyperscanning technology to simultaneously measure the brain activity of two musicians during an ensemble performance, further supports the pedagogical importance of ensemble playing to develop many of the previously listed skills.

Another research regarding the role of adults in the musical education of children showed that when a child is exposed to an adult who both transmits musical signs and performs as a co-player, the child progresses remarkably faster than a child who does not have this opportunity.<sup>33</sup> In the case of this study, the adult co-players were parents who had some sort of musical training.

A survey showed that many of the students of ages 9-12 that played duets with their teachers were highly satisfied with their private music lessons. However, twenty-five percent of students reported that they did not know if they like playing duets. This might indicate that they

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<sup>32</sup> Patricia Vanzella et al., “fNIRS Responses in Professional Violinists While Playing Duets: Evidence for Distinct Leader and Follower Roles at the Brain Level,” abstract, *Frontiers in Psychology* 10 (February 2019): 5.

<sup>33</sup> Mayumi Adachi, “The Role of the Adult in the Child’s Early Musical Socialization: A Vygotskian Perspective,” *The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning* 5, no. 3 (Fall 1994): 31-34.

have never played duets before. Teachers should make sure they do not miss this teaching strategy to improve the students' satisfaction.<sup>34</sup>

Finally, an examination of the rehearsals of two expert pianists preparing for a duet recital showed how they developed and implemented non-verbal communication. All the rehearsals and the recital were video recorded, and the musicians were interviewed to share their learning process. The results showed that as they solidified timing, musical phrasing, and musical style during rehearsals, they developed efficient non-verbal gestures and eye contact that allowed for a more successful performance. In addition, the co-performer interaction and negotiation deepened their understanding of their repertoire, allowing them to transmit the expressiveness of the music in a more effective and convincing way.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Nora A. Rife et al., "Children's Satisfaction with Private Music Lessons," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 49, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 29.

<sup>35</sup> Williamon and Davidson, abstract.

## DUET REPERTOIRE

### **Duets Demonstrating Technical Elements, Musical Styles, and Prominent Repertoire**

Nowadays, the internet allows for access to an overwhelming number of recordings, masterclasses, and performance practice information. However, in the past musicians did not have unlimited access to such sources. According to the dissertation “The Ensemble Étude for Violins,” by Eva Lundell, music instructors used to be the most important musical influence regarding performance practice:

In previous eras, opportunities to hear great musicians were limited, and the teacher was often the student’s primary musical influence. This made demonstration in the lesson essential. Duets provided a way for pedagogues to demonstrate musical and technical ideas to their students while playing together. Some examples of teaching with duets are Spohr’s *Violinschule*, Dont’s Twenty Progressive Exercises for the Violin, Op. 38, and Wieniawski’s Etudes-Caprices for Violin, Op. 18.<sup>36</sup>

In other words, students used to imitate the teacher’s interpretation of a piece in terms of articulation, sound, phrasing, etc., because that used to be the only available version.

Regarding the duets mentioned by Lundell, Spohr’s *Violinschule* is a comprehensive pedagogical violin treatise that covers general music subjects like rhythms, keys, among others, and technical elements to violin playing such as set up, bow strokes, and sound production. The book covers each subject with written explanations followed by musical examples, which are often in the form of violin duets. The works by Dont and Wieniawski are etudes that address different technical elements of violin playing.

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<sup>36</sup> Lundell, “The Ensemble Étude for Violins,” 29.

Before there was unlimited access to recordings, duet etudes also served to get familiar with the most relevant symphonic and operatic repertoire. For this purpose, many Beethoven symphonies and Verdi operas were arranged for violin duet. In her *Strad* article about duet playing, Mary Davis-Brown writes: “I became familiar with the themes of many major works through playing with my mother a volume of *Klassische Stücke*.”<sup>37</sup> Even though current students can easily access and hear recordings of various musical styles and periods, they still need to know how to execute them. Playing is the only way to learn how to produce the correct articulation, type of sound, and phrasing that a certain musical style or period requires. In addition, a student will remember the melodies of a symphony or an opera much better when playing them than by only hearing a recording.

### **Concert Duets and Pedagogical Duets**

Duets have unjustly been ignored as a serious chamber music subgenre suitable for recitals, although that is changing since the rise of new duo groups that are actively cultivating this repertoire (see pp. 3-4). As mentioned earlier, one bias against string duos is that they sound less full than trios or quartets. Another prejudice against performing duets is that they have been historically tied to pedagogical literature and *Hausmusik*.<sup>38</sup> However, even though many duets were indeed composed for amateur musicians, or for an instructor-pupil combination, good duets can be used as performance pieces. Works by Mozart, Mazas, Pleyel, Viotti, Beriot, among others, are certainly both musically interesting and technically challenging

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<sup>37</sup> Lundell, “The Ensemble Étude for Violins,” 30.

<sup>38</sup> Bruderer, “Twentieth-Century Violin and Viola Duos,” 8.

enough to be enjoyed by an audience, despite originally composed for the domestic enjoyment of amateur musicians, rather than for a public performance in a concert hall.

The most relevant *concert duet* literature was composed in Paris during the first half of the twentieth century by Prokofiev, Ysaÿe, Milhaud, and Honegger. Two prominent nineteenth century examples come from Spohr and Beriot. Even though composers did not explicitly label the duets as concert pieces, their technical difficulty makes them almost inaccessible for non-professional musicians. Another prolific environment for concert duets was Poland during the second part of the twentieth century, although aside of Henryk Górecki, the rest of the composers are not particularly well known.<sup>39</sup>

Despite their numerous benefits, some *pedagogical duets* have also been neglected not by performers or audiences but by violin instructors. Beside the previously mentioned duets by Dont and Wieniawski (p. 14), there are many other duets composed for pedagogical purposes that deserve more attention (see Appendix, pp. 46-48). For example, Paul Hindemith and Luciano Berio composed collections of violin duets that are as interesting as the more popular *44 Duets* by Bartok. Some violinists and pedagogues composed second violin parts to standard violin etudes, promoting their use as concert pieces. For example, Friederich Herman wrote a second violin part for Kreutzer's 42 Etudes, which is technically as complex as the original etudes, and Spohr did the same with Fiorillo's 36 Caprices Op. 3.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Anna Jež, "Polish Violin Duos," liner notes for *Polish violin duos* (Warsaw, Poland: Dux Recording Producers, DUX 0398, 2002, compact disc) 8-11.

<sup>40</sup> Rodolphe Kreutzer and Fr. Hermann, *42 Etudes ou caprices pour violon* (Leipzig: C.F. Peters, 1900).  
Federigo Fiorillo and Louis Spohr, *Etuden* (n.p.: Edition Peters, n.d.).

## Duets Teaching the Operatic Qualities of Mozart's Repertoire

The ideas included in this section were inspired from the article “Mozarts Musik im Instrumentalunterricht,” by violin pedagogue Peter Röbbke.<sup>41</sup> According to the article, Mozart's music is particularly challenging for violin students because of its fast succession of contrasting musical characters. Portraying those characters convincingly can be more demanding than solving technical problems of romantic repertoire, such as intonation in extremely high registers or the clean execution of fast passages.

Violin students usually approach Mozart's music after studying violin concertos by Vivaldi, sonatas by Corelli and Telemann, or other Baroque and early Classical repertoire. The interpretation of that music is not too challenging because usually each phrase has one clear impulse that drives the music, and the entire movement is dominated by one affect. On the contrary, even Mozart's simpler sonatinas, dances or duets are full of different musical impulses, which are best explained to the student as human figures with changing behaviors.

An excellent way to teach the operatic qualities of Mozart's music is through the arrangements of his operas into violin duets. In his operas, the character's qualities are obvious and relatable: they can be brave, graceful, sweet, rude, evil, respectful, lustful, sad, among others. For example, the duet “La ci darem la mano”<sup>42</sup> from the opera *Don Giovanni* can be used to teach the human interactions that are always implied in Mozart's music. In that aria, Don Giovanni asks Zerlina to follow him to his castle to be “happy and blessed,” and Mozart musicalizes the process in which both characters come slowly closer to each other (see Figure 1).

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<sup>41</sup> Peter Röbbke, “Mozarts Musik im Instrumentalunterricht,” *Musik & Bildung: Zeitschrift Für Musikerziehung* 16, no. 7–8 (1984): 507–13.

<sup>42</sup> Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Don Giovanni: für zwei Flöten oder Violinen nach einer Ausgabe um 1809*, ed. Karl Heinz Füssl (Wien: Universal Edition A. G., 1981), 22.

Figure 1 – Don Giovanni: für zwei Flöten oder Violinen nach einer Ausgabe um 1809, “Là ci darem la mano” (mm. 1-39)

Andante

1. Don Giovanni's 8 bar request

7

Zerlina's 10 bar reply

14

2. Don Giovanni's arpeggiated motif

21

Zerlina's chromatic motif

27

3. Don Giovanni (antecedent)

Zerlina's 4 bar closure

34

Zelina (consequent)

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1. Mm. 1-18. Don Giovanni opens his request to Zerlina with a harmonically closed, eight-bar period. Zerlina has no choice but to reply singing along, although her insecurity manifests musically with an irregular, ten-bar reply.
2. Mm. 19-28. The increased intensity of the discussion is musicalized by contrasting motifs that interact as question and answer, Don Giovanni's being arpeggiated and broad, while Zerlina's is chromatic and narrow. The beginning of the dialogue is in regular two-measure phrases, but Zerlina's reluctance shows again by breaking the regularity with a four-bar closure.
3. Mm. 30-37. The characters are brought even closer, now sharing a musical period. Don Giovanni's motif is the antecedent and Zerlina's the consequent.
4. Mm. 40-onward. The question-answer interaction is over, both characters are now so close that they cannot be separated in distinct musical motifs anymore. They finally melt into unified parallel thirds.

Students need to be aware that in Mozart's music the phrase structure, in this case periodic, is used to mimic a human interaction. When the composer repeats a phrase, makes it irregular, motivically contrasting, fragmented, homorhythmic, etc., those changes imply an extra musical meaning. These nuances need to be considered when playing Mozart because they express the soul of his musical construction.

Sometimes his musical gestures represent a specific action, like walking or taking a respectful bow. In other occasions, contrasting articulations are used to represent the two sides of a character, *spiccato* for its playful side and *detaché* for its reflective side. Mozart's music can also represent polarity between instrumental and vocal sounds, some musical gestures implying

brass instruments and others human laughter. Hence, the violin student needs to produce different and convincing types of sounds for each case.

These human gestures (or attributes) are very explicit in Mozart's operatic music, but they are also implicit in his absolute music, and failing to identify them translates into flat and lifeless music. When portraying these contrasting characters in the music, they should not be limited to different articulations or dynamics, but also phrase length, polarity between music with instrumental or human qualities, etc. For example, the opening of Mozart's Violin Sonata KV 302, can be described as the opposition of a two-bar agitated statement, and a six-bar relaxed explanation. Likewise, the adagio-allegro opening movement of the Violin Sonata KV 303, reflects the polarity between the human (cantabile, singing) and the instrumental (virtuosic, breathless, scalar, chordal).

Describing Mozart's musical process as a constantly evolving dialogue between two people helps the student to understand the gestures (not the content!) of the imaginary dialogue. This is taught more effectively through duet arrangements of his arias. Having summarized the history and surveyed the repertoire of the genre, we will now examine some specific works in greater detail.

## PEDAGOGICAL DISCUSSION

This manuscript is submitted along with a performance of selected violin duets.<sup>43</sup> The pieces chosen for the recital exhibit diverse musical styles, eras, and levels of difficulty. For the elementary level, a selection of pieces from the following collections will be discussed: *44 violin duets*, by Béla Bartók; *23 Stücke für eine und zwei Geigen*, by Paul Hindemith; and *Duetti per due violini*, by Luciano Berio. The intermediate level is represented by: Canonic Duo No. 3 in D major TWV 40:120, by Georg Philipp Telemann; and two arias from *Don Giovanni: für zwei Flöten oder Violinen nach einer Ausgabe um 1809*, arranged after the opera by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Finally, for the advanced level, the following pieces will be discussed: Duo concertant in G Minor, Op. 57, No. 1, by Charles Auguste de Bériot; and Sonata for 2 Violins in C Major, Op. 56, by Sergey Prokofiev. Musical examples will be used for the intermediate and advanced repertoire when necessary. Since the elementary pieces are much shorter and the discussed concepts are simpler, they do not require further clarification through musical examples. If the reader wants to consult the music of any of these pieces, the editions mentioned in the appendix are a good starting point. The pieces by Mozart, Telemann, and Bériot are public domain in the U.S. Contrastingly, the pieces by Bartók, Berio, Hindemith, and Prokofiev are most likely not.

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<sup>43</sup> Kate Thielen and Christian Paillan, “DMA Violin Duo Recital,” Moody Concert Hall, Tuscaloosa, AL, January 17, 2021, accessed February 2, 2021, <https://youtu.be/oEiLIHynfK8>

### **44 Duets, by Béla Bartók**

This collection of duets was written by the Hungarian composer in 1931. They were commissioned by Erich and Elma Doflein to be part of a violin method based on duets (see Appendix p. 46). All pieces are inspired by folk tunes of several Eastern European countries. However, the pitch realm has been extended beyond the characteristic modal elements of peasant songs, creating a unique, personal, and modern language.<sup>44</sup> The pieces are full of subtleties and tensions, producing a rather complex melodic concept. Irregular rhythmic patterns, drones, percussive accents, among other aspects, contribute to enrich the music.

Bartók always showed curiosity in combining interesting musical content with teaching tools.<sup>45</sup> This pedagogical collection was preceded by others of the kind, like his *Mikrokosmos* for piano. In *44 Duets*, the pieces are roughly ordered in increasing levels of difficulty. This progression was conceived for conservatoire violin students, rather than for amateur players. Apparently, the composer was often disappointed with the performance of his music, and this collection could be an attempt to train young musicians in his musical language.<sup>46</sup>

Bartók was very detailed regarding articulation and dynamic markings. His notation intended to capture the sounds of folk tunes, but at the same time avoid stereotypes associated with Eastern folk music. The following numbers are suggested by the composer as a good

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<sup>44</sup> César Viana, “Béla Bartók: Duos for two Violins,” liner notes for *Duos for Violin* (Viterbo, Italy: Pan Classics, PC 10399, 2019, compact disc), 11-14.

<sup>45</sup> Carlo Vitali, “Nude Music,” liner notes for *Suite Case: Violin Duos from Vivaldi to Sollima* (Milan, Italy: ARCANA, A 448, 2018, compact disc), 9.

<sup>46</sup> Viana, “Duos for two Violins,” 14.

selection for a performance.<sup>47</sup> All the discussed pieces are elementary level, although usually one part is slightly easier than the other one.

The first piece of the collection, titled “Teasing Song,” reinforces careful counting, since students must hold longer note values like half notes, dotted half notes, and whole notes. The first violin part is easier because it only uses E and G string, stimulating note reading skills in both extremes of the register. The second violin part has several accidentals, including a change of key. It promotes the alternate use of B-sharp/B-natural, E-sharp/E-natural, F-sharp/F-natural, and G-sharp/G-natural, all in first position. Additionally, it requires easy double stops (open D drone).

The “Slovakian Song” (No. 8) is marked by a repeated rhythmic motif of four eighth notes, which is traded between the voices in an imitative fashion. This requires steady tempo and rhythmic accuracy, especially when the motif is displaced to the second beat. Careful counting is also necessary due to extensive rests. Other challenges are the first violin’s augmented second (D-sharp/C-natural in the A string), and the second violin’s chromatic descending motif that requires a half position. Finally, both parts have some easy double stops with one of the notes being an open D.

The “Hungarian Song” (No. 6) has an easier first violin part, with very steady rhythmic patterns. The second part has many ties, encouraging constant subdivision in order to play accurately the offbeat eighth notes. It also promotes the alternate use of C-sharp/C-natural and G-sharp/G-natural, as well as abundant 4th finger.

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<sup>47</sup> Béla Bartók, *44 Duets*, rev. ed. by Peter Bartók (Milwaukee, WI: Boosey & Hawkes, Inc., 1992), preface.

Finally, the “Play song” (No. 9) provides plenty of practice of dotted rhythms, especially in the first violin part. It demands constant subdivision and rhythmic accuracy when playing eighth notes in off beats. The second violin part is more challenging in terms of intonation, since it has many accidentals that require to shift the fingers up and down. The melody in the first violin can be played spiccato if the student is ready, otherwise martelé will suffice.

These pieces expose elementary level students to modal sonorities that might be less common in their other repertoire. In that sense they enrich and expand the students’ sound world, adding another exciting element to their musical experience.

### ***23 Stücke für eine und zwei Geigen, by Paul Hindemith***

Paul Hindemith (1895-1963) was a German composer, theorist, teacher, violinist, violist, and conductor.<sup>48</sup> He firmly believed that every musician has the responsibility to pass their knowledge to the next generation.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, his interest in creating pedagogical material for amateur musicians intended to serve a double purpose: facilitate the learning of an instrument through pieces, as opposed to technical etudes, and promote contemporary music among laymen.

Hindemith wrote his first pedagogical pieces around 1912, during his time as violin student. The collection, titled *Studien für Violine allein*, was never published and only a fragment of four pages remains. His published pedagogical violin compositions are a set of five very challenging etudes, *Übungen für Geiger* (1926), and three collections of pieces commissioned for the *Doflein Method* and published for the first time in 1932. The collections are titled: 23

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<sup>48</sup> Giselher Schubert, “Hindemith, Paul,” *Grove Music Online*, accessed October 30, 2020. <https://doi-org.libdata.lib.ua.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.13053>

<sup>49</sup> Paul Hindemith, *Paul Hindemith: Sämtliche Werke. VIII,3: Sing- Und Spielmusik III*, edited by Luitgard Schader (Mainz: Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, 2009), IX-X.

*Stücke für eine und zwei Geigen, 14 leichte Stücke für zwei Geigen, and 2 kanonische Duette für zwei Geigen.* Together they add up to a total of 39 pieces, of which 37 are duets. A brief description of the entire *Doflein Method* as well as of the three Hindemith collections can be found in the appendix (p. 46-47).

Describing the extensive list of violin duets that Hindemith completed during his lifetime is a research project on its own, far beyond the scope of this manuscript. It is known that Hindemith composed at least 46 violin duets, of which 39 were published. Here we will focus on the most pedagogically oriented collection: *23 Stücke für eine und zwei Geigen.*

Most of the pieces in *23 Stücke* are for elementary level students, although sometimes one of the parts can be intermediate level, in which case Hindemith specifies which of the parts is meant to be played by the student. Most pieces are titled after the technical aspect that they emphasize. For example, “Pausenstück” displays rests on different beats of the measure, “Tonleiterstück” consist of only scalar motion in the student’s part, and “Melodie in zweierlei Takt” alternates between duple and triple meter. Three pieces from this collection will be discussed.

“Dur und Moll” (No. 14) is characterized by the alternation between major and minor thirds in both parts, which makes it sound modally ambiguous. At a technical level, this reinforces the ability to alternate from a narrower to a wider third between 1st and 3rd finger. The piece also promotes eighth-note subdivision, since the first violin has numerous dotted quarter notes, and the second violin many offbeat eighth notes.

“Punktierungsstück” (No. 18) has an extensive use of dotted quarter notes in the first violin part, hence the title. To further stimulate subdivision, both parts often have eighth-note rests followed by offbeat eighth notes. The second violin part has extensive double stops, one of

the notes always being an open string (mostly D but also G). It also alternates between C-sharp/C-natural, B-flat/B-natural, and E-natural/E-flat.

“Triolenstück” (No. 19) makes emphasis on the use of triplets, as the title states. To assure a good ensemble both players need to actively listen to each other, making sure that the triplets remain even when passing from one voice to the other. As an additional challenge, the second violin has rests within one of the triplets, requiring accurate subdivision to play in time. All these pieces explore harmonic languages which might be new to many players, so that they need to keep their own intonation very centered, regardless of what they hear from their partner.

### ***Duetti per due violini*, by Luciano Berio**

Berio’s *Duetti* are discussed in detail by Julia Sakiko Reeves in her dissertation “Gateways to 20th Century Violin Repertoire.” She examines the benefits of teaching contemporary repertoire to young musicians, including biographical information about Luciano Berio and a pedagogical analysis of ten selected duets.<sup>50</sup> It is worth mentioning that despite the fact that Berio is primarily known for his serial, electronic, and virtuosic vocal and instrumental music, this collection has a pedagogical purpose.<sup>51</sup> Written between 1979-1983, *Duetti per due violini* allows young students to work on technical challenges while playing twentieth-century repertoire. As stated in the composer’s preface, the collection is intended to be performed by a large group of students of different ages and proficiency.<sup>52</sup> This type of collaboration provides

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<sup>50</sup> Julia Sakiko Reeves, “Gateways to 20th Century Violin Repertoire: Selections from Luciano Berio’s *Duetti Per due Violini*,” (DMA diss., The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2018).

<sup>51</sup> “Luciano Berio 1925-2003,” *Computer Music Journal* 27, no. 4 (2003): 12-13, accessed November 11, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3681896>.

<sup>52</sup> Luciano Berio, *Duetti per due violini*, preface (Milan: Universal Edition, 1982), i.

benefits for everybody: the less experienced students can imitate and find a role model in the more advanced players, and the more advanced can learn how to adjust their playing and tempo to help their duet partner.

The thirty-four duets in *Duetti* were titled after the first name of friends or musicians that Berio admired. It is not by chance that the opening number is titled “Béla,” since Bartók’s *44 Duets* were certainly an inspiration for the collection. These character-pieces express the rich variety of contemporary violin playing, exploring various sound effects and textures.<sup>53</sup> The following two pieces were chosen because at least one of the parts is for an elementary level student.

The piece “Carlo” (No. 25) is titled after violinist Carlo Chiarappa, who premiered two of Berio’s most celebrated pieces for violin: *Sequenza VIII* for solo violin, and *Corale* for violin and orchestra.<sup>54</sup> The first violin part is for an intermediate/advanced level player, since it has several accidentals and requires fifth position. The second part is for an elementary level student, having some accidentals that reinforce the alternation between B-flat/B-natural, C-natural/C-sharp, and F-natural/F-sharp. Rhythmically, the piece promotes subdivision of dotted rhythms and careful counting of rests, to assure a good ensemble with the first violin. It also has some easy double stops, with one of the two notes being an open D.

The piece “Alfredo” (No. 27) has a first violin part that is borderline between elementary and intermediate level. It only uses the chromatic notes of the A string when in first position (A-E). Other features are dotted rhythms and grace notes. The second part is elementary level,

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<sup>53</sup> Horst A. Scholtz, “Liner notes,” for *Luciano Berio/Edison Denisov* (Åkersberga, Sweden: BIS Records AB, CD-1047, 2001, compact disc), 4.

<sup>54</sup> Diego Cantalupi, “Carlo Chiarappa,” liner notes for *Francesco Geminiani: Concerti Grossi* (Italy: Tactus, TC 680703, 2001, compact disc), 8.

consisting of a sixteenth-note ostinato. The constant alternation between F-natural and F-sharp on the E string, serves as a good practice for 1st finger adjustment. This piece introduces the students to rests measured in seconds as opposed to beats. The first violin is required to start about 7 seconds after the second violin. At the end, the second violin needs to play for another 6 seconds by himself. While in most of the traditional duets the goal is to play together, in this piece that is discouraged, since both parts have different *tempi*. The challenge of each player is to keep a good internal tempo.

Most of the pieces of this collection explore the liberal use of dissonances. They expose elementary level students to sounds that they might not have heard in their traditional repertoire, adding a new exciting element to the students' musical journey. For a successful execution in terms of intonation, each player needs to keep a very centered intonation on its own, regardless of what the partner is playing.

### **Canonic Duo in D major TWV 40:120, by Georg Philipp Telemann**

Most of Telemann's music, including this Canonic Duo, combines French dance rhythms and Italian melodicism. In addition, this stylistic mixture is masterfully presented in contrapuntal texture, creating Telemann's personal style.<sup>55</sup> Published in Paris in 1738, the "ingeniously constructed duets consist of a single part to be performed by two instruments in strict canon, with signs showing the second player where to begin and end."<sup>56</sup> They were designed to fit the needs

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<sup>55</sup> Liner Notes, *Two Violins*, 2.

<sup>56</sup> Brain Stewart, "Georg Philipp Telemann," liner notes for *Telemann: Sonatas Corellisantes, Canonic Duos* (Suffolk, England: Chandos Digital Recording, CHAN 0546, 1993, compact disc), 7.

of a variety of customers, not only in terms of style but also instrumentation, being suitable for two flutes, two violins, or two viola da gamba.

Since the Renaissance, and well past the Baroque era, composers have proven their craftsmanship by writing music using complex contrapuntal procedures such as canon.<sup>57</sup> In the case of Telemann's *Canonic Duo in D major*, the result is a multi-movement work of astonishing richness and diversity. The work offers the possibility to discuss with the student the issue of performance practice and style. Telemann's music represents a pivotal movement in music history, being still influenced by the late Baroque, but already gravitating towards new fashions such as the galant and the sensitive style. This hybrid style, halfway between old and new, would ultimately lead to the Classic era. The canonic duo represents both the traditional two voice counterpoint, but also the rising Italian three movement sonata form.<sup>58</sup> Such diversity of styles and forms allows the performers to make decisions regarding articulation, ornaments, sound type, and even tuning.

The first movement, *Spiritoso*, is marked by a lively and virtuosic opening gesture, immediately repeated in the dominant key, and once more in the home key towards the end of the movement. It has some staccato markings that need to be discussed in terms of execution (see Figure 2). One option is to play them with almost no separation but rather a slight decay of the notes, as it would sound when using a Baroque bow. Another possibility is to play them martelé, so that the articulation is more crisp and closer to the lighter galant style. There is not a definitive answer to which option is better, and of course a combination of both can also be used.

Ultimately, the only essential rule is that both players need to do the same, since the “echo”

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<sup>57</sup> Dan Laurin, liner notes for *Telemann: The Complete Recorder Music, Volume II* (Sweden: BIS Records AB, CD-335, 1986, compact disc).

<sup>58</sup> Vitali, “Nude Music,” 6.

needs to match the original. A similar approach applies to trills, both players having to agree on their execution.

Figure 2 – Canonic Duo in D major TWV 40:120, Spirituoso (mm. 1-7)  
Period style execution of articulations and ornaments



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The second movement, *Larghetto*, primarily has the challenge of matching ornaments between both voices. Since there are extensive trills, an agreement needs to be made regarding whether to start them from the real note or the ornamental note. The resolution of the trill must match as well, since in such a slow movement discrepancy in that regard will be heard. Some editions suggest specific trill resolutions.

The third movement, *Allegro assai*, is in ritornello form with two contrasting episodes.<sup>59</sup> The main challenge here is to match articulations. Because of the fast tempo, the bow will tend to come off the string during the extensive staccato sections (see Figure 3). However, the spiccato should not be forced but rather bounce naturally, otherwise the sound will become too incisive and short, stylistically outside the realm of late Baroque or early Classicism. As in the other movements, the execution of ornaments needs to be the same for both players. Canonic compositions require of the performers to pay particular attention to rhythm and steady tempo, but they also offer the unique opportunity of matching intonation, articulation, ornaments,

<sup>59</sup> Michael Talbot, “Ritornello,” *Grove Music Online*, accessed December 13, 2020. <https://doi-org.libdata.lib.ua.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.23526>

bowings, among other elements, by simply playing together, since the music is fundamentally the same for both players.

Figure 3 – Canonic Duo in D major TWV 40:120, Allegro assai (mm. 1-11)  
Execution of staccato articulation

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***Don Giovanni: für zwei Flöten oder Violinen nach einer Ausgabe um 1809, anonymous arrangement from the opera by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart***

The benefits of teaching the operatic qualities of Mozart's music through violin duets was discussed earlier in this manuscript (pp. 17-20). This section will focus on the other pedagogical benefits of playing these duets, aside of those already mentioned. The collection was most likely arranged for amateur violinists of intermediate level, who wanted to enjoy these popular arias at home. The duets allow violinists to explore the Classical style, which requires a light and clean sound, with a slight articulation between notes unless marked legato. The collection has a total of eleven arias, of which two will be discussed here.

“Eh via buffone” (No. 5) is a duet where Leporello threatens to leave his master Don Giovanni, because the master tried to blame him for a crime that he committed himself.<sup>60</sup> The nature of this heated argument is portrait musically with restless passing back and forth of the melody, staccatissimo markings, extreme dynamic contrasts, insistent motifs, brisk tempo, among other elements. When the musical gestures are repeated in the other violin part, they need to be executed with the same articulation, mostly short and with a sense of urgency. Oftentimes a new motif starts before the previous one has been completed. This feeling of interruption needs to be highlighted with a strong start, disrupting the elegant closure of the other part. Most of the aria has a constant eighth note pulsation, and the players need to align the rhythms to that subdivision.

“Là ci darem la mano” (No. 8) is a duet where Don Giovanni is trying to seduce Zerlina. He takes her hand, but she is suspicious. Eventually they go off together, arm in arm.<sup>61</sup> Both characters start with a dialogue, followed by a song together. In the opening conversational *Andante* section, the musical functions of melody and accompaniment are constantly exchanged. Following the dynamic instructions is crucial to achieve a good balance, since they highlight which voice should be in the foreground and which one in the background. Active listening of the other’s part is necessary to achieve the level of rhythmic precision required for the style. In this section the accompaniment is mostly an even quarter-note pulsation, which the melody needs to match without much room for tempo fluctuations. The following *Allegro* section is either in unison when emulating the vocal parts, or in imitational texture when mimicking instrumental episodes. In both cases, tone, articulation and dynamics need to match precisely.

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<sup>60</sup> Keith Anderson, “Synopsis” liner notes for *Don Giovanni* (Budapest, Hungary: Naxos, 8.660080-82, 2000, compact disc), 10.

<sup>61</sup> Anderson, “Synopsis,” 8.

### **Duo concertant in G Minor, Op. 57, No. 1, by Charles-Auguste de Bériot**

Charles-Auguste de Bériot (1802-1870), is one of the founders of the rich Belgium school of virtuosic violinists. This list includes some distinguished names like his own student Henri Vieuxtemps, who himself mentored Eugène Ysaÿe. Hence, Bériot can be seen as the father of a long tradition of not only outstanding violinists but also significant pedagogues and composers, that shaped the development of the violin technique and repertoire. He composed about fifteen concert duets, Op. 57 being the more substantial ones in terms of length and technical difficulty. That collection of duets is proper for advanced level players.

Composed in 1847, the first duo of the collection is in G minor, with a Classical three movement structure. The first movement, *Moderato*, opens with dramatic chords marked *risoluto* in the first violin and *fièramente* in the second.<sup>62</sup> The opening theme has many homorhythmic sections where both voices need to match articulation and tone. The dotted rhythms must be very tight in order to provide a brilliant and virtuosic beginning. When the second violin switches to accompanimental chords, they need to be broken fast and with good articulation, so that they match the rhythmic character of the melodic line. The contrasting secondary theme, in B-flat major, is lyrical and legato, with both voices trading the melodic and accompanimental roles. In order to assure a good ensemble, the melody needs to be aligned with the sixteenth note arpeggiated chords accompaniment. After a brief development, the recapitulation presents the secondary theme in G major. It starts in the first violin but is reiterated by both voices in unison. The coda reuses the opening of the movement, now in major mode. The movement has more sections of homorhythmic texture like the one described at the beginning. Each of them requires

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<sup>62</sup> Keith Anderson, "Charles-Auguste de Bériot (1802–1870): Duos Concertants, Op. 57/Six Duos caractéristiques, Op. 113," liner notes for *BÉRIOT Duos concertants Six Duos caractéristiques* (Canada: Naxos, 8.570748, 2009, compact disc), 2-3.

the matching of tone and articulation, so that both voices create excellent ensemble. When one of the voices has an accompanimental role, it needs to stay in character with the melody.

The second movement, *Adagio moderato*, starts with the first violin playing the principal melody in E-flat major, while the second violin has the accompaniment. In general, this movement poses fewer ensemble challenges because most of it is in homophonic texture, one voice leading and the other one accompanying. If the players are actively listening to each other, it should be easy to stay together. However, the few sections that feature homorhythmic or imitative texture require special care. Figure 4 shows how both voices converge into sixteenth notes at the end of the phrase, so that even the *gruppetto* needs to be perfectly aligned. The passage at rehearsal letter [M] presents unisons and imitation, requiring a good blend of tone and articulation among the voices.

Figure 4 – Duo concertant, No. 1, Adagio moderato (rehearsal letter M)  
Unisons and imitation

The image displays a musical score for two violins. The top staff is for Violin I and the bottom staff is for Violin II. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into two systems. The first system shows the beginning of the phrase, with a rehearsal mark 'M' above the second measure. The second system shows the continuation of the phrase, ending with a *dim.* (diminuendo) marking. Various musical notations are present, including slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like *p* (piano), *f* (forte), and *dim.* (diminuendo). The music features unisons and imitation between the two voices.

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The third movement, *Rondo*, starts with the first violin introducing the principal theme in G minor. It needs to have some substance despite the piano dynamic, since the instruction *con spirito* does not only affect the tempo but also the sound. The second violin should add up to that energy by playing short and crisp accompanimental chords. A few measures later, when the

phrase relaxes with the *dolce* marking, a true piano *flotando* can be used. Both voices can achieve even more contrast by playing very legato, as opposed to the more articulate beginning. The first unison appears at mm. 30, requiring unified articulation, dynamic, and phrasing. In order to play the sixteenth notes before letter [R] together, the preceding note can be slightly shorter, allowing for time to rearticulate the bow (see Figure 5). The same applies to the up bow staccato unisons at letter [S], and when both phrases are repeated later in the movement.

Figure 5 – Duo concertant, No.1, Rondo (rehearsal letter R and S)  
Rearticulating the bow



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### Sonata for 2 Violins in C Major, Op. 56, by Sergey Prokofiev

As he wrote in his memoir, Prokofiev was inspired to compose the sonata for two violins after hearing a bad unaccompanied violin duet:

Sometimes hearing bad compositions gives birth to good ideas. “That’s not the way to do it,” one tells oneself, “it should be done this way.” That is how I happened to write my sonata for two violins. After once hearing an unsuccessful piece for two violins without piano accompaniment, it struck me that in spite of the apparent limitations of such a duet, one could make it interesting enough to listen to for 10 or 15 minutes without tiring.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Marc McAneny, “Signs, Games, and Messages / Sonata for Two Violins, Op. 56,” liner notes for *In nomine: music for violin* (Albany, N.Y.: Albany Records, TROY 1301, 2011, compact disc).

Hence, this multi-movement seventeen minutes long sonata was intended as an essay on how to compose a good violin duet.

The sonata was composed in 1932, during the composer's time in Paris, and premiered the same year by members of the Beethoven Quartet in Moscow. Prokofiev, alongside Poulenc, Honegger, and Milhaud, was in the committee of the Parisian chamber music society Triton. This organization was always looking for new repertoire to perform in their concerts.<sup>64</sup> Perhaps Prokofiev's motivation to experiment with the genre came from hearing Honegger's *Sonatina for Two Violins*, composed in 1920.<sup>65</sup> Milhaud also produced two violin duets, but much later, in the 1940s. Prokofiev's sonata is for advanced level players, representing the musical possibilities of two equal voices when in contrapuntal texture. The work can certainly be placed at the pinnacle of the violin duet repertoire in terms of substance, length, and technical difficulty. It shares that place along with other multi-movement concert duets by Beriot, Spohr, Ysaÿe, Weinberg, and Górecki. Although, Prokofiev is certainly the most prominent composer among all these names.

The first movement, *Andante cantabile*, presents pedagogical benefits in the realm of ensemble and intonation. Marked by contrapuntal textures, including compound lines in each part, it requires coordination between the two players through active listening and non-verbal communication. This becomes particularly relevant when the two independent voices converge into rhythmic unisons, usually at the end of phrases. Those moments should be perfectly together, with a simultaneous release of the last note when pertinent. The discussion and

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<sup>64</sup> David Nice, "Prokofiev: Complete Works for Violin," liner notes for *James Ehned plays Prokofiev: Complete Works for Violin* (Colchester, England: Chandos Records Ltd., CHAN10787(2), 2013, compact disc), 9-10.

<sup>65</sup> Liner notes for *Two violins: violin duos by Telemann, Boccherini, Honegger, Ysaÿe* (Santa Monica, CA: Delos, DE 3390, 2008, compact disc), 2.

negotiation with the duet partner of the articulation and length of certain notes is especially important when playing homorhythmic sections. *Ritardandos* are also an instance where cues and listening are crucial to keep a tight ensemble.

Another pedagogical learning can be found in the aspects of vertical and relative intonation. Due to frequent shifts of tonal center and the extensive use of dissonances, it is important to identify when both voices are forming consonant intervals. Particular attention needs to be given to some passages that have successive octaves and perfect fourths, since perfect intervals stand out if not in tune (see Figure 6). Finally, the performers will notice that many times their dynamics are opposed. Considering that the intricate counterpoint tends to obscure the musical functions of melody and accompaniment, the composer's contrasting dynamics should facilitate the voicing process throughout the sonata.

Figure 6 – Sonata for 2 violins, Op. 56, Andante cantabile (mm. 12-13)  
Successive octaves and perfect fourths



Sonata for 2 Violins in C Major, Op 56 by Sergei Prokofiev  
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The second movement, *Allegro*, starts with a recurring motif first presented in the second violin part. It needs to be played with the same character and articulation each time it appears in one of the voices (see Figure 7). When a string of sixteenth notes is passed from one part to the other, the musical line needs to be uninterrupted. Some tempo changes need to be led by the player that has the moving part in that section. For example, the *poco più mosso* at rehearsal number [10] is guided by the first violin (see Figure 8). When both parts are rather equal in terms



rhythmic unisons, the same homophonic texture is repeated at rehearsal number [19], but with inverted roles. This time the dynamic instructions of Prokofiev work better, since the melody is *mf* while the chords are marked *mp*.

The fourth movement, *Allegro con brio*, presents more learning opportunities regarding interpretation of articulation markings, ensemble, intonation, and balancing of parts. The music presents a nuanced array of staccato markings, which need to be discussed with the duet partner to agree on their character and length. At rehearsal number [24], the first violin has staccatissimo markings, and seven measures later both violins have staccato markings and the additional instruction of *martellato*. In this case, the first violin needs to switch from off the string staccatissimo to on the string, in order to match the second violin. Similarly, five measures before rehearsal number [26], an agreement needs to be made regarding the length of the staccato because both parts are trading eight notes back and forth.

Regarding ensemble, the movement presents two unisons in *pesante* character. In addition, the unison gesture of the first movement reappears four measures before [37]. All those passages require good non-verbal communication to keep a tight ensemble. Sometimes the music does not allow for a strict alignment of all the notes, like in the passage from [33] to [35], which juxtaposes ternary with binary rhythms. In that case coinciding on the bigger beats should be the goal.

The movement is also marked by three passages where a recurring fast motif is rhythmically displaced in both parts, producing a chaotic imitation effect. In those moments both players need to develop a good individual sense of pulse, which will help the rhythms to interlock properly. The longest passage of this type is from rehearsal number [38] to [39], but it also happens in other places such as between [26] and [27] (see Figure 9). As in the previous

movements, contrasting dynamics aid the voicing process and melodic unisons need to be particularly in tune.

Figure 9 – Sonata for 2 violins, Op. 56, Allegro con brio (mm. 60-67)  
Rhythmically displaced motif



Sonata for 2 Violins in C Major, Op 56 by Sergei Prokofiev  
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Oftentimes, duet editions come in two different formats, as score or as parts. If the performers like to perform with hardcopies, it is advisable to perform out of parts, since there is not enough time to turn pages. But the score needs to be at hand when preparing the work, in order to easily see how both parts are interacting.

### Conclusion

A well-rounded musician needs to be trained in solo, chamber, and orchestral repertoire, and the duet develops skills applicable for playing all three realms. Duets are beneficial to build musical comprehension and technique.<sup>66</sup> They promote vertical intonation, an ability necessary in trios, quartets, other larger chamber ensembles, and orchestra.<sup>67</sup> Beside intonation, the

<sup>66</sup> Barbara Sturgis-Everett, “The value of chamber music in ensemble education,” *American String Teacher* 39, no. 2 (May 1989): 69-70.

<sup>67</sup> Thomas Filas, “Why Duets?” *The Instrumentalist* 22, no. 7 (February 1968): 40.

homogeneity of sound in string duets serves to teach and experience other elements of chamber music playing such as blending tone, matching articulation, synchronizing rhythms, among many other aspects.

Duets are also a useful pedagogical tool for both teacher and student. They allow the students to directly compare their phrasing, rhythm, sound, and overall technique, with that of their teacher.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, duets of the same instrument have the advantage that they can easily be played during a regular lesson and recitals, since they only require the teacher to play along with the student.

Students can also benefit from playing duets with their peers. The teamwork it takes to not let a partner down motivates both students to practice more. When a student suffers stage fright, he or she should be paired with a more confident partner.<sup>69</sup> If memorizing music is an issue, duets are a great option since they are usually performed with the music, allowing the students to perform more frequently because less time is spent memorizing. Hence, whether to improve technical, musical, or performing abilities, duets are a powerful pedagogical tool.

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<sup>68</sup> Conrad David Bruderer, "A Study of Twentieth-Century Violin and Viola Duos, Including Critical Reviews and Analyses of Selected Works," (PhD diss., University of California, San Diego, 1998): 31.

<sup>69</sup> Eric Street, "In Praise of Teaching Duets," *Clavier* 40, no. 6 (July 2001): 16-17.

## APPENDIX

### **Annotated Selective List of Violin Duets**

This repertoire list represents music of various styles and eras. It includes the most performed and taught violin duets, but also some less known very original collections. The following pieces have been grouped into two main categories: *concert duets* and *pedagogical duets*. Each work has been assigned to one or the other according to the intention of the composer. For example, in the preface of *Duetti per due violini*, the composer Luciano Berio states that “these 34 Duets are intended for school violin teaching,” hence these pieces are pedagogical duets. Any collection titled “Etudes” also falls into the pedagogical category, since that title explicitly manifests that the music’s purpose is to acquire, reinforce, and emphasize technical skills. However, if a given composer did not specify his intentions explicitly as in the previous examples, the following criteria will be applied: works where both parts have equal levels of difficulty will be considered concert duets, and those where the difficulty is unequal will be included in the pedagogical duets group. These labels are certainly not absolute, being both debatable and perfectible. Many arguments could be found to move a piece from one category to the other one, or to create new categories altogether. Nevertheless, separating the duets into concert and pedagogical pieces makes this list more user friendly. For example, a violin instructor in need of duets to teach a technical skill will consult the pedagogical list. But if the primary intention is to find duets for a recital, the concert list is helpful, keeping in mind that

many pedagogical pieces are musically interesting enough to be used in a performance as well. A summary repertoire table according to level is included at the end (p. 49).

### Concert Duets

Bériot, Charles-Auguste de. *Three duos concertants for two violins, op. 57*. Edited by F. Hermann and Philipp Mittell. New York: G. Schirmer, 1909.

The Belgium composer produced a prolific number of violin duets, the most substantial ones being the *Duos Concertants*. They are for advanced level players, marked by the virtuosity and lyricism of the Franco-Belgium school. They include position work, a variety of bow strokes, and extensive double stops. Other works for two violins are: 6 Duos caractéristiques, Op. 113, “Spanish Airs,” and 3 Grand Studies for 2 Violins, Op. 43. Both collections are advanced level as well, Op. 43 being particularly challenging. Finally, it's worth mentioning the collection 12 Easy Duos for 2 Violins, Op. 87, which is pedagogical in nature, combining pieces for both elementary and intermediate level.

Leclair, Jean-Marie, and Sydney Beck. *Six Sonatas for Two Violins Op. 3: Volume I, Nos. 1-3*. Edited by Sydney Beck. New York: Music Press Inc., 1946.

Jean Marie Leclair was one of the most prominent composers for violin of the late French Baroque. These sonatas represent a departure from the common practice because they omit the continuo. Instead they give more independence to the counterpoint between the two violins, producing vivacious and graceful music. This volume contains the first three sonatas out of a total of six. They are for intermediate level players, including passages in third position and extensive use of double stops.

Mazas, Jacques Féréol. *Fifteen Duos Abécédaires for Two Violins, Op. 85*. New York: Carl Fischer Music Library, 1901.

The French composer Jacques Féréol Mazas has 14 collections of duets. They were published mostly in sets of 6 and represent various levels of difficulty all within the intermediate level. The Fifteen Duos *Abécédaires*, Op. 85 is the easiest collection staying entirely in first position but exploring many keys, bow strokes, rhythms, and including rapid sixteenth notes passages. Even though the title could suggest a pedagogical intention, it is not explicit enough and the equal difficulty of both parts makes Op. 85 part of the concert duets category. All the other collections are also highly recommended because of their beauty and gracefulness, so characteristic of the Classical era. Those collections are technically more difficult, for example Op. 39 and Op. 40 use from 1st to 5th position. Op. 41 goes all the way to 7th position and according to Heim's grading system<sup>70</sup> it is the most difficult of all the Mazas violin duet collections.

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<sup>70</sup> Ernst Heim, *Neuer Führer durch die Violin Litteratur*, 2nd ed. edited by Otto Girschner (Hannover: Oertel, 1900).

Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus. *Don Giovanni: für zwei Flöten oder Violinen nach einer Ausgabe um 1809*. Edited by Karl Heinz Füssl. Wien: Universal Edition A. G., 1981.

This is a collection of anonymous arrangements from the opera *Don Giovanni* by Mozart. It was published in 1809 containing 11 numbers; five of them were unabridged and the rest were only slightly shorter than Mozart's original, so that the structure of the music was hardly affected.<sup>71</sup> The duets are an excellent way to introduce intermediate level students to Mozart's operatic writing.

Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus, and August Schulz. *12 Duos pour 2 Violons: Op. 70 Cahier 3 (No. 9-12)*. Braunschweig: Litolff, 1900.

Mozart arranged several of his works into a collection of violin duets. The first edition was published in 1800, thus several years after his death. The current Litolff edition was revised and partially reworked by August Schultz. It was published in three volumes between 1894-1900. Duet No. 9 is an arrangement of the Piano Trio in C major, K.548. Duet No. 10 is an arrangement of the Trio in E-flat major, K. 498. Duet No. 11 is an arrangement of the Piano Sonata No. 9 in D major, K. 311/284c. Duet No. 12 is an arrangement of the Piano Sonata No. 11 in A major, K. 331/300i. The duets are advanced level, with the first violin playing often in the upper register and with slightly faster passages than the second violin. Although both parts trade the melody quite often.

Pleyel, Ignaz. *Six Duos for One or Two Violins, Op. 23*. New York: Carl Fischer Music Library, 1902.

The Austrian-born French composer Ignaz Pleyel wrote many collections of string duets in Classical style. At least four of them are violin duets, all in the intermediate level range. Op. 23 is one of the most difficult duos despite using only from 1st to 3rd position. It has extensive and somewhat uncomfortable fast passages, double stops, and various rhythmic patterns. Op. 59 is slightly easier, but with similar technical demands. On the other hand, Op. 8, titled *Six Little Duets*, is the easiest collection. It consists of shorter pieces that are all in first position and with simpler rhythms.

Prokofieff, Serge. *Sonata, Op. 56: 2 violins*. London: Boosey & Hawkes, 2007.

Published in 1933, this sonata manifests influences of various styles and eras, exhibiting Classical influences in its four movements structure, but also dramatic tonal shifts with rapidly changing contrapuntal textures. Op. 56 is for advanced level players since both parts are technically and musically very demanding.

Spohr, Louis. *Duette für zwei Violinen Op. 3*. Edited by Karl Herrmann. Leipzig: C. F. Peters Edition, 1964.

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<sup>71</sup> Karl Heinz Füssl, "Preface," in *Don Giovanni: für zwei Flöten oder Violinen nach einer Ausgabe um 1809* (Wien: Universal Edition A. G., 1981).

German violin virtuoso and composer Louis Spohr has 14 concert duets grouped in 5 different collections. Op. 3 (1805) consists of 3 duets for advanced level students, with extensive use of double stops, up bow staccato, and virtuosic passage work. The duets are in a rather Classical style and with a somewhat unequal role distribution, since the second violin has more of an accompanimental role. Beside Op. 3, all the other collections are also excellent concert pieces. Op. 9 (1807) includes 2 duets which are similar in style and technical demands to their predecessor. Op. 39 (1816) and Op. 67 (1824) have 3 duets each, written in an increasingly Romantic style. Against his publisher's wishes, these duets are even more challenging technically, which made them harder to sell. Finally, Op. 148 (1856) includes 2 duets and Op. 153 (1856) contains 1 duet. These last 3 are also in a rather romantic style.

Telemann, Georg Philipp. *Sechs Kanonische Sonaten Für Zwei Violinen*. Edited by Carl Herrmann. Frankfurt: C. F. Peters Corp., 1900.

This collection consists of six sonatas for two violins or two flutes. They are written as a strict canon, so that the second violin plays the same notes as the first, but just a couple of beats later. It is remarkable how both parts fit together perfectly creating such variety and charming polyphony. These intermediate level duets are perfect to promote the listening of each other's part, since the imitative qualities of the music are easy to follow.

Ysaÿe, Eugène. *Sonate pour deux violons seuls, op. Posthume*. Bruxelles: Schott, 2006.

Taking around thirty minutes of performance time, the size of this sonata is unparalleled in the violin duet repertoire. "The frequent use of four-part contrapuntal writing produces a richness of sonority not normally encountered in violin duets."<sup>72</sup> In addition, its formal design has been subject of extensive analysis due to its complexity. This work is technically and musically very demanding and apt for advanced level players.

### **Pedagogical duets**

Bartók, Béla. *44 Duets*. Rev. ed. by Peter Bartók. Milwaukee, WI: Boosey & Hawkes, Inc., 1992.

This edition groups the duets in two volumes, volume I is mostly for elementary level students that have a good rhythmic and left hand foundation, while volume II is for intermediate level students who already have some position work.<sup>73</sup> The duets

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<sup>72</sup> Meng-Hsun Chuang, "Formal Ambiguity and Tonal Structure in Eugène-Auguste Ysaÿe's Sonata Pour Deux Violons Seuls Op. Posthume" (DMA diss., New England Conservatory of Music, 2007), 1.

<sup>73</sup> Hambourg, "Focal Point," 67.

incorporate Eastern European rhythms, polytonality, drones, strong off-beat accentuation, canons, etc.<sup>74</sup> They are roughly arranged in order of difficulty.

Berio Luciano. *Duetti per due violini*. Milan: Universal Edition, 1983.

The Italian composer Luciano Berio is more known for his experimental work than for his pedagogical compositions. However, this collection, organized in two volumes, focuses primarily on collaboration among violin students. It has duets for various levels: elementary (“Béla,” “Henri,” “Igor,” etc.), intermediate (“Alfredo” or “Annie”), and some are almost advanced (e.g. “Massimo” or “Lorin”). When one or both parts of the duet are elementary level they are given in larger print. If a part is for more advanced players or for the teacher, it is in smaller print. This collection allows for an earlier exposure to the twentieth century musical language.

Doflein, Erich and Elma Doflein. *The Doflein Method: The Violinist’s Progress*. Trans. by Philip Marler. Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1957-1958.

This is a compilation of many pedagogical duos into a comprehensive violin curriculum of five volumes.<sup>75</sup> For this series, violin pedagogues Elma and Erich Doflein commissioned violin duets from several composers. Works like Bartok’s *44 Duos* and Hindemith’s *14 Leichte Stücke* were produced for this purpose. The collection also includes duets by Carl Orff and Bohuslav Martinu, among others. Most of these duos are great to expose adults or children to twentieth century repertoire, since they have interesting harmonies and many accidentals, including double sharps. Intended to produce well-rounded players, each book contains diagrams, musical examples, music theory practice, and duets for performance. Vol. 1, *The Beginning*, is appropriately geared toward elementary level players, addressing proper positioning of the instrument, string names, note values, etc. Vol. 2: *Development of Technique*, is also for elementary level students since it remains in first position, dealing with major and minor keys, slower tempos, bowing techniques like martelé, dotted rhythms, basic double-stops, canons, and more. Vol. 3, *The Second and Third Positions*, is for intermediate level players since it addresses the issue of shifting into the second and third positions by way of short pieces and exercises, as well as introducing trills, harmonics, further reinforcement of minor keys, and half position. Vol. 4, *Further Technique in Bowing and Fingering*, is also intermediate level. Vol. 5, *The Higher Positions*, introduces from 4th through 10th position, while revisiting the lower positions and how they interact with the higher ones. More short pieces, exercises, and duets are included, all within intermediate level.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Keith Anderson, “Belá Bartók (1881 –1945): Sonata for Solo Violin Sz. 117; 44 Duos for Two Violins,” liner notes for *Bartók: Sonata for Solo Violin SZ117; 44 Duos for Two Violins* (Munich: MVD, Naxos, 8.550868, 1995, compact disc), 4-5.

<sup>75</sup> Reel, “Vertical Climb,” 22.

<sup>76</sup> “The Doflein Method,” Sharmusic. Accessed September 30, 2020.

<https://www.sharmusic.com/shop.axd/Search?buttonsearch=Search&keywords=the+doflein+method>.

Hindemith, Paul. *Paul Hindemith: Sämtliche Werke. VIII,3: Sing- Und Spielmusik III*. Edited by Luitgard Schader. Mainz: Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, 2009.

Being a violinist himself, the German composer Paul Hindemith was very interested in violin pedagogy. This volume includes three collections of violin duets: *23 Stücke für eine und zwei Geigen*, *14 leichte Stücke für zwei Geigen*, and *2 kanonische Duette für zwei Geigen*. They are both influenced by folk music and twentieth century musical idioms. *23 Stücke* has twenty-one short duets, varying from two lines to one page. Each piece makes emphasis on one technical aspect, which usually is clearly stated in the title, e.g. “Achtelstück” (Octaves) or “Saitenwechselstück” (string crossings). Most of the duets are elementary level for both parts, but some are intermediate level. *14 leichte Stücke* is mostly for a student-teacher collaboration or for two intermediate level students, because usually at least one part is intermediate level. Finally, *2 Kanonische Duette* is for advanced level players. They are very intricate even though they can all be played in 1st position. The complexity lies in its rhythms, harmonies, double stops, and extensive accidentals.

Hersch, Sarah and Mary Horozaniecki, eds. *Scary Pieces*. N.p.: One World Publishing, 2006.

According to the authors, this book is “for beginning students (elementary level), since it is short, accessible, and extremely creative, making it very exciting for students.” Pieces like the “Monster’s March” require the students to march, and the “Cold” ask them to sneeze.

McLean, Michael. *The Well-Tempered Violin*. N.p.: Summy-Burchard, 1992.

Inspired in Bach’s *Well-Tempered Clavier*, each of these duets is in a different key and represents a specific baroque dance. When a duet has a lot of accidentals (up to seven sharps!), McLean uses a well-known recognizable tune to help the students to realize when they are playing wrong notes. It has pieces from elementary to intermediate level.

Thorp, Bill. *Fiddling around: violin duets: traditional folk songs and fiddle tunes*. London: Broadbent & Dunn, 1996.

This is a collection of fiddle tunes arranged as duets for advanced players. “There is always a new twist every time the melody comes around. So, it sounds like you are jamming even though everything is written out.”<sup>77</sup> It has pieces from elementary to intermediate level.

Van Bronkhorst, Warren. *The not-so-boring book of bowing*. Stockton, CA: Pernambuco Press, 1984.

This book is an alternative to the traditional and rather tedious Sevcik method. It is a collection of excerpts from relevant string quartets, each of them highlighting a different

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<sup>77</sup> Reel, “Vertical Climb,” 23.

bowing pattern or bow stroke. The second violin part makes it more interesting and the selection allows the students to become familiar with relevant string repertoire.<sup>78</sup> However, it has some inconvenient page turns that require several copies and some excerpts do not seem appropriate to illustrate a specific bow stroke.<sup>79</sup> It has pieces from elementary to intermediate level.

Vigh, Lajos. *Violin duos for beginners*. Budapest: Editio Musica, 1977.

This elementary level duet collection consists of arrangements of pieces by prominent composers such as Beethoven, Bach, Purcell, Mozart, etc. The author also has two volumes of violin-cello duets, which are intermediate level for the violin part.

Yin, Lo I. *Six duets: for two violins*. Oberlin, OH: E & R Music Engravers, 1994.

The author was born in China but migrated to the United States when he was nineteen years old, to study music at Eastman and Physics at the University of Michigan. He worked both for NASA but also as a composer. That background can be heard in his music, e.g. “East-West” is written in 5/4 meter, with artificial harmonics, double stops, interesting rhythms, and glissando reminiscent of Chinese traditional instruments.<sup>80</sup> These pieces are appropriate for intermediate level.

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<sup>78</sup> Hambourg, “Focal Point,” 66.

<sup>79</sup>“Violin,” *American String Teacher* 50, no. 1 (February 2000): 110.

<sup>80</sup> Reel, “Vertical Climb,” 23.

### Summary Repertoire Table According to Level

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Elementary</b>              | Hersch, Sarah and Mary Horozaniecki, eds. <i>Scary Pieces</i>                              |
|                                | Vigh, Lajos. <i>Violin duos for beginners</i>  |
| <b>Elementary-Intermediate</b> | Bartók, Béla. <i>44 Duets</i>  |
|                                | Bériot, Charles-Auguste de. <i>12 Easy Duos for 2 Violins, Op.87</i>                       |
|                                | Doflein, Erich and Elma Doflein. <i>The Doflein Method: The Violinist's Progress</i>       |
|                                | McLean, Michael. <i>The Well-Tempered Violin</i>   |
|                                | Thorp, Bill. <i>Fiddling around: violin duets: traditional folk songs and fiddle tunes</i> |
|                                | Van Bronkhorst, Warren. <i>The not-so-boring book of bowing</i>                            |
| <b>Intermediate</b>            | Leclair, Jean-Marie, and Sydney Beck. <i>Six Sonatas for Two Violins Op. 3</i>             |
|                                | Mazas, Jacques Féréol. <i>Fifteen Duos Abécédaires for Two Violins, Op. 85</i>             |
|                                | Pleyel, Ignaz. <i>Six Duos for One or Two Violins, Op. 23</i>                              |
|                                | Telemann, Georg Philipp. <i>Sechs Kanonische Sonaten Für Zwei Violinen</i>                 |
|                                | Yin, Lo I. <i>Six duets: for two violins</i>   |
| <b>Advanced</b>                | Bériot, Charles-Auguste de. <i>3 Grand Studies for 2 Violins, Op.43</i>                    |
|                                | Bériot, Charles-Auguste de. <i>Three duos concertants for two violins, op. 57</i>          |
|                                | Bériot, Charles-Auguste de. <i>Duos caractéristiques, Op. 113, "Spanish Airs"</i>          |
|                                | Mozart, W. A. <i>Don Giovanni: für zwei Violinen nach einer Ausgabe um 1809</i>            |
|                                | Mozart, W. A., and August Schulz. <i>12 Duos pour 2 Violons: Op. 70</i>                    |
|                                | Prokofieff, Serge. <i>Sonata, Op. 56: 2 violins</i>  |
|                                | Spohr, Louis. <i>Duette für zwei Violinen Op. 3</i>  |
|                                | Ysaÿe, Eugène. <i>Sonate pour deux violons seuls, op. Posthume</i>                         |
| <b>Elementary-Advanced</b>     | Berio Luciano. <i>Duetti per due violini</i>   |
|                                | Hindemith, Paul. <i>Paul Hindemith: Sämtliche Werke. VII,3: Sing- Und Spielmusik III</i>   |

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