The Bel Canto Cello

A study of violoncello playing in Italy in the 19th century.

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Abstract

The violoncello was ‘born’ of the violin family in Italy during the 16th century. In the ensuing hundred years, Italian cellists guided the course of development of violoncello playing. As a consequence of their teaching and concert activities, numerous Italian cellists of this period enjoyed fame at home and abroad. Today, these 17th- and 18th-century virtuosi are still acknowledged in print and in performance. However, the legacy of their 19th-century compatriots largely has been ignored. This dearth of information in contemporary literature about 19th-century Italian cellists represents a significant lacuna. Save for the compositions and concert activities of Alfredo Piatti, little is known today about the principal 19th-century Italian exponents of the cello, the sorts of music they played, and how they played it. Given the significant and widely-acknowledged role Italian cellists played in the development of the cello in preceding centuries, this is surprising.

This study sought first to identify key 19th-century Italian cello virtuosi and teachers, and to investigate and describe their performance practices based on an examination of relevant compositions, method books, and reviews of their concert activities. However, in doing so, it soon became apparent that the topic has a much broader significance for the history of 19th-century performance practice than was originally thought. Reference is made to bel canto in cello sources of the period. Bel canto is a term otherwise identified exclusively with singing. This is an aspect of Italian cello playing that distinguishes it from other national schools of that era. Bel canto as a concept has long been treated as somewhat of a ‘mystery’, and thus misinterpreted and misunderstood in recent times. Furthermore, its relevance to instrumental performance has been almost completely overlooked in the literature. Though the tradition of bel canto experienced a rapid decline in vocalism in the latter half of the 19th century, it was lovingly nurtured by Italian cellists well into the 20th century.

Thus far, the cello methods of 19th-century Italian cellists have not been included in studies of 19th-century violoncello playing, or of 19th-century performance practice generally. Some Italian violin sources, generally more comprehensive in scope than cello sources, have been included in the latter studies. However, cello sources represent a valuable and unique source of information about the then contemporary performance
practices in Italy, about which little is published. Furthermore, they offer an entirely
new perspective on the bel canto aesthetic and its expression in instrumental contexts.
By considering cello, violin, and vocal sources together this study achieves a more
comprehensive understanding of the bel canto aesthetic; its basic principles, influence,
and expression, and thus of 19th-century performance practices generally.
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Introduction

The violoncello is generally thought to have evolved in Italy during the first half of the 16th century. The earliest models show considerable variation in size, shapes, tunings, number of strings, and playing techniques, and were ascribed a variety of names. Antonio Stradivari’s model of around 1707-1710, the “Forma B”, eventually became the structural norm, and the progenitor of the modern instrument to which we refer as ‘violoncello’ today.

For at least a hundred years after its inception, Italian cellists guided the course of development of violoncello playing. As a consequence of their teaching and concert activities, numerous Italian cellists of this period enjoyed fame at home and abroad. Names such as Gabrielli, Jacchini, Franciscello, Platti, Leo and Boccherini are still familiar to the contemporary cellist. The achievements of those 17th- and 18th-century virtuosi are acknowledged today both in literary discourse and on the concert platform. However, we are less familiar with the legacy of their 19th-century compatriots. The dearth of information in contemporary literature about 19th-century Italian cellists is surprising. With the exception of Alfredo Piatti, questions about the activities of individual cellists, the existence of regional “schools” or styles of playing, and repertoire written for the instrument during this period in Italy, are addressed only superficially, if at all. Is one to understand from this that Italy was bereft of creativity in cello composition and performance for some hundred years? Given the significant role that its cellists played in the development of the cello in preceding centuries, this is unlikely.

Napoleon’s invasion of Italy in 1796 was the prelude to a series of wars and insurrections, the effects of which drastically changed the political and social fabric of the Italian states in the ensuing 60-70 years. Royal patronage of musicians ceased and numerous monasteries, with their associated orchestras, choirs and schools, were dissolved. This constituted the loss of two of the most influential sources of patronage and promotion of music and musicians in Italy at the time. Instrumental musicians were particularly hard-hit by these changes. Many musicians were forced to seek their

livelihood and fame elsewhere. Hence, a number of notable instrumentalists, such as Piatti, Dragonetti and Paganini left Italy for England, Germany, Austria and France. What became of those who remained?

At the same time, Italian opera gained unprecedented, international attention and became the country’s principal musical export. This prolific development of opera in 19th-century Italy appears to have captured the attention of our contemporary historiographers to such an extent as to overshadow their perspective on developments in composition and performance practice of Italian instrumental music throughout that era. Some new operas provided a pleasant distraction from a volatile political climate; others gave expression to the nation’s growing fears and concerns. Many 19th-century Italian operas contain cello soli that pose significant challenges to the performer on both a technical and an expressive level. This was not a new development; many 18th-century Italian opera composers had favoured the cello as an obbligato instrument in opera arias. Evidently, in the 19th century there were still cellists in Italy who were capable of meeting such technical and expressive challenges.

Cello playing in Italy during the 19th century followed a different course from that taken elsewhere. Whereas many cellists on the other side of the Alps focused on developing the technical and virtuosic capabilities of the instrument, Italian cellists increasingly turned their attention to exploration of how to express the range of ‘vocal’ capabilities of the cello, at this time when, in Italy, vocal music was preeminent. It is commonly recognized that Italian vocal music of this period was highly individualistic in character and style. Perhaps surprisingly, but by no means coincidentally, so it was with Italian cello playing. The significant influences of Italian opera on 19th-century Italian cello playing cannot be ignored. These influences manifested themselves principally in:

- A proliferation of compositions for cello in the form of “fantasias” and “caprices” on opera themes, as well as compositions which were generally conceived in an operatic style, and
- The incorporation of elements of vocal technique and style in Italian cello performance practice.

19th-century Italian cello methods and literature refer to the importance and centrality of bel canto, a concept which, in recent times, we have tended to associate almost
exclusively with singing. This aspect of Italian composition and cello playing needs serious consideration as we attempt to address adequately the under-representation of information on 19th-century Italian performance practice in contemporary histories of cello playing. *Bel canto* both distinguishes the Italian from other national schools of that time (about which much is already known), and enables a more comprehensive understanding of those schools; for many of the Italian performers who left Italy continued the tradition through their teaching and example elsewhere. Piatti, for instance, taught numerous cellists at the Royal Academy in London, who later became distinguished performers and educators themselves, among them Hausmann, Stern, Becker, Whitehouse, and Squire. Furthermore, a study of 19th-century Italian cello playing offers an important, new perspective on the Italian vocal practices of that era and *bel canto* aesthetic generally.

This study focuses on information contained in 19th-century Italian cello methods, and 19th-century Italian editions of other cello methods. It also includes two 20th-century Italian cello sources by Luigi Forino, as primary sources. Luigi Forino (1868-1936) was a student and devoted disciple of his father, Ferdinando Forino (1837-1905), and therefore clearly a product of the 19th-century Italian school. The principal cello sources consulted in this study are the methods of Rachelle (1825), Merighi (exact date of publication unknown, but probably between 1850 and 1870), Braga (1873), F. Forino (1876), Quarenghi (1877), Kummer (revised by Piatti) (1877), Piatti (exact date unknown, but certainly late 19th century), Magrini (circa 1889), Loveri (1899), and L. Forino (1905 and 1919). Many of these sources have not been included in studies of 19th-century violoncello playing, or 19th-century performance practice thus far.

In the absence of any known Italian cello sources from the early part of the 19th-century, four major violin sources from the 18th and early 19th centuries have been consulted, as they may be considered to be representative of 18th- and early 19th-century string performance practices generally. These are the methods of Tartini (ca. 1752-1756), Geminiani (1751), Galeazzi (1791), and Campagnoli (1791). Two works by Francesco Sfilio, whose teacher was Camillo Sivori, Paganini’s only student, have been taken as representative of the mid 19th-century Italian violin school, as it was understood and practiced in the late-19th century. These are the *Nuova Scuola Violinistica Italiana* (first published 1934), and *Advanced Violin Technique* (first published 2002).
Singing methods illustrate the history of *bel canto* and its expression in the vocal context. Principal sources from this literature include the methods of Corri (1810), Lablache (1842), Manuel García II (1847 and 1872), F. Lamperti (1864), Marchesi (1877), and G. B. Lamperti (1905).

19th-century concert reviews of cellists, violinists and singers provide additional information on the *bel canto* aesthetic, as well as more general information about contemporary style, practices, and tastes. The vocal sources afford an insight into the *bel canto* tradition as it was originally expressed in singing. The violin and cello sources offer new perspectives on the aesthetic through its expression in other contexts. Until now, this combination of sources (cello, violin, and vocal) has not been considered together in this way.

The following pages examine the performance practices of 19th-century Italian cellists as represented in their didactic works and compositions, and in the then contemporary reviews and reports about their playing. We will see that the rules and assumptions gained from our knowledge of the more familiar 19th-century Franco-Belgian and Austro-German cello playing traditions cannot simply be assumed to be validly representative and interpretative of the less well known Italian context. This study addresses some of the questions about this neglected area of cello history, and sheds new light on the *bel canto* aesthetic and its implications for our understanding of 19th-century vocal and instrumental music generally.
1. \textit{Bel canto}

\textbf{A definition of ‘\textit{bel canto}’}

The term ‘\textit{bel canto}’ is elusive. By the time it had gained currency in musical discourse in the mid-19\textsuperscript{th} century, much of what it had come to represent was in decline.\textsuperscript{3} Specific meanings were attributed to the term in dictionary definitions after 1900,\textsuperscript{4} however this has not prevented it being used erroneously and ambiguously since then. \textit{Bel canto} literally means ‘beautiful singing’, but it represents more than that. It refers to a compositional style, a vocal technique, and an aesthetic, all of which evolved concurrently and in such a way that no one element could have developed independently of the others.

The origins of \textit{bel canto} can be traced to the emergence of commercial opera in Venice after 1637. Venetian opera of that time, through the works of composers such as Claudio Monteverdi and Pier Francesco Cavalli, adapted the earlier Florentine concept of opera by shifting the focus from dramatic recitative to passages of vocal lyricism. Audiences became increasingly interested in displays of vocal artistry than in the dramatic content of the text, and this resulted in a greater emphasis on arias.\textsuperscript{5} Singer-composers such as Cavalli developed a style of vocal writing which emphasized the beauty of the human voice, with lyrical, sensuous, flowing lines.

These developments soon influenced instrumental performance and composition, with players and composers emulating the new vocal style. The inherent properties and tendencies of the human voice became the basis of an aesthetic, which in turn shaped compositional styles and the performance practices of singers and instrumentalists for centuries. Silva and Baker explain that “…the artist’s inspiration drew its highest

\textsuperscript{5} George J. Buelow, \textit{A History of Baroque Music} (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 85.
potency of expression from the musical properties of the human voice as perfected by all the resources of the art of song.”

The principal aim of music, as it was understood by composers and performers, was to incite an emotional response in the listener. But bel canto, by definition, had always to be beautiful, and this meant that expression had also to conform to certain stylistic and aesthetic standards. Bel canto aimed to incite a sense of wonder in the listener; it charmed through allusion to an idealized world characterized by beauty, communicating on a level outside of the immediate and the obvious. Over time, it developed certain techniques and practices which acquired specific emotional connotations, and were exploited accordingly. Expression was conveyed through stylized means; there was nothing of the exaggerated, raw emotion characteristic of later 19th-century verismo, or Wagnerian drama. Bel canto singing was allegorical, rather than merely rhetorical. The aria for solo voice (da capo aria), with its focus on expressive melody, provided the perfect platform for bel canto to flourish. To simple, lyrical melody, performers added expressive nuance in the form of accent and articulation, rhythmic alterations, colouring, and dynamic and timbral nuance. Additionally, ornamentation (both improvised and written-out) added to the appeal of bel canto melody, evoking awe and wonder in the listener when it was applied tastefully and executed with skill. In bel canto arias, expert singers used the natural resources of the human voice, under the guidance of their impeccable technique and knowledge of style, to express and incite the full range of human emotions.

Amidst evolving genres and changing styles, the basic principles of bel canto composition and singing held sway (at least in Italian music) for approximately 200 years, until the early decades of the 19th century. Giulio Caccini, in his Le Nuove Musiche (1602), had earlier established the fundamentals for expressive singing and rhetorical delivery. He emphasized lightness of emission for the purposes of purity of tone and flexibility of the voice, the latter of which facilitated both nuanced, expressive rendition, and florid virtuosity. Upon this basis, seventeenth-century Venetian opera composers, through their use of the aria, developed the concepts of beauty and

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8 Ibid.
virtuosity in singing. In the nineteenth century, Rossini identified three key elements of *bel canto* singing: a naturally beautiful voice, even in tone throughout its range; careful training that encouraged effortless delivery of highly florid music; and a mastery of style that could not be taught but only assimilated from listening to the best Italian exponents. James Stark’s more recent definition of ‘bel canto’ in *Bel canto, A History of Vocal Pedagogy*, addresses the specific ways in which the aesthetic was realized in both vocal performance and composition:

*Bel canto* is a concept that takes into account two separate but related matters. First, it is a highly refined method of using the singing voice in which the glottal source, the vocal tract, and the respiratory system interact in such a way as to create the qualities of *chiaroscuro*, *appoggio*, register equalization, malleability of pitch and intensity, and a pleasing vibrato. The idiomatic use of this voice includes various forms of vocal onset, *legato*, *portamento*, glottal articulation, crescendo, decrescendo, *messa di voce*, *mezza voce*, floridity and trills, and *tempo rubato*. Second, *bel canto* refers to any style of music that employs this kind of singing in a tasteful and expressive way. Historically, composers and singers have created categories of recitative, song, and aria that took advantage of these techniques, and that lent themselves to various types of vocal expression. *Bel canto* has demonstrated its power to astonish, to charm, to amuse, and especially to move the listener. As musical epochs and styles changed, the elements of *bel canto* adapted to meet new musical demands, thereby ensuring the continuation of *bel canto* into our own time.

**Bel canto as an Italian phenomenon**

*Bel canto* could not have evolved anywhere but in Italy. It was essentially a product of the musical culture which prevailed initially in Venice from around 1640 and later, in all of Italy until the mid-19th century. Language was also an important influence; the melodic expressiveness, articulations, open vowels, clear consonants, and rhythms of spoken Italian are qualities which make it universally pleasing to the ear. Another

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11 Silva, 59.
peculiarly Italian feature of bel canto is the prominence it gave to and inspiration it
drew from, the castrato voice. The history of castrati in Italy is thought to date back to
the mid-16th century. Women were banned from the stage in Rome, as they were from
singing in the Church. Thus, high parts and women’s roles in both sacred and secular
works were sung by boy sopranos and castrati. The unique timbral qualities and
technical capabilities of the castrato voice became the ideal to which all singers aspired.
It is interesting to note that the decline in bel canto coincided with the decline in the
practice of castration for musical purposes in Italy.

Bel canto and the castrato voice

Many celebrated singers and teachers of singing in the 18th and early-19th centuries were
castrati – Tosi, Carlo Broschi (Farinelli), Mancini, Velluti, and Crescentini, to name a few. If the human voice was considered the instrument par excellence at that time, the
castrato was the ultimate voice type. It was highly influential in defining the
characteristics of bel canto in all its expressions: as a vocal technique, as an aesthetic,
and as a compositional style.

One of the effects of orchiectomy was over-development of the rib cage, which allowed
for increased lung capacity. This enabled greater projection of the voice, as well as the
ability to sustain breath flow for an exceptionally long time. Castrati advocated ‘singing
on the breath’ – a way of singing in which the amount and speed of breath released
determined the attack and the quality of a note, and which rejected a tightening of the
throat as a means to these ends. Such control of breath flow allowed castrati to sing with
an easy, effortless legato, and gave them a flexibility which permitted a high degree of
expressive nuance in the line. Farinelli was reported to have been able to hold a note for
a full minute without having to inhale, and to execute a long messa di voce which
astonished audiences. Castrato voices also typically displayed an arresting array of
vocal timbres.

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12 John Rosselli, “Castrato.” In Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online,
13 J. Peter Burkholder, Donald Jay Grout and Claude V. Palisca, A History of Western Music, 8th edition
(New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010), 322.
14 Ibid., 418.
15 Stark, 201.
Not all who underwent castration achieved such success, however the ambition which drove the practice led to a significant investment in the process of educating castrati. They received rigorous and well-rounded musical training, which, according to reports of one singing school in Rome, included the daily singing of difficult and awkward passages, trills, and passaggi. Complementary to this they had to actively cultivate an easy, unaffected demeanour when singing. Their study also encompassed musical theory and instrumental music. They were, by any standards, well-rounded musicians, whose education provided them with an exceptional ability to improvise, as well as to understand musical construction and the intricacies of musical expression.

Bel canto repertoire, with its delicate, sensuous melodies on the one hand, and highly virtuosic passages on the other, suited the agility, flexibility, and expressive capabilities of the castrato voice. Naturally, singers of other voice types tried to cultivate and emulate these same qualities in their singing.

**Bel canto composition**

It is a fact that many roles from the bel canto operatic repertoire were written for specific singers. This of course meant that composers wrote with the unique talents of those singers in mind, writing in ways that were flattering and used their individual vocal abilities to greatest effect. Whilst few would dispute that singers, and especially castrati, had a role to play in the evolution of bel canto, some would challenge the significance given to that role. Celletti argues that composers, more so than singers, were responsible for the creation of bel canto. He maintains that it was through their writing, which was governed by bel canto aesthetic principles, that a particular style of singing emerged:

Schools of singing and types of voice are created, not by singers or by singing teachers, but rather by the most representative opera composers and their librettists, through the writing, the language used, the tessitura, the shape of set pieces and recitatives, the stage situations, and the relationship between singing

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18 Celletti, 9.
and orchestra. The art of bel canto was what it was simply and solely because the composers and librettists, even after the Baroque period, were inspired by the aesthetic I have already outlined, and hence built up musical and theatrical structures which enabled the executants to sing and express themselves in that way rather than another. Thus the ‘belcantists’ are first and foremost the composers, then the librettists, and lastly the singers – assuming, of course, that they are giving artistic performances of the repertory which historically falls within the bel canto period. In any other repertoire, singers are divided simply into those who sing well and those who sing badly.\(^{19}\)

The belcantists gave particular attention to melody. The melody, unlike the text, was to evoke emotion, not describe it. It had a degree of independence from the text and could develop accordingly, permitting of melismata and other ornamental figures wherever these served expressive purposes, and not only on important words or syllables of the text. In fact, ornamentation became a central component of expression in melody; it was not an optional adornment, but something which was essential to evoking the desired emotion in the listener. Therefore, ornamentation had always to be in keeping with the style and character of the melody it embellished. Accompaniment played a secondary role, providing rhythmic and harmonic support. Everything was geared towards enhancing the expressive power of the melody. Italians became famous for their ability to compose beautiful melodies.\(^{20}\) Rossini’s philosophy on melody is summarized in a letter to Filippi:

I shall always be inébranlable [unswerving] in my contention that Italian musical art (especially the vocal aspect) is entirely ‘ideal and expressive’, and never ‘imitative’, as certain materialistic so-called philosophers would argue. Allow me to state my view that the feelings of the heart are expressed and not imitated. (Letter to Filippo Filippi, 26 August 1868).\(^{21}\)

In Zanolini’s Biografia di Gioacchino Rossini, the composer is quoted as having said:

\(^{19}\) Ibid., 9-10.
\(^{21}\) Celletti, 136.
Music is a sublime art precisely because, not possessing ways and means of imitating the truth, it rises above and beyond everyday life into an ideal world... Bear in mind that expression in music is not the same as in painting, and that it consists, not in representing to the life the external manifestation of inner emotions, but in arousing this in the listener.\textsuperscript{22}

In a general sense, \textit{bel canto} composition can be divided into two categories – the simple, \textit{spianato} style, which uses little or no ornamentation, and the florid style, which incorporates extensive divisions and embellishments. Both types are directed towards moving the emotions of the listener, but in different ways. The 17\textsuperscript{th}-century ideal, as expressed by Monteverdi, was that the florid style should represent the symbolic language of mythical and legendary characters and deity, while the \textit{spianato} style conveyed the everyday speech of mortals, as well as idyllic, sorrowful, and poignant expression.\textsuperscript{23} This of course changed as opera took on different subjects, but in both styles compositions typically demonstrate regular, symmetrical phrases which allow the singer to breathe regularly and comfortably. The phrases are often based on set harmonic progressions, and emphasize the important notes of the tonality. Melodies use predominantly stepwise motion, with the occasional addition of a coloratura within the phrase, or a vocalise at the end of it. Difficult passages and cantabile pieces are generally limited to the comfortable middle range of the voice, and sudden leaps are avoided. The extremes of the vocal range are usually approached gradually, often with the use of sequence. If a phrase or section is repeated, it is varied or developed in some way. Initially, much of the responsibility for variation was left to the performer, with the expectation that s/he would improvise embellishments or alterations, however during the course of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, composers increasingly dictated such changes themselves. This was partly due to composers wanting to protect the integrity of their compositions, but also because embellishment had become so integral to the conception of a melody that it was no longer separable from it.

Strings feature most prominently in Italian opera scores. Whereas late 19\textsuperscript{th}-century orchestral parts often compete with the voice on a melodic level, orchestral parts in 18\textsuperscript{th}- and early 19\textsuperscript{th}-century operas generally provide rhythmic and harmonic support to the vocal melody. Exceptions to this occur in arias where obbligato instruments are used in

\textsuperscript{22} Celletti, 136.
\textsuperscript{23} Celletti, 7.
dialogue with the voice, and in purely orchestral numbers, such as overtures and intermezzi. In these cases the writing for instruments typically illustrates vocal influences. The orchestras were small by today’s standards, and the orchestration light, allowing singers to focus more on vocal dexterity, as well as nuance and beauty of sound, than on vocal projection.

**The teaching of bel canto**

While there was no definitive school of bel canto singing in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, certain features are common to Italian vocal methods of the period. Principal foci include breath control, tone, blending of registers, legato, *portamento* (or the carriage of the voice from one note to another), an expansive range, agility, and flexibility of the voice. Methods typically begin with exercises on single notes, then proceed to scales, solfeggi, vocalises, ornamentation, and agility passages. Manuel García II was one of the most prominent teachers of bel canto singing in the 19th century, though he has in recent times been linked to its demise. Paul Newham writes:

> The decline of Bel canto may be attributed in part to Ferrein and García who, with a dangerously small and historically premature knowledge of laryngeal function, abandoned the intuitive and emotional insight of the anatomically blind singers. ²⁴

It is logical to assume that an understanding of the physical processes of vocalization would facilitate the teaching and transmission of good singing. However, with the science available to him at the time, García was able to discern only a very rudimentary, and in some aspects incorrect, picture of vocal physiology. It appears that, to some degree, he abandoned singers’ traditional reliance on experience in favour of an inadequate scientific model, thus adding to the already great level of confusion and misunderstanding about bel canto. It is not the purpose of this chapter to examine the intricacies of 19th-century vocal technique, but rather, to identify the characteristics which shaped them. These had a much broader significance – for, as we will see, they also shaped the techniques and practices of 19th-century Italian cello playing.

Characteristics of bel canto singing

Bel canto opera was emotive in a way that written text alone could not be. It required a level of nuance in performance that the librettist and the composer could only suggest to a very limited extent in notation. Stendhal was of the opinion that Rossini operas were completely unintelligible if they were not sung well.\(^{25}\) The 19\(^{th}\)-century music critic, Eduard Hanslick (1825-1904), writes in an essay on soprano Adelina Patti:

That enthusiastic admirer of Italian art, W. Heinse, once wrote: ‘The Italians are quite right in paying a Gabrielli or a Marchesi five or ten times as much for singing an opera as they pay a Sarti or a Paisello for writing it. The finest composition is a mere skeleton if the melodies are not animated and made beautiful by such voices.’ Although this assertion is questionable, especially if it were to lead to the general assumption that the interpretative artist takes precedence over the creative, there is much to be said for it, particularly as regards Italian opera.\(^{26}\)

According to Hanslick, Patti was able to make what would otherwise be considered superficial and empty works, not only palatable, but thoroughly enjoyable listening.\(^{27}\) This he put down to her musical genius, which comprised intelligence, a good ear, an unfailing memory, and infallible technique. While not everyone was so critical of bel canto opera, most would have agreed with Stendhal and Hanslick in saying that, more than other music, the performance of a bel canto opera determined its reception to an unusually large degree.

So what did a good bel canto rendition entail? A fuller appreciation of the performance practice associated with bel canto singing may be gained by considering reports of its most famous exponents. In the 18\(^{th}\) century, soprano Santa Stella (c. 1686-1759), wife of composer Antonio Lotti, impressed Quantz with her “robust voice, excellent trill, and unexceptionable intonation.”\(^{28}\) She used tempo rubato, and was apparently the first

\(^{25}\) Celletti, 179.


\(^{27}\) Ibid.

\(^{28}\) Celletti, 68.
singer Quantz had heard do so.\textsuperscript{29} Contralto Marietta Alboni (1826-1894), a student of Rossini, reportedly had “a positive horror of forced, harsh sounds”, no doubt instilled by her teacher who was of the opinion that a singer’s sound should always be beautiful and warm.\textsuperscript{30} Stendhal was a great admirer of Giuditta Pasta (1797-1865), whose reported technical deficits were more than compensated for by her powerful expressiveness. She had an infinite palette of colours, nuances and accents, which she always used in new and creative ways. She used \textit{fioriture} with discretion, elegance, and expression.\textsuperscript{31} The voice of mezzo-soprano Adelaide Borghi-Mamo (1826-1901), for whom Braga composed a number of works, is described as warm, mellow and powerful, with the agility typical of a soprano voice. These characteristics were underpinned by a sensitive musicality.\textsuperscript{32}

Celletti names five essential elements for the performance of 19\textsuperscript{th}-century music up to 1840, as outlined in the methods of Manuel García II, Gilbert Louis Duprez and Luigi Lablache:

1) The \textit{messa di voce};

2) Legato singing, defined as the gentle and clean transition from one note to another, and \textit{portamento}, or the ‘carriage’ of the voice over an interval with grace and lightness, without sounding intermediary pitches;

3) Shaping of the musical phrase, and monitoring of the breath accordingly;

4) Dynamic nuance, in accordance with the phrasing and character of the music, and the meaning of the text;

5) The flawless delivery of ornaments.\textsuperscript{33}

Hermann Klein, a student of Manuel García II, also asserted that the qualities of good singing could be summarised in five categories. He argued that only when all of these were present, and supported by “natural instinct, disposition, environment, brains, industry, and general conditions, which are also perfect for the purpose”, could one speak of \textit{bel canto}:

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 139.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 184.
\textsuperscript{33} Celletti, 171-2.
1. Voice (includes ear and physique)
2. Sostenuto (includes breathing, vowel-formation, resonance)
3. Legato (includes the scale, light or dark tone, colour)
4. Flexibility (includes all florid singing)
5. Phrasing (includes diction, expression, and all interpretation).

Based on the evidence examined here, we can make some informed conclusions about bel canto singing as it was practiced and taught by famous 19th-century singers. It required a beautiful voice; an instrument capable of producing beautiful, resonant tone. The singer had to be able to use his or her voice in an expressive way, and such that it was not hampered by technical deficiencies. The voice must be agile and flexible, and able to sustain. For this, a high level of breath control was essential. The registers must be well blended. One must be able to pass imperceptibly from one note to the next, without affecting the resonance or the colour. In terms of the timbres, both light and dark must be possible. The same flexibility of technique which facilitated legato and nuance in simple cantilena lines had also to allow for the performance of florid music and ornamentation. Such figurations were to be executed flawlessly, and with the correct feeling and accent. They were intended for expressive purposes; not to showcase the technical prowess of the singer. Finally, the text was always to be enunciated clearly, and nuance and accent given appropriately such that the meaning of the words was enhanced by the music, and that which could not be expressed in the text was conveyed in the musical line. However, subtlety was essential – it was considered bad taste to exaggerate effects and nuances.

**Bel canto and the cello**

In bel canto opera, instruments take on an overtly vocal character when they play a solo role. Instrumental melodies required the same degree of nuance and sensitivity as vocal ones. Some instruments assumed specific emotional connotations. Luigi Forino was of the opinion that stringed instruments possessed all the necessary resources to express the most profound and intimate sentiments. Not surprisingly, cello solos feature in numerous bel canto operas, such as Bellini’s Norma, Donizetti’s La Favorita, and Lucia di Lammermoor, and the opening to Rossini’s opera Guglielmo Tell. They are often

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35 Luigi Forino, Il Violoncello, il Violoncellista ed i Violoncellisti (Milano: Ulrico Hoepli, 1930), 282.
poignant and lyrical melodies, and reflect what cellists describe as the inherent character of the instrument; serious, sensitive, dignified, majestic and solemn. Interestingly, Italian cellist-composers did not show the same zeal for sonata composition as their Austro-German and Franco-Belgian counterparts; thus, a significant portion of their compositional output consists of fantasias on themes of the most popular bel canto opera tunes of the day, and pieces modelled on vocal types. Bellini’s La Sonnambula, for example, inspired compositions for cello by Piatti, Braga, Quarenghi, Pezze, Moja and Curti. The following review praises Quarenghi’s fidelity to the melodic writing of Donizetti and Bellini, which provided the inspiration for his own compositions:

Professor Quarenghi has published three Fantasie for violoncello, which could more accurately be called Pot-pourris: for such a sweet and passionate instrument, which in its singing simulates and emulates the voice, the system of keeping to the greatest simplicity of melodies is admirable, all the more so if these impassioned melodies belong to the divine inspiration of Donizetti or Bellini. – Therefore in Quarenghi’s compositions and in his original Caprice, the suitability of the transcription to the unique character of the instrument, the elegance of the variations, the brio of the interludes and the cadenzas, and the connections applied to the various thoughts within them is to be sought and commended, rather than musical ideas, modulations, and rare forms. It was only natural then, that cello performance practice be guided by the same principles which governed bel canto singing. Braga insisted that cellists follow the example of great singers and the tradition of Italian bel canto for matters concerning style, interpretation, and phrasing. While Piatti does not mention bel canto specifically in his writing, reports of his playing highlight the same qualities for which the great bel canto singers were admired, such as economy of style, beautiful sound, tasteful phrasing, and impeccable technique. Luigi Forino writes that the cello is the instrument which most closely resembles the human voice, and for this reason, the

36 Guglielmo Quarenghi, Metodo di Violoncello (Milano: Editorio Musicale, 1877), 219.
37 Gazzetta Musicale di Milano, Anno XVI, N. 43 (24 Ottobre, 1858), 342.
38 Braga, 233.
Braga, 11.
cellist must adhere to the vocal tradition in which the art of bel canto is magnificently revealed.\textsuperscript{40} However, he also states that whereas once cellists had looked to singers for guidance in matters of style, interpretation, and phrasing, singers were now forced to turn to cellists, violinists, and pianists for such direction.\textsuperscript{41} It seems that by the twentieth century, singers had lost the art of bel canto phrasing and accentuation. According to Forino, composers’ intentions were frequently ignored, technique had become an end in itself, interpretations were forced and affected, and singers used embellishment inappropriately. He provides a generic definition of bel canto, from which the implications for cellists are clear:

\textit{Bel canto} is the colouring of the phrases according to artistic good taste. As it is in our common language, so too in musical phrases, there is an accent, a smaller or larger inflection in the intensity of sound which delineates the progression of the melodic phrase and makes it clear.\textsuperscript{42}

Forino maintains that the art of beautiful phrasing is rarely inborn; thus, it is the teacher’s responsibility to familiarize the student with the characteristics of good phrasing.\textsuperscript{43} The teacher must also communicate the importance of subtlety in phrasing, as, Forino explains, it is not uncommon for students to exaggerate in their interpretation of the signs of colouring. The student learns, under the guidance of the teacher, to interpret a composer’s markings within the broader context of the piece and in accordance with good taste and good style. Forino acknowledges that there can be numerous ways of interpreting a passage, many of them correct. Individuality is encouraged; the innate musicality of the student must be nurtured, and the teacher must not aim to produce copies of himself. What is not tolerated is a manner of execution which is uncommunicative, even if it is technically sound. The ultimate aim of the performer is to faithfully interpret the composer’s work, and with his performance, to incite the same emotional response in the listener as that which the performer himself has to the work. To achieve this, one must have mastered bel canto (the colouring of phrases according to good taste), and style, which he defines as follows:

\textsuperscript{40} Forino, 282.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 283.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 281.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
Style is the art of presenting ideas with clarity, elegance, naturalness, energy, and strength. It flows from ordered thought and complete balance of our intellectual faculties. It is necessary to adapt our mechanical/technical means to the nature of the piece, and that applies as much to the qualities requested above, as to the peculiarities proper to the various eras and composers. Style is reflected principally in the good and traditional technical execution of the piece... it is closely connected to the mastery of technical means... The correct manner of phrasing, in accordance with correct melodic accent, is one of the essential qualities for possessing beautiful style.\textsuperscript{44}

Because interpretative skills were best learned through example and observation, cello students were advised to listen to the performances of great artists.\textsuperscript{45} Braga recommends that cello students listen to singers,\textsuperscript{46} and lists Pasta, Alboni, Bosio, Frezzolini, Rubini, and Lablache as admirable performers.\textsuperscript{47} Naturally, this was only an option for his contemporaries, and not for posthumous generations, which in part explains the shroud of mystery surrounding bel canto today. Bel canto was a tradition which was reliant principally on performance for its transmission, and one which could only to a limited extent be documented in text. The closest that we can get to experiencing such performances today is through concert reviews. Those pertaining to 19\textsuperscript{th}-century Italian cellists demonstrate a clear concurrence between their performance practices and those which characterized bel canto singing.

Like singers, cellists aimed to convey a sense of ease in the performance of difficult passagework. This required a high degree of technical competence. Quarenghi, while still a student, was praised in one concert review for his exceptional bravura in performance.\textsuperscript{48} Braga was admired for his “irreproachable technique”,\textsuperscript{49} and excellent command of the bow.\textsuperscript{50} Such bravura was not, however, an end in itself, and was only of value in so far as it served expression. This is also made clear in reviews, e.g. we are told that Braga’s excellent command of the bow allowed the melody to “flow in a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{44}Ibid., 299.
\item \textsuperscript{45}Ibid., 302.
\item \textsuperscript{46}Braga, 233.
\item \textsuperscript{47}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{48}Gazzetta Musicale di Milano, (Anno I) N. 37 (Domenica 11 Settembre, 1842), 162.
\item \textsuperscript{49}La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris, (43e annee) no. 9 (27 fevrier, 1876), p. 70.
\item \textsuperscript{50}Gazzetta Musicale di Milano, (Anno XII) N. 21 (21 Maggio, 1854), 167.
\end{itemize}
natural and alluring manner."\textsuperscript{51} Alessandro Pezze embodied technical command and interpretative skill in equally generous measure:

Signor Pezze treated us to the beautiful *Souvenir de la Sonnambula* of Alfredo Piatti. He reached perfection as much in difficulty and refinement as in feeling, and soon he will certainly be deemed worthy to vie with any cellist of renown, not only in Italy, but better still, with those beyond the mountains who are so highly commended to us through French and German sources.\textsuperscript{52}

He demonstrated the same qualities six years later at a concert in London, in which his sound and perfect intonation were also admired:

Pezze, once a student of the Conservatorio in Milan, and now first cellist at Her Majesty’s Theatre, played Mariani’s compositions so sweetly that everyone was left full of admiration. His *cavata*\textsuperscript{53} is vigorous and at the same time very sweet: he plays the adagios with delicate expression; his handling of the bravura passages is frank and assured, and his intonation perfect.\textsuperscript{54}

Braga too was reported to have played with perfect intonation,\textsuperscript{55} and Quarenghi with “excellence of intonation and strength of colouring.”\textsuperscript{56} One review praises Quarenghi for being able to give the necessary colouring and expression to Piatti’s *Souvenir de la Sonnambula*, “without which instrumental composition is not fit to capture the attention of the public.”\textsuperscript{57} Merighi, teacher of Piatti, Pezze, and Quarenghi, was no doubt partially responsible for the expressive playing of his students. An 1827 review of his performance of an *a solo* in the opera *Zaira*, by Antonio Cortesi, refers to him playing with “perfect accent” in a manner that was pleasing to all.\textsuperscript{58} This was likely to have been the progenitor of Pezze’s “impassioned and touching accent.”\textsuperscript{59} Pezze possessed not only a great mastery of the bow, style, and expression, but also a warm sentiment

\textsuperscript{51} *La Musica*, (Anno I) N. 9 (27 marzo, 1855), 71.
\textsuperscript{52} *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, (Anno X) N. 25 (20 Giugno, 1852), 112.
\textsuperscript{53} Refer to page 22 for a discussion of *cavata*.
\textsuperscript{54} *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, (Anno XVI) N. 32 (8 Agosto, 1858), 258.
\textsuperscript{55} *La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris*, (43e annee) no. 9 (27 fevrier,1876), 70.
\textsuperscript{56} *L’Italia Musicale*, (Anno II) N. 48 (Sabato 13 Luglio, 1850), 189.
\textsuperscript{57} *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, (Anno VIII) N. 28 (14 Luglio, 1850), 119-20.
\textsuperscript{58} *I Teatri*, (Tomo I) Parte I (13 settembre, 1827), 364.
\textsuperscript{59} *L’Italia Musicale*, (Anno V) N. 50 (22 Giugno, 1853), 200.
which was greatly appreciated by audiences.\textsuperscript{60} One critic was particularly impressed to observe these qualities in Pezze, in light of his still youthful age:

Pezze is a young man of tall and noble stature, who, if he did not commend himself for utmost bravura, would do so, and does so for his bearing; a young man just out of the Milan Conservatorio, who already plays the cello with the ability of an expert artist. The fine player is especially competent in the adagios, in the expression, and in the feeling. Here he is unparalleled; his bow speaks, quivers, laments, touches your heart in every way, with the eloquence of his gentle mastery. And, he is equally strong in the pieces which call for bravura, as in the impassioned and the plaintive ones... Precisely his management of the bow is most wonderful, he either caresses the strings, with soft movement, in the legato notes, or he hits them, striking in the staccatos...\textsuperscript{61}

The reviewer also draws attention to Pezze’s demeanour, which is described as noble. Similar accounts were given of Piatti, who was described as having a humble and somewhat reserved countenance. This may also have been a characteristic of the cellists of Merighi’s ‘school’:

Signor Pezze... was above ordinary praise. He possesses qualities of style that are entirely his own. The cello is coloured and enlivened under his bow, enriching itself with all the gradations between forte and piano. To refinement he adds strength, and his ever restrained manner recalls the sage school of the famous Merighi...\textsuperscript{62}

Vainglory was not compatible with the performance ethic of Italian cellists; they strove for sincerity and integrity in their communication with the audience. Braga was openly critical of what he saw as the misguided virtuosity of performers such as Paganini and Servais.\textsuperscript{63} These attitudes reflect Italian cellists’ understanding of the inherent character or nature of the instrument, which they described as noble, simple and humble. Their manner of playing the instrument, and the music they composed for it, embodied the same qualities. In fact, one might say that bel canto itself required a certain humility in

\textsuperscript{60} Gazzetta Musicale di Milano, (Anno XI) N. 26 (26 Giugno, 1853), 116.
\textsuperscript{61} L’Italia Musicale, (Anno V) N. 67 (20 Agosto, 1853), 268.
\textsuperscript{62} Gazzetta Musicale di Milano, (Anno X) N. 50 (12 Dicembre, 1852), 223.
\textsuperscript{63} Braga, 11.
the performer – s/he was to surrender himself completely to the service of the music and its expressive requirements, and not use it as a vehicle for personal aggrandisement. The demise of bel canto in singing may be partially attributable to the diva culture to which so many singers fell victim. When they themselves became more of a focus than the music they sang, the bel canto aesthetic was compromised. Italian cellists, on the other hand, probably by virtue of their relative lack of notoriety and the general public’s minimal interest in purely instrumental music at the time, seem to have retained a more humble perspective on their role and remained immune to such distortions. Another review illustrates the simple, unaffected manner of Pezze’s expression:

Pezze is already known favourably by the Milanese, and is in fact one of the most distinguished players of this difficult and most pleasing instrument. His cavata is strong, mellow, and pervasive: his intonation faultless: the expression most very pure, not affected; his effects are natural, and do not feel like charlatanry.  

It appears that what audiences were most responsive to in cellists was their direct and unaffected manner of expression. The following review of a concert given by Luigi Venzano (1815-1874), a student of Pietro Casella, illustrates his appeal:

Venzano’s notes are so sweet and expressive that they go straight to the soul, and every time that he performs, even something of little importance, he possesses the secret magic of rousing the approval of the audience.

The key was to be expressive, but not in an over-done way. The expression had to be genuine, sincere, and within the context of good taste and style. Braga was admired for his naturalness, good taste, and elegance with regards to his execution of cantabile passages and ornaments.

Beautiful sound is another quality frequently associated with fine cello playing in reviews. Beautiful sound could be soft, sweet, strong, robust, round and vibrant. Similarly, a delicate touch and highly nuanced colouring never went unnoticed. A

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64 Gazzetta Musicale di Milano, (Anno XIV) N. 52 (28 Dicembre, 1856), 414.
review from *La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* praises Braga for his delicate playing, which was “full of charm”.\(^6^7\) Other reviews make a feature of the sweetness of his sound, and the melodies he drew from the instrument.\(^6^8\) However, the cellist who seems to have embodied *bel canto* principles more than anyone else was Alfredo Piatti. His cellist colleagues acknowledged him as the master among the greats.\(^6^9\) Furthermore, he was acknowledged as the master ‘singer’:

...But much more than the perfect execution of the difficult passages, we admire and love Piatti for the way in which he sings; that is, his music is truly singing and it is precisely that singing which we hear in our souls. Without the help of words, without the scenery, without the charm that is natural in the human voice, and devoid of any idea of drama, when he plays the notes – those divine notes of the *Adagio*, *Ah non credea mirarti*? – what movements of the soul are not stirred within us? And when Piatti plays that *Adagio*, one understands – and we might almost say one sees – how miserable today’s singers are, and of what little value their gifts are (which are the only things they can boast of) – robust voices and strong lungs...\(^7^0\)

**Conclusions**

*Bel canto* has not always been well understood. Originally, the term was used to designate a style of singing cultivated in Italy between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. By the time it gained currency, the practices associated with it were already in decline. However, the disappearance of *bel canto* from Italian singing did not entirely spell its end; for the vocal practice had been merely one expression of a more general aesthetic, which penetrated all aspects of Italian music-making, beginning with composition and extending to instrumental playing as well. *Bel canto* took its inspiration from the human voice. It was based on the premise that the speaking voice is naturally expressive; it communicates the emotion of the speaker in ways which intensify the words s/he is uttering, and that such natural, expressive qualities should form the basis of expression in singing. The aim of *bel canto* was to appeal to the

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\(^6^7\) *La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris*, (43e année) no. 9 (27 février, 1876), 70.
\(^6^8\) *L’Italia Musicale*, (Anno VII) N. 19 (7 Marzo, 1855),75.
\(^6^9\) Braga praised Piatti’s playing most highly in his * Metodo per Violoncello*, 11.
\(^7^0\) Quoted in Barzanò and Bellisario, 242.
listener on an emotional level through the emotive power of vocal melody. Melody achieved such power by virtue of its beauty; through beauty one could evoke wonder, rapture, and a sense of a ‘higher’ dimension, appealing to the listener not on the level of intellect through words, but on a more instinctual level. Composers composed in ways which were conducive to this end, and which promoted a usage of the voice that was natural and flattering. Vocal styles and techniques evolved which used the natural, inherent qualities of the voice to best advantage, and were representative of the aesthetic principles of bel canto.

Bel canto was thoroughly Italian in origin. It was shaped by the peculiarities of the Italian language, as well as by currents in the prevailing musical culture in Italy in the years between 1640 and 1850, which focused on monody, vocal forms, and phenomena such as the castrati, and all the special qualities unique to that voice type. Bel canto was dependent on both beautiful melody and beautiful singing. To be beautiful meant to be expressive and conform to the prescriptions of good taste and style. Thus, beautiful singing was achieved through the performer’s application of a wide range of expressive effects such as portamento, articulation, vibrato, tempo rubato and ornamentation, according to the dictates of good taste. By the 19th century, composers such as Bellini conceived of melody of such expressiveness that these effects were now inseparable from it – composers could no longer rely on performers to improvise them at whim, and so indicated them in scores. Due to the limitations of notation, however, the performer was still afforded a great degree of liberty in the interpretation of such indications. This had significant implications for the teaching of bel canto. Interpretation is not a skill which can be learnt through literary instruction alone – it requires good example in performance. Thus, the tradition of bel canto performance practice was, to a large extent, transmitted aurally.

Not having the benefit of this aural tradition today, it is necessary for us to consider both the teaching of the great bel canto singers as it is expressed in their method books, as well as critical accounts of performances, in order to understand the aesthetic and its broader applications. The foci of these documents indicate what was considered most important, admirable and noteworthy in bel canto performance. This includes such qualities as beautiful sound, perfect intonation, expressiveness, superior technique, a wide range which was even throughout, a variety of timbres, and a knowledge of taste and style which enabled singers to use the instruments of expression (such as
articulation, tempo rubato, vibrato, *portamento*, ornamentation) in a tasteful and appropriate manner.

Based on the assumption that melody could be expressive independently of text, it was natural that *bel canto* could be applied also to instrumental performance. The most obvious context for the application of *bel canto* to instrumental playing was in opera, where instruments were given vocal-style melodies, either alone or in dialogue with the voice. The use of the cello in this context is revealing in that it indicates firstly that the instrument was considered to be comparable with the human voice in terms of its range and expressive capabilities, and secondly, that it was most suited to a particular style of expression, which was lyrical, solemn and majestic, rather than playful or showy. The second assertion is given added credence through evidence that 19th-century Italian cellists believed their instrument to have an innate character which reflected these same traits. They themselves composed works for the instrument, which were either directly based on *bel canto* operas, or resembled them in compositional style. In addition, their performance practices mirrored those of vocalists. Thus, all the necessary criteria by which *bel canto* could be cultivated in cello playing were fulfilled.

Italian cellists were particularly admired for their expressiveness. Unlike many Austro-German and Franco-Belgian cello virtuosi of the time, they were less inclined to shallow displays of virtuosity, and cultivated a humble attitude to the instrument which eschewed affectation and showiness. This may explain in part why the *bel canto* tradition endured longer in Italian cello playing than it did in singing. Singers had long been bedevilled by the cult of the operatic diva, which often drew attention to the individual merits of a particular singer at the expense of the expressive demands of the music. In addition, the requirements of mid-to-late 19th-century Italian operatic composition (heavily influenced by Wagner) placed new expressive demands on singers; demands which were incompatible with the *bel canto* aesthetic, such as loud singing, and a focus on what was seen to be ‘real’ and ‘true’ depiction of emotion, unrelated to notions of beauty, allusion, and allegory.

Italian cello composition, on the other hand, was less receptive to such influences, and provided a safe haven in which it was possible for many Italian cellists to keep the *bel canto* performance tradition alive. In the mid-nineteenth century, the name ‘*bel canto*’ was given to a style of vocalism which had been in practice for centuries, but which was
waning. This style of vocalism had been shaped by an aesthetic which had as yet to be clearly defined. Singers and operatic composers could not be relied upon to do this, as their attention had already turned elsewhere. Cellists, however, through a continued practice of bel canto which was peculiarly their own, were helping to define the aesthetic more clearly and in a much broader sense. For this reason, the performance practices of 19th-century Italian cellists provide a valuable source of information on bel canto for instrumentalists, singers, and scholars alike.

The subsequent chapters of this thesis will examine specific aspects of bel canto performance as they are expressed in 19th-century Italian cello playing; namely sound, tempo and rhythm, portamento, and vibrato.
2. Sound

19th-century Italian musicians had a predilection for beautiful sound. This is not surprising, considering it was a feature of *bel canto* style. Scottish musicologist and music critic, George Hogarth (1783-1870), explains:

...for the beauty of sound itself, and of vocal sounds in particular, as being the finest of all sounds, is held by the Italians to be one of the chief sources of pleasure derived from music.  

The Italians’ attention to sound attracted both admiration and criticism abroad. While many saw it as a positive feature of their musicianship, others viewed it as a manifestation of an inherent superficiality. Wagner famously described the Italian singing school as merely being concerned with “whether that *g* or *a* will come out roundly”. Other referred to it as “vocalization devoid of content”. Beautiful sound was equally important to Italian string players. They believed that, like the human voice, stringed instruments were capable of an infinite variety of timbres throughout a wide dynamic range, this being one of their finest assets. Luigi Forino writes:

A fine sound in its numberless variety of intensity and tone-colour constitutes the greatest charm of the bow stringed instruments.

Alfredo Piatti, a native from Bergamo (dubbed the “city of singers”75), was admired for his ability to ‘sing’ on the cello. An 1843 review of a concert in Parma praises his unique sound for its combination of “strength, clarity, sweetness, and durability.”77 Evidently it was also distinguished for its variety:

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71 Stark, 178.
73 Ibid.
75 A review from the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* (14.3.1838), 181, states: “Er heißt Carlo Piatti und ist aus der berühmten Sängerstadt Bergamo”. Some of the most celebrated singers and opera composers came from Bergamo and its surrounds, including Legrenzi, Rubini, and Donizetti.
76 *Il Pirata*, 10.4.1838.
77 *Gazzetta di Parma*, 22.3.1843.
...he drew many sounds from the eloquent instrument, he emitted many of them, all passing through the inextricable paths of the harmony. To me, those sounds resembled distinct voices, marvellous, prophetic; unless I deceive myself, every syllable preserved and expressed an idea.  

The abundance of cantabile writing in the works of 19th-century Italian cellist-composers, a considerable proportion of which were based on popular contemporary opera melodies, provided cellists ample opportunity to demonstrate beautiful and highly-nuanced sound. In this, they strove to emulate the sound and style of the best singers of the day. This, of course, was not a new idea; it is something that instrumentalists have always tried to do. Therefore, it is not surprising that cellists used explicitly vocal terminology when referring to sound; many employed the word voce (voice) to designate cello sound. Braga describes “broad, impassioned, vibrant singing” (canto) as one of the principal attributes of a good cellist. He criticizes players who imitate Paganini’s technical bravura (such as Belgian cellist, Servais), saying that they do so to the detriment of their sound. Instead, he recommends that cellists follow the example of good singers, on the basis of the many similarities between the cello and the human voice. He likens the function of the bow to that of the human lung:

The bow is to the cello what the lung is to the voice; that is, not only a source of emission, but an efficacious mechanism whose task it is to regulate and more or less mould the voice.

Luigi Forino writes that beautiful sound requires diligence, a good ear, and a high degree of technical skill. Firstly, one must be able to conceptualize beautiful sound, and then be able to realize the aural concept physically. This is a skill which requires assiduous practice to learn and then maintain.

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78 Giornale della Provincia di Bergamo, (27.4.1838).
79 Figaro, (11.4.1838), 115-16.
80 Pietro Rachelle, Breve Metodo per imparare il Violoncello (Milano: Gio Ricordi, 1825), 6.
81 Braga, 11.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid., 233.
84 Luigi Forino, La Tecnica, vol. 5, 119.
85 Ibid.
What constituted ‘beautiful sound’ for a 19th-century Italian musician? Both cellists and singers listed particular qualities of sound that they considered desirable, including: sweetness, clarity, lightness, limpidity, vibrancy, evenness, warmth and fullness. However, such descriptors of sound are vague and therefore open to subjective interpretations and realizations. Alternatively, descriptions of the technical methods for production of desirable sound could be stated more objectively, be therefore less susceptible to variability in interpretation, and facilitate a more accurate reproduction of the sound described, with its specific qualities such as volume, intensity and resonance. A combination of such objective and subjective textual descriptions could bring us closer to understanding and recreating the ‘beautiful sound’ for which 19th-century Italian cellists were renowned.

**Descriptions of sound**

The word *cavare* literally means “to extract” or “to dig out”. The term *cavata* is most commonly used by Italian string players to refer to tone production, or the quality of sound drawn from the strings. Quarenghi’s definition, however, also extends to wind instruments:

> The manner of obtaining sound from the instrument. It is used only for stringed and wind instruments.  

He recommends a bright *cavata* and even timbre:

> Consider your *cavata*, which by this time will have gained greater force, and take care to keep it bright, and always even in tone.  

According to an 1853 review, Braga’s *cavata* was a noteworthy feature of his playing:

> His touch, his *cavata*, the sweetness, the perfect intonation, and more than everything, the very delicate *portamento*, make him worthy of that resounding praise which was spontaneously called out.  

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86 Quarenghi, 56.
87 Ibid.
Luigi Forino cites *cavata* as one of the most important qualities for a cellist, and compares the beautiful and robust *cavata* to the beautiful and robust voice of a singer.\(^{89}\) He associates it with “strength and vigour in the sound”, and defines it as follows:

...the quantity of sound combined with a beautiful quality, with a beautiful timbre.\(^{90}\)

Forino thinks it is a rare quality, intrinsic to the player; and if one is endowed with a *bella cavata*, it will be revealed at an early stage. The *bella cavata* cannot be reduced to a set of physiological precepts, and essentially cannot be taught. Technical directives alone were considered to have only a limited potential for improving *cavata*; first and foremost, one had to assimilate the characteristic qualities which 19\(^{th}\)-century Italian musicians associated with beautiful sound.

**Chiaroscuro**

The term *chiaroscuro*, which literally means ‘light-dark’, is used in the visual arts to refer to the strong contrasts in illumination that suggest three-dimensional volume and emotional effects.\(^{91}\) The term is also used in musical discourse, most frequently in connection with singing, to refer to a particular quality of sound. Classical Italian vocal methods advocate *chiaroscuro*, or ‘light-dark’ tone, in which the sound simultaneously demonstrates qualities of depth, darkness and roundness, coupled with a bright, clear, resonant edge.\(^{92}\) While most, if not all, singers of the Classical Italian School espoused *chiaroscuro*, they did not always agree on the technical means for achieving it. In the 19\(^{th}\) century, debate ensued between disciples of the new scientific method of Manuel García II, and those who followed the Lampertis’ (Francesco and Giovanni Battista) more subjective approach. Later in the 19\(^{th}\) century, largely through the work of Hermann Helmholtz, singers acquired a more detailed understanding of vocal resonance and its causes. Helmholtz proposed that tones consist of a fundamental pitch and upper

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\(^{90}\) Ibid, 278.


\(^{92}\) Stark, 33.
partials. He linked resonant tone to an abundance of upper partials.\textsuperscript{93} A recent definition by Richard Miller emphasises the significance of resonance in \textit{chiaroscuro}:

That basic timbre of the singing voice in which the laryngeal source and the resonating system appear to interact in such a way as to present a spectrum of harmonics perceived by the conditioned listener as that balanced vocal quality to be desired – the quality the singer calls ‘resonant’.\textsuperscript{94}

19\textsuperscript{th}-century Italian cellists do not use the term \textit{chiaroscuro} in their methods, however they advocate the qualities associated with it. Rachelle indicates a preference for bright or clear (‘\textit{chiaro}’) tone, writing that, to this purpose, the cellist must exert firm pressure with the left-hand fingers on the strings.\textsuperscript{95} Quarenghi asserts that beautiful sound is “light, bright, and even.”\textsuperscript{96} Braga, who praised Piatti’s sonorous playing,\textsuperscript{97} also identifies three qualities of sound that are desirable: roundness, purity, and vibrancy. These determine the placement of the bow:

\begin{quote}
It is up to the player himself to look for the place where the sound is round, pure, and vibrant.\textsuperscript{98}
\end{quote}

**Importance of the Bow**

In contrast to singers, 19\textsuperscript{th}-century Italian cellists generally agreed on technical aspects of sound production. They focused primarily on bowing, which, according to Quarenghi\textsuperscript{99} and Luigi Forino, should be the foremost concern of the cellist.\textsuperscript{100} Citing Dotzauer, Braga refers to bow management as one of the most difficult aspects of cello technique to master and convey. He advises students to read the German cellist’s theories on bowing, but apply the principles differently.\textsuperscript{101} Braga also finds fault with the French school as represented by Duport, whose method, he claims, need not be read

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., 47.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 33-4.
\textsuperscript{95} Rachelle, 6.
\textsuperscript{96} Quarenghi, 16.
\textsuperscript{97} Braga, 11.
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid., 9.
\textsuperscript{99} Quarenghi, 8.
\textsuperscript{100} Forino, \textit{Il Violoncello}, 271.
\textsuperscript{101} Braga, 8.
Such comments could indicate that Italian cellists used the bow in a manner different from their German and French counterparts, and, as a consequence, produced a different quality of sound. The following extract from Eduard Hanslick’s review of 1858 suggests that Piatti’s sound was superior to that which was usually heard from cellists in Viennese concert halls:

His tone is of a rare beauty, soft, round and full of life. Perhaps for the first time, we noticed that this cellist did not produce that accompanying purring, droning sound from the lower strings, which has rarely been absent even from the playing of the greatest virtuosi.  

In spite of the general consensus regarding its importance, Luigi Forino believed that bowing technique received inadequate attention in cello methods, and that cellists generally did not command the same level of mastery of the bow as their violinist contemporaries.  

19th-century Italian cello methods do, however, discuss the fundamental aspects of bow management, such as hold, placement, and conduct. These factors indicate to us a number of important details about 19th-century Italian cellists’ sound.

**Bow hold**

All of the cello methods consulted in this study agree on the fundamental principles of the bow hold; that the bow is to be held lightly and in a natural manner, without stiffness. Quarenghi writes that the hand should appear to be resting on the bow, rather than sustaining it. Luigi Forino advises that although a slight grip is needed on the bow, this should not inhibit the “pliability and freedom” of the fingers. This has important implications for sound; the fingers are held naturally, rather than rigidly, on the bow, and are therefore able to respond to ‘feedback’ from the string. In this way, the string is allowed to vibrate freely, and thus produce resonant tone. On the other hand, a rigid bow hold can impede the free vibration of the string, resulting in less resonant

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102 Ibid., 11.
103 Barzanò and Bellisario, 240.
104 Forino, *La Tecnica*, vol. 1, IX.
106 Quarenghi, 9.
107 Forino, *La Tecnica*, vol. 1, 18.
tone. This simple relationship between bow hold and sound is illustrated in a comment by Luigi Forino:

For some time, some cellists have adopted the practice of adding a large covering made of rubber or some other material to the usual metal or leather trimming on the stick of the bow. In order to justify this unsightly addition they say that with it, the bow is held more firmly by the fingers. We do not know how to understand this justification, given that greater fluency of the fingers enables greater sensitivity in the bow, this being invaluable, and given that violinists, who in matters to do with bowing can be our masters, have not felt the need for such a thing.\textsuperscript{108}

**Placement of bow**

The position at which the bow was placed on the string, nowadays commonly referred to as the ‘contact point’, is not always described in measurements that can be interpreted precisely. It is located in varying positions within the region extending from midway between the bridge and the fingerboard to a few centimetres from the bridge. All of the cellists agree that, for optimal sound, the same contact point should be maintained throughout a bow stroke, and that the bow should be drawn perpendicularly to the string. Rachelle places the bow “roughly two thumbs”\textsuperscript{109} (two inches, or about 5cm) from the bridge and writes that the bow hair should be turned towards the bridge, implying the use of a full, flat ribbon of hair.\textsuperscript{110}

Braga states that one of the secrets for obtaining an excellent sound is to have the bow hair touching the string at right angles as much as possible. He fixes it at two or three thumbs (two or three inches) distance from the bridge,\textsuperscript{111} adding, however, that this distance varies from player to player depending on the strength of the wrist. He argues that those with a firm hand will be able to place the bow closer to the bridge, and obtain

\textsuperscript{108} Forino, *Il Violoncello*, 245.
\textsuperscript{109} Rachelle, 6.
\textsuperscript{110} Cellists generally tend to tilt the bow slightly towards the fingerboard, and thus play on the edge of the bow hair. The instruction to turn it towards the bridge therefore implies that one play on the flat, rather than the edge, of the bow hair.
\textsuperscript{111} Braga, 9.
a good sound; while those with a weaker touch are obliged to place the bow a little further away from the bridge in order not to produce a shrill or squeaky sound.\textsuperscript{112}

Loveri also positions the bow roughly two-thumbs (two inches) distance from the bridge.\textsuperscript{113} An illustration in his method shows the bow three quarters of the way between the bridge and the fingerboard, closer to the bridge end.\textsuperscript{114} Quarenghi’s measurement is more precise; he places the bow a little further from the bridge, at a distance of about 7 centimetres.\textsuperscript{115} The Augner edition of Piatti’s method positions it two inches from the bridge,\textsuperscript{116} and the Whitehouse and Tabb edition of the same method “about midway between the end of the fingerboard and the bridge,”\textsuperscript{117} with the option of placing it nearer to the bridge if more tone is desired.\textsuperscript{118} Piatti’s edition of Kummer’s method suggests a contact point two inches from the bridge, both “for brilliant passages and for sustained notes”, though this position can be varied at the player’s discretion according to musical demands, as well as the inherent individual qualities of the instrument.\textsuperscript{119}

Luigi Forino’s sources reveal inconsistencies in his placement of the bow. In the English translation of \textit{La Tecnica}, we read that the bow should be placed about 3 inches (7.62cm) from the bridge.\textsuperscript{120} However, the Italian version of the same passage has the bow positioned 5cm from the bridge. In a preliminary bowing exercise recommended in \textit{Il violoncello}..., Forino recommends that the teacher assist the student to maintain the contact point at 3 or 4 centimetres from the bridge.\textsuperscript{121} Photo illustrations in \textit{La Tecnica} show a placement roughly half way between fingerboard and bridge, or ‘ever-so-slightly’ closer to the bridge.\textsuperscript{122} In the third volume of the same method he suggests that the contact point actually varies from string to string:

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{113} Vincenzo Loveri, \textit{Primo Corso del Violoncello} (Firenze: A. Forlivesi e C., 1899), 3.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 4.
\textsuperscript{115} Quarenghi, 9.
\textsuperscript{116} Alfredo Piatti, \textit{Méthode de Violoncelle} (London: Augener & Co. date unknown) vol. 1, 3.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., 6.
\textsuperscript{120} Forino, \textit{La Tecnica}, vol. 1, 19.
\textsuperscript{121} Forino, \textit{Il Violoncello}, 245.
\textsuperscript{122} Forino, \textit{La Tecnica}, vol. 1, 1-3.
As regards the sound, every instrument has, near the bridge, its golden point (varying with every string) where the acoustic result is best.\textsuperscript{123}

Such specifications were given with the aim of providing students the method for producing optimal sound with minimal effort. It was, however, generally understood that the contact point should be varied according to musical demands:

We draw the bow towards the fingerboard in order to obtain the beautiful effect of a very thin sound, of sweet and covered timbre.\textsuperscript{124}

**Conduct of the bow**

Another feature of the bowing technique of 19\textsuperscript{th}-century Italian cellists is the low position of the right elbow, and the relatively passive upper arm, which is kept close to the body. Braga writes that “the upper part of the forearm must be a little lower than the bow stick.”\textsuperscript{125} Rachelle warns the student never to use the upper part of the arm to guide the bow, as this is uncomfortable, tiring, and prevents agility and facility of execution.\textsuperscript{126} Instead, one must use the wrist and forearm, partly so as to keep the bow perpendicular to the strings.\textsuperscript{127}

Piatti’s edition of Kummer’s method has the lower arm generate the bow stroke, with the elbow kept low and close to the body.\textsuperscript{128} Loveri’s approach is similar:

The upper part of the arm must always be near to the body; the forearm must follow all the movements of the bow.\textsuperscript{129}

Piatti’s method addresses the movements of both the wrist and arm in the bow stroke (forearm and upper arm), however, in contrast to Braga’s and Quarenghi’s methods, it

\textsuperscript{123} Forino, *La Tecnica*, vol. 3, 74.
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 79.
\textsuperscript{125} Braga, 9.
\textsuperscript{126} Rachelle, 6.
\textsuperscript{127} Rachelle, 6.
\textsuperscript{128} Kummer, 4.
\textsuperscript{129} Loveri, 3.
states that the elbow should be kept away from the body, but without being raised too high.\textsuperscript{130}

In contrast to the other method writers, Forino emphasizes the inter-connectedness of all parts of the right arm in bowing, and iterates the relevance this has to sound:

\begin{quote}
The Managing of the Bow on which depends principally the purity and beauty of the sound, is based on the movements impressed by the will of our brain to a large number of muscles, giving impulse to the arm, hand and fingers by means of the articulations. All these muscles are perfectly connected between themselves so that no motion, even of the secondary articulations, can be independent. But very often the muscles of the secondary articulations have to remain nearly passive while the others are working. This contrast is rendered possible only by a long practice just as it may be possible to surmount the tendency that has one arm to follow the motions of the other.\textsuperscript{131}
\end{quote}

Like that of Braga and Quarenghi, Forino’s bowing is characterized by a low elbow and comparatively passive upper arm. He attributes specific roles to all parts of the right arm, and emphasises their inter-dependency.\textsuperscript{132}

These indications suggest that Italian cellists aimed to achieve optimal quality and quantity of sound in the most efficient way. Their bow hold, characterized by relaxed, responsive fingers, was conducive to producing resonant tone. Similarly, the low position at which they held the right elbow and upper arm, as well as their sense of the entire limb (shoulder, arm, wrist, hand, and fingers) working as an integrated unit, allowed these cellists to use arm weight, rather than force, to apply pressure to the string. This resulted in optimal volume and resonance, and prevented the sound from becoming forced or harsh.

\textsuperscript{130} Piatti, \textit{Violoncello Method}, ed. Whitehouse and Tabb, iii.
\textsuperscript{131} Forino, \textit{La Tecnica}, vol. 5, 117.
\textsuperscript{132} Forino, \textit{La Tecnica}, vol. 1, 18.
Loose wrist

The loose and flexible wrist was also a characteristic of Italian cello bowing technique. It facilitated string crossings, as well as the execution of both short and long strokes on one string. It allowed for smooth transition between up and down bows which, according to Braga and Quarenghi, should be rendered inaudible. This required flexibility of the wrist in both the vertical and lateral planes. While most of the method writers mention only the vertical aspect, Luigi Forino also considers the lateral movement of the hand:

This movement is always accompanied by a slight bending (flexion) of the hand. This lateral movement of the hand, so largely used in various forms of bowing is also employed in long drawn-out bows, although to a lesser extent, especially in changing the bow, to unite the two sounds.

Ease of movement

Light and effortless delivery was a salient feature of bel canto singing; so too of Italian cellists’ bowing. Not only was their playing to look and sound effortless, it had to be effortless. Luigi Forino writes:

No movement of the bow should be rigid; all the muscles should act freely and without contraction, as if let loose.

A bowing mechanism which was ‘easy’ and devoid of rigidity was necessary for producing beautiful sound. Loveri writes:

To achieve a beautiful sound, it will be necessary to manage the bow with ease and lightness, and to attack the strings without hardness, in perfect accordance with the movements of the bow and those of the fingers of the left hand.

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133 Braga, 10.
134 Quarenghi, 55.
135 Forino, La Tecnica, vol. 1, 41.
136 Ibid., 18-19.
137 Loveri, 3.
Facility, lightness, and coordination in bowing are also the qualities emphasized in Piatti’s method.\textsuperscript{138} It recommends the practice of long, ‘generous’ strokes as being conducive to developing such ease.\textsuperscript{139}

Braga,\textsuperscript{140} Quarenghi,\textsuperscript{141} and Luigi Forino\textsuperscript{142} advise against playing through fatigue. Forino explains that tiredness causes bowing to become stiff.\textsuperscript{143} He recommends lightness in bowing highly florid, slurred passages,\textsuperscript{144} and concludes that lightness in the movements of the right arm results in a more natural, accurate, and elegant execution, and allows the player to play for long periods and “to an advanced age”,\textsuperscript{145} without the risk of fatigue or injury.\textsuperscript{146}

**Intensity of sound**

The *bel canto* penchant for even tone and impeccable legato was expressed in cellists’ concern for control of intensity of sound in all portions of the bow. The ability to regulate intensity of sound allowed cellists not only to play in a legato manner, but also to accent and colour any notes as they wished.\textsuperscript{147} Slow pieces were considered particularly useful for developing this skill, as well as for acquiring strength in the sound.\textsuperscript{148}

Quarenghi declares the aim of one study as being to produce evenness in strength, such that the up- and down-bows, and the notes executed at the heel and those at the tip of the bow, have the same character and intensity.\textsuperscript{149} He also states that because the sound is weaker the further one plays from the heel, there must be a greater amount of pressure on the bow the more the right arm is stretched.\textsuperscript{150} However, control of intensity of sound was not cultivated merely for the purposes of evenness and legato; it also allowed for variation of intensity of sound within a single note. This was particularly relevant for

\textsuperscript{138} Piatti, *Méthode de Violoncelle*, vol 1, 3.
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., 5.
\textsuperscript{140} Braga, 9.
\textsuperscript{141} Quarenghi, 16.
\textsuperscript{142} Forino, *La Tecnica*, vol. 1, 20.
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{144} Forino, *La Tecnica*, vol. 5, 24.
\textsuperscript{145} Forino, *Il Violoncello*, 246.
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{147} Forino, *La Tecnica*, vol. 1, 101.
\textsuperscript{148} Braga, 13.
\textsuperscript{149} Quarenghi, 120.
\textsuperscript{150} Quarenghi, 16 (footnote).
slow movements in which *messe di voce* were executed on long notes. The attention given to the *messe di voce* in vocal and cello methods is indicative of its centrality to *bel canto*, and 19th-century, style. Rachelle introduces it in a preliminary bowing exercise. He writes that the intensity of sound is varied by varying the pressure on the bow.\(^{151}\) Piatti and Quarenghi also include variation of speed of bow as an additional means of varying intensity. Quarenghi states that pressure is applied in inverse proportion to the speed of the bow stroke, because velocity compensates for force.\(^{152}\) Piatti’s method (Stainer and Bell edition) lists increased pressure of the first finger on the bow and increased speed of bow, as well as placing the bow nearer the bridge, as the principal means for increasing tone.\(^{153}\) To these three variables, Luigi Forino adds a fourth - the amount of bow hair in contact with the string. Both Forino and Piatti acknowledge that these variables influence not only the strength of tone, but also tone colour.\(^{154}\)

Good bowing technique required a careful balance of pressure. Rachelle writes:

> If the bow is pressed and managed with too much force, a rough and unpleasant sound will ensue; if too lightly, a weak and weary one. To avoid one and the other deficiency, the student will have to keep the force in balance.\(^{155}\)

Braga warns of the negative effects of excessive bow pressure on the quality and quantity of sound.\(^{156}\) It is interesting that Braga appears to be more concerned about too much pressure being applied to the string than too little. One review describes his *cavata* as “weak”; perhaps this was, in part, symptomatic of his light approach to bowing:

Signor Braga played several pieces with great naturalness, revealing good taste and elegance in the execution of the *cantabile* passages, the trills, and various other ornaments. His *cavata*, according to those journals, is weak but pleasing; excellent handing of the bow.\(^{157}\)

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\(^{151}\) Rachelle, 6.

\(^{152}\) Quarenghi, 24.


\(^{154}\) Forino, *La Tecnica*, vol. 1, 104.


\(^{156}\) Rachelle, 6.

\(^{157}\) Braga, 233.
In Piatti’s edition of Kummer’s method we read that the bow should never be placed harshly on the strings, irrespective of whether one is playing piano or forte.\textsuperscript{158} Luigi Forino also warns against the use of excessive force, and for this reason advises that the right elbow be kept low.\textsuperscript{159} According to Forino, what is most important in sound production is good placement and conduct of the bow. For this, expedient use of the muscular apparatus is needed, but not extraordinary strength:

Only part of the strength, activity and tension of our muscles will have to be employed when using the bow, even when the sound has to be increased. It is by a diligent practice of our motive apparatus that we will acquire the necessary adaptation of these exigencies of the sound. The purity of sound [is founded] especially on the strictness of keeping the parallel existing between the bow and the bridge; on the perfect balance between the oblique pressure and the motion of the bow on the strings; on the fit distribution of the entire strength of the arm in each part of it and in the bow; on the point of the string chosen for the rubbing of the bow; on the vigorous pressure of the fingers of the left hand and, last of all, on the proper distribution of the colophony on the bow hair.

It must not be forgotten that any excitement, nervousness and preoccupation has its repercussion on the management of the bow, disposing to an exaggerated pressure prejudicial to the beauty and purity of the sound.\textsuperscript{160}

Kummer states that a full tone is not dependent on sheer strength, to which Piatti adds:

This is very true, and sometimes a strong and powerful performer produces a much thinner tone than even a child. It is not strength, but skill that gives a pure and rich tone.\textsuperscript{161}

Variation of pressure on the bow was not only useful for the purposes of achieving legato, \textit{messa di voce}, and accents; it also facilitated the easy and agile delivery of passages which were technically challenging, and allowed the cellist to accommodate

\textsuperscript{158} Kummer, 5.
\textsuperscript{159} Forino, \textit{La Tecnica}, vol. 1, 21.
\textsuperscript{160} Forino, \textit{La Tecnica}, vol. 5, 119.
\textsuperscript{161} Kummer, 29.
some of the inherent limitations of the instrument. Cellists, like singers, advocated light delivery of high notes and florid passagework.\textsuperscript{162} Luigi Forino writes:

The pressure of the bow (which is greater in the low notes of every string because of the greater length and elasticity of the string itself) must diminish when going up to the higher tones for the opposite reasons.\textsuperscript{163}

Elsewhere, he writes:

Ascending to the higher positions, the pressure of the fingers on the string must be greater and that of the bow more moderate.\textsuperscript{164}

Knowing just how much to vary the pressure on the bow was a matter of practice and familiarity. It required a discerning ear and a responsive hand. Double stops, which require an exceptional level of cooperation between ear and hand, were thus deemed highly effective for improving both intonation and sound production. Quarenghi writes that they should be practiced in loud and soft dynamics, and always with resonance, achieved by setting the string vibrating at the widest possible amplitude.\textsuperscript{165} Forino states that the expressive execution of double stops requires extraordinary sensitivity of the bow fingers. In monitoring pressure on the bow, the fingers must also be responsive to the thickness, tension, and height of the different strings:

In order to apply colouring effects to double-stopping, an exquisite sensitiveness is required in the bow-fingers. One must measure the pressure according to the thickness of the string and the length of the part of the string which is vibrating. Besides, the string which is being pressed modifies its level with regard of the other and in this case the sensitiveness of the bow-fingers must adapt the necessary pressure.\textsuperscript{166}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[162] Such passages are frequently marked $p$ or $pp$.
\item[163] Forino, \textit{La Tecnica}, vol. 3, 74.
\item[164] Forino, \textit{La Tecnica}, vol. 3, 2.
\item[165] Quarenghi, 147.
\item[166] Forino, \textit{La Tecnica}, vol. 3, 80.
\end{footnotes}
Technical considerations of left-hand fingers in sound production

Unlike many modern schools of technique, Piatti’s edition of Kummer’s method states that the fingers of the left hand must be placed firmly on the strings so that the strings may vibrate freely.\footnote{Kummer, 29.} This is necessary for producing a clear and resonant sound. Rachelle and Luigi Forino also address the role of left-hand finger pressure in sound production. Rachelle writes:

...the sound will be more clear the stronger the pressure of the fingers on the strings.\footnote{Rachelle, 6.}

Luigi Forino writes that to obtain a clear sound, the left hand should exert firm pressure, and the pressure of the bow must be well-regulated:

The notes should sound as clear as possible, the fingers of the left hand pressing the strings firmly and with just the right pressure of the bow...\footnote{Forino, \textit{La Tecnica}, vol. 1, 37.}

It is important that the two hands be able to act independently. While the fingers of the left hand must exert firm pressure, those on the bow should not:

The fingers on the strings should exert much greater pressure than those on the bow, and long practice will make these two forces independent. A bad tone is almost always due to too great pressure on the bow, and not sufficient on the strings.\footnote{Ibid., 25.}

It is necessary then to make the student realize that the pressure of the left-hand fingers, with the lightness of those of the right hand, are in total contrast, and that it is therefore necessary to develop the independence of the two hands little by little, such that they complement one another in strength and softness in their such contrasting uses.\footnote{Forino, \textit{Il Violoncello}, 246.}
Conclusions

Beautiful sound was one of the most notable and admirable characteristics of 19th-century Italian performance practice, and of the bel canto aesthetic generally. Cellists, like other instrumentalists, developed a concept of sound based on the most attractive attributes of the human voice. Emulating chiaroscuro, they strove for a sound which displayed clarity, evenness, lightness, roundness, purity, and resonance. Bowing technique was their foremost concern in this regard. They saw the role of the bow as analogous to that of the breathing and speaking apparatus of the singer, and their use of the bow (bow hold, placement, and conduct) was determined by the same principles of ease and lightness which governed singing technique.

While lyrical, legato writing features most prominently in 19th-century Italian cello compositions, the florid and virtuosic passagework typical of bel canto writing is also strongly represented. Irrespective of the nature of the writing, the delivery was always to appear effortless, and this resulted in the development of a bowing technique which was relaxed and free from rigidity or hardness. Such a technique guaranteed that the sound would not be forced, and that the player could execute demanding passages without fatigue.

Cellists believed that the beautiful cavata, was an intrinsic quality with which the player was either naturally endowed, or not. It required an understanding of sound on multiple levels simultaneously. No amount of technical advice could procure it if one did not first have both an aesthetic and an aural concept of beautiful sound. This was achieved through listening: to the sound of the teacher, to the sound of the foremost performers of the day, and above all, to the sound of the best singers. The student’s understanding of the aesthetic and aural aspects of beautiful sound guided the physical; s/he learnt to use the instrument and muscular apparatus in ways that were conducive to producing that sound. Thus, the aural concept guided the technique. Perhaps this explains why explanations about bowing are somewhat less-detailed in the methods of Italian cellists compared to those from other regions. No doubt bowing is most effectively taught by a teacher who is physically present to the student; however, it seems plausible that Italian cellists took for granted that the teacher would also impart the aesthetic principles which would guide the student’s mastery of the bow. As a result, Italian methods focus only on a few key principles: a natural and relaxed bow hold, placement of the bow at the
optimal sounding point, bowing perpendicularly to the string, and using the fingers, hand, wrist and arm in ways that are natural and requiring of minimal muscular input, so that each part remains responsive and flexible. Guided by these principles, the student would acquire a superior level of technical control, enabling him/her to surmount any technical difficulty, as well as respond freely and spontaneously to the expressive aspect of the music.

Generally speaking, the bow hold advocated by 19th-century Italian cellists was less of a ‘hold’ than a ‘support’ of the bow and its movements; there was no gripping or pressing, emphasis instead being placed on lightness, naturalness and responsiveness. The contact point was to be maintained within a stroke or passage for clean and even sound. In certain cases its location is difficult to pinpoint exactly. Luigi Forino is inconsistent in his measurements. Quarenghi placed the bow at a distance of 7 centimetres from the bridge. This is unusually far from the bridge by today’s standards, as well as being farther than his contemporaries recommended. In Quarenghi’s method, it is stated that the length of the fingerboard is roughly 59 cm. Using his measurements, the length of the area between the end of the fingerboard and the bridge should measure roughly 9.57 cm, meaning that when the bow is placed 7 cm from the bridge, it is 2.57 cm from the fingerboard. This contrasts with Loveri’s illustration, which roughly depicts the reverse situation (where the bow is placed roughly three quarters of the way between the fingerboard and bridge, but closer to the bridge end).

One edition of Piatti’s method places the bow 2 inches (5.08 cm) from the bridge; another, halfway between fingerboard and bridge (which, according to Quarenghi’s measurements, is approximately 5 cm). Braga places it 2-3 inches (5.08 – 7.62 cm) from the bridge. Luigi Forino’s measurements vary the most – 3 inches (7.62 cm), 5 cm, 3-4 cm, and 5.08 cm from the bridge, as well as halfway between bridge and fingerboard.

Thus, the measurements for the contact point range from 3-7.62 cm from the bridge. One could move the bow closer to the bridge for a louder, brighter sound, and further away for a softer, ‘covered’ sound. Braga’s comment that those with a firm hand will be able to play closer to the bridge holds true if the bow hair is not too taut, meaning that one can play with greater pressure closer to the bridge, and weaker pressure further away from it. Luigi Forino’s discussion of contact points, though variable, generally

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172 This is not due to a shorter fingerboard; Quarenghi states that the fingerboard should be roughly 59 cm in length (Quarenghi, 7).
places the bow closer to the bridge than the other writers. In fact, he even complains that his contemporaries neglect the practice of bowing close to the bridge.\textsuperscript{173} Variability in his measurements, as well as the variability in contemporary practices at the time, may have been due to new stringing practices and string-manufacturing techniques, as well as varying preferences regarding the tautness of the bow hair.\textsuperscript{174}

The methods unanimously agree that good sound production requires that the bow be drawn perpendicularly to the string. To this purpose, it is most important that the wrist is flexible. It must be free to move in the vertical plane to effect string crossings, and in the horizontal/lateral plane to effect legato bow changes and to execute short bow strokes. Lateral and vertical movement of the wrist is necessary within long bow strokes in order to maintain the contact point. While all parts of the arm are inter-dependent and move in relation to one another, the wrist and forearm are the most active parts of the mechanism. For the most part, the upper arm is passive and moves as a consequence of the movements of the forearm. The elbow is generally held low and kept close to the body, enabling the player to use the weight of the arm to apply pressure to the string, rather than muscular force. This allows the muscles of the hand and arm to remain flexible and responsive, so that the string may be kept vibrating at sufficient amplitude.

Control of the intensity of sound was important for two reasons: firstly, it allowed the player to realize a seamless legato, ensuring that the intensity of sound could be equally strong at the tip of the bow, as at the frog; and secondly, it allowed for the accentuation or emphasis of particular notes, and for the variation of intensity within them. The latter was especially important in slow movements, in which it was expected that long notes be coloured with \textit{messe di voce} and other ornaments. Braga recommends the study of

\textsuperscript{173} Forino, \textit{Il Violoncello}, 280.

\textsuperscript{174} Braga, though he admits it is largely determined by the personal preference of the player, states that for orchestral playing, the bow hair should be tauter than for solo playing (Braga, 8 and 13). Quarenghi gives more general advice, and his text and illustration (in which the stick is completely straight and parallel with the hair) (Quarenghi, 18i.) suggest a higher degree of hair tension than is commonplace today: “For playing, tighten the hair until the hair and the stick are parallel.” (Quarenghi, 8). For the stick of the bow and the hair to be parallel, the stick has to be straight. This requires an unusually high degree of tension in the bow hair. Piatti’s edition of Kummer’s method, however, suggests a lesser degree of tension: “The tension of the bow, ought always to be so, that the stick should not be quite straight.” (Kummer, 4.). Luigi Forino advises the student initially to apply light pressure with the bow, with the bow hair quite slack. (Forino, \textit{Il Violoncello}, 245). He writes:”The strength of the sound, after all, does not depend on the pressure, that is; some cellists obtain a large sound with loose hairs, while others obtain little sound with taut hair and a lot of pressure.” (Forino, \textit{Il Violoncello}, 245.) Elsewhere, he writes: “The hair should be kept neither too slack nor too taut, when playing one must not touch the stick, neither must one allow that the stick loses its elegant curve because of excessive tension in the hair.” (Forino, \textit{Il Violoncello}, 210).
the *largo* for developing strength of sound. Others, such as Luigi Forino and Quarenghi, recommend practicing double stops for the same reason.

The intensity of sound was varied through the variation of pressure on the bow, variation of the speed of bow, variation of the contact point, and variation of the amount of bow hair in contact with the string. Increasing pressure on the bow was achieved principally through the action of the index finger. Italian cellists generally seem to have been more concerned with not applying too much pressure to the bow, than not applying enough. They never recommend raising the elbow or engaging the muscles of the arm to increase pressure on the bow. In fact, they believe that judicious use of the muscular apparatus, rather than strength, is necessary for producing a good sound. Therefore Italian cellists utilize the weight of the arm to apply pressure on the bow. Such an approach precludes a sound which is forced, and is instead conducive to clarity, lightness, and resonance. Flexion, or turning of the wrist is not generally recommended; only Luigi Forino mentions this, and then only in a specific context: “Bend the right hand for a strong attack at the point of the bow”.

Notes at the upper end of the fingerboard (i.e. of higher pitch) or on higher strings were played with less bow pressure than those at the lower end or on lower strings. What is clearly and repeatedly highlighted in reviews about 19th-century Italian cellists’ playing is their highly nuanced, agile, and generally delicate approach to bowing, and their sweet, resonant and warm sound. No doubt these qualities are more readily achievable with gut strings, but these alone will not suffice for today’s cellist if s/he wants to replicate 19th-century Italian cello sound and expressive aesthetics. The 19th-century Italian cellist had first to understand the aesthetic of sound, and then cultivate a physiological constitution conducive to producing it. Today, devoid of the possibility of hearing early and mid-19th-century Italian performances, and with a different technical, and possibly also aesthetic approach to the instrument, we need to take an alternative approach. We must consider the aesthetic and technical directives contained in 19th-century written sources together, in such a way that each aspect informs the other. Only then will we come to an objective understanding of the significance and meaning of beautiful sound in 19th-century Italian cello playing.

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175 Braga, 13.
176 Forino, *La Tecnica*, vol. 1, 104.
3. Tempo and Rhythm

The practice of modifying tempo and rhythm for expressive purposes was already well-established before 1800. Giulio Caccini advocated the use of *sprezzatura*, which Celletti defines as follows:

...a kind of singing liberated from the rhythmic inflexibility of polyphonic performance and allowing the interpreter, by slowing down or speeding up the tempo, to ‘adjust the value of the note to fit the concept of the words’, and hence to make the phrasing more expressive.\(^{177}\)

Modification of tempo and rhythm for expressive purposes continued into and throughout the 19\(^{th}\) century. It assumed various forms and names, but was commonly referred to as *tempo rubato*. Italian musicians were particularly noted for their use of it. In an 1813 article from the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, the author complains that *tempo rubato* “although effective in rare cases, has become a bad habit of most Italian singers and has led to rhythmic capriciousness and dissolution.”\(^{178}\) Others praised Italians’ use of the device. Chorley admired Giuditta Pasta’s use of tempo rubato and included her name in his 1850 list of the great artists who had the “nicest measurement of time.”\(^{179}\) Evidently *tempo rubato* was still a feature of Italian singing in 1874, when Lemaitre, in his French translation of Tosi’s *Opinioni de’ cantori antichi e moderni*, wrote:

The Italian singers have a manner of delaying the singing, or of losing the precision of the time at will, while the orchestra continues its prescribed movement, which has a great effect, when it is done with taste and when the singer knows how to regain his balance. One cannot give an example of this effect in singing; it is necessary to observe it in performance. This method may be called *vacillare*, which means to vacillate, hesitate, falter, waver, be in suspense.\(^{180}\)

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\(^{177}\) Celletti, 16. (Quoting Giulio Caccini)
\(^{179}\) Ibid., 76-7.
Flexibility in tempo and rhythm could be realized in a number of ways, including:

1) The redistribution of note values and accents;
2) The addition of notes which were not included in the score, or the subtraction of others which were; and
3) The modification of tempo in one or more parts of the texture.

Before 1850, modifications (particularly of the first two types) were seldom marked in scores. Such indications did start to appear in the latter part of the century, however it is difficult to ascertain precisely how and to what extent 19th-century cellists used the above techniques. We will see that whilst the cello methods establish that a degree of flexibility in tempo and rhythm was permissible and even considered necessary for expressive performance, they do not give specific advice regarding appropriate methods and contexts for its use. Violin and vocal methods of the period are more forthcoming in this respect. We will see that Italian cello compositions from the latter part of the 19th century reflect practices described in earlier vocal and violin sources, through the notation of modifications which would have been improvised by performers in earlier times. These notated modifications are expressed in various types of accent, articulation and dynamic markings; the use of terms associated with tempo modification; as well as terms associated with character, such as *stentato* (laboured), *con abbandono* (with abandon), and *con slancio* (impetuously). However, underpinning such modifications were concepts of time and rhythm that, in some important aspects, are different to common understandings of these concepts today when realised in performance.

**Time, rhythm and meter**

The following extract from Garcia’s *A Complete Treatise on the Art of Singing* reflects a 19th-century musician’s understanding of time. In it we see that time, as it is expressed in the beat, is not simply an absolute temporal measurement to which the musical execution must conform (in the manner in which it is commonly understood today), but rather, it is a quantity which can be moulded according to the needs of the music:
Time, by the regularity of its progress, gives the music steadiness and cohesion; its irregularities lend the performance variety and interest.\(^{181}\)

19\(^{th}\)-century musicians had a sense of malleability of time, seeing in it possibilities for expressive liberties rather than merely temporal constraints. Since the invention of the metronome in the second decade of the 19\(^{th}\) century, musicians have been able to measure more accurately and ‘keep’ time in performance. A brief survey of recordings from the early 20\(^{th}\) century to the present day will indicate that today’s musicians are, generally speaking, more rigid and exacting in their adherence to a regular pulse than was common 100 years ago. Time is now commonly considered a regulated absolute to which we are obliged to conform obediently. Nowadays, it is not uncommon for the expression ‘rhythmical’ to be equated with ‘metronomic’, such that ‘rhythmical’ playing is understood to be that which strictly adheres strictly to a regular pulse. However, such an understanding is inappropriate when applied in the context of performing 19\(^{th}\)-century Italian music because it fails to recognize the broader definition of rhythm that was prevalent at the time. Evidently such misinterpretations were already prevalent at the end of the 19\(^{th}\) century; in the 1890 edition of his *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, George Grove saw it necessary to clarify what rhythm was not. He defines it as “the systematic grouping of notes with regard to duration”,\(^{182}\) and writes:

> It is often inaccurately employed as a synonym for its two subdivisions, ACCENT and TIME, and in its proper signification bears the same relation to these that metre bears to quantity in poetry.  
> ...Thus we see that the proper distinction of the three terms is as follows:-  
> **Accent** arranges a heterogeneous mass of notes into long and short;  
> **Time** divides them into groups of equal duration;  
> **Rhythm** does for these groups what accent does for notes. 
> In short, Rhythm is the Metre of the Music.\(^{183}\)

\(^{183}\) Ibid.
In his *Nuova Scuola Violinistica Italiana*, Italian violinist Francesco Sfilio (of Paganini lineage) defines rhythm simply as:

... an alternation of strong and weak beats, which gives shape to the structure of a musical piece.\(^{184}\)

Thus defined, rhythm is the result of the hierarchical ordering of beats within a bar. Galeazzi highlights the dependency of structure on rhythm, saying that integrity and clarity of expression depends upon the performer understanding this relationship:

> It is impossible for someone who does not understand Rhythm to ever give the correct expression to that which he plays or sings. It is to music what Metre is to Poetry, and even something more precise: it does not only establish that which is commonly called tempo, or rather its parts, that which is called the bar, but characterizes and gives sense to the very parts of the bar.\(^{185}\)

Hence, from the 19\(^{th}\)-century musician’s perspective, to play ‘rhythmically’ is to make clear the alternation of strong and weak beats within the bar, and strong and weak parts of the phrase; and in so doing, to delineate the tempo, character, and structure of the piece. Galeazzi defines rhythm from the perspective of the bar, writing that in a 4/4 bar, the first and third beats should be stronger than the second and fourth.\(^{186}\) He likens the alternation of weak and strong beats in music to an adaptation of the rules of prosody.\(^{187}\) Cellist Luigi Forino shares this opinion, and adds that rhythmical playing does not merely consist of a regular beat, or the delineation of strong and weak parts of a phrase, but, more importantly, it maintains balance and proportion within the phrase, and, as such, can allow for changes in tempo:

> Although rhythm is related to metrics it must not be confused with it. It is possible to be perfectly metrical and not be rhythmical. Rhythm is a quality that eludes every control, it remains evident even through alterations of tempo... rhythm is the most important quality for rendering the execution clear and

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\(^{186}\) Ibid.  
\(^{187}\) Ibid.
comprehensible. Performed rhythmically, every figure turns out to be clear, clean [and] in perfect balance, including in those places where *rubato, rallentandi* or *stringendi* noticeably alter the beat, since whoever has a good feeling for rhythm also performs these alterations in perfect rhythm. A *rallentando*, for example, must be executed in a proportional manner; every successive note must be a certain amount and proportionally longer than the preceding one; so it is, in reverse, in the *affrettandi* and in all those small licences that the indications of the author require.\(^{188}\)

This idea of balance and proportion within the phrase is reflected in the concept of *aplomb*, which is defined in Mary Frances Boyce’s thesis, *The French School of Violin Playing in the Sphere of Viotti: Technique and Style*, as “the steadiness or exactness of the beats in a given tempo”.\(^{189}\) Viotti-disciple Pierre Baillot writes of the relationship between aplomb and the metronome:

> The aplomb should approach mathematical regularity but not equal it. The heart, whose tempos are so varied even in their constancy does not know how to be in harmony with insensibility; the aplomb, this effect of the will and movement of the soul, free as it is in its captivity, cannot depend on a material object that would give constraint to the step, an inflexible stiffness and, so to speak, a fatal character incompatible with its principle.\(^{190}\)

Whereas we are more likely today to think of rhythmical playing in terms of that which conforms to a regular beat, 19th-century musicians associated it with balanced phrasing, which, among other things, permitted temporary irregularities in the beat. Viotti was renowned for his intensely expressive playing, and for his sense of aplomb. Evidently this lay in his ability to strike a perfect balance between self control and ‘letting himself go’ in his expression.\(^{191}\)

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190 Ibid., 282.
Accents

Accents provided the means by which the rhythmical and structural characteristics of a piece were delineated, thus establishing the *aplomb*. Music, like poetry, required this in order to be expressive. Violinist Campagnoli writes:

> The accent is generally regarded as the soul of the music; when it is not communicated with accents it becomes monotonous, sluggish and dull.\(^{192}\)

On string instruments accent can be achieved through the use of a variety of left- and right-hand techniques including vibrato, ornamental embellishments, and articulations of the bow. Cellist Rachelle highlights the importance of accents in the expressive playing of slow movements, in which, he says, the management of the bow is the foremost concern:

> On the string instruments, musical accents are formed through the conduct of the bow, with which one may give greater or lesser strength to the note, and in this manner the *Adagio* and the *Cantabile* will be played with expression; it will, however, be necessary to train oneself extensively in the handling of this.\(^{193}\)

Accents might also be achieved by drawing attention to, or away from, a note through its anticipation or delay, or by altering its printed duration. To increase the duration of a note is to give it a particular kind of emphasis referred to as ‘agogic’ accent. The agogic accent was one of a number of possibilities for the realization of *tempo rubato* in 19\(^{th}\) - century performance practice.

**Tempo rubato**

The history of *tempo rubato* is long and multifarious. In its literal translation, the term means “stolen time”. According to Tosi, who was one of the first to use the term and may in fact have coined it, *tempo rubato* was part of the ‘stock in trade’ of the true artist:


\(^{193}\) Rachelle, 8.
Whoever does not know how to stretch out the notes [rubare il tempo] can certainly neither compose nor accompany himself and remains deprived of the best taste and the finest insight.\footnote{194}{Julianne Baird, ed. and trans., \textit{Introduction to the Art of Singing by Johann Friedrich Agricola} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 32.}

Here, “to stretch out the notes” means to lengthen some at the expense of others. As Julianne Baird indicates in her translation of Agricola’s \textit{Introduction to the Art of Singing}, the phenomenon to which Tosi refers is actually more of a ‘borrowing’ or ‘sharing’ than a ‘stealing’ of time.\footnote{195}{Ibid.} Time taken from one note is ‘given back’ to another – it is not lost forever. Tosi permits the singer to “move from one note to another with unusual and unexpected rubato”, making sure, however, that it is “tailored to the exact movement of the bass”.\footnote{196}{Ibid., 205-6.} In the solo part, the elongation of some notes results in the proportional shortening of others, so as to reunite with the steady-moving bass after temporary dislocation from it. This was the common understanding of \textit{tempo rubato} in the 18\textsuperscript{th} and the first half of the 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries, and one which Manuel García II shared:

\begin{quote}
By \textit{tempo rubato} is meant the momentary increase of value, which is given to one or several sounds, to the detriment of the rest, while the total length of the bar remains unaltered. This distribution of notes into long and short, breaks the monotony of regular movements, and gives greater vehemence to bursts of passion... To make \textit{tempo rubato} perceptible in singing, the accents and time of the accompaniment should be strictly maintained: upon this monotonous ground, all alterations introduced by a singer will stand out in relief, and change the character of certain phrases. \textit{Accelerando} and \textit{rallentando} movements require the voice and accompaniment to proceed in concert; whereas, \textit{tempo rubato} allows liberty to the voice only.\footnote{197}{García, 75.}
\end{quote}

Richard Hudson refers to this sort of rubato as the ‘earlier’ type.\footnote{198}{As quoted in Hudson, 68-9.} It required a regular beat in the accompaniment against which liberties in the solo part were offset; thus making their irregularity felt, and creating a whimsical or improvisatory feel in performance. What Hudson refers to as the ‘later’ type of rubato involved rhythmic and
tempo flexibility of all parts (solo and accompaniment) – actual tempo modification over the entire musical texture.199

Definitions

It is useful to consider some definitions and descriptions of tempo rubato as they appear in 19th- and early 20th-century texts. Koch, in his Musikalisches Lexikon of 1802, writes:

Tempo rubato really means stolen time, or a motion which has been stolen from a different meter. Many, however, also understand this expression to signify the manner of performance in which the notes of the bar which usually receive the accent, are played weakly whereas the weaker notes are played strongly and with accent; for example:

Figure 3.1 Koch, Musikalisches Lexikon, p. 1503.

One also understands under this expression that practice of a solo singer or concert artist, whereby he intentionally bends some consecutive notes of the melody, such that disarray seems to result, which he, however, immediately lifts again in that he performs the following notes again in their proper division. An example of this manner of performance, which one must generally only concede to virtuosos for rare use, does not let itself be expressed in musical notation.200

Koch also equates tempo rubato with imbroglio, in which the printed rhythm conflicts with the time signature:

199 See Hudson, 4-13.
200 Heinrich Christoph Koch, “Tempo rubato” in Musikalisches Lexikon (Frankfurt am Main: August Hermann dem Juengern, 1802), 1502-3.
Imbroglio, the confusion. Thus is sometimes called those parts of a piece in which an opposing time signature intervenes, as, for example, in the following Menuet from Haydn. Many also refer to this sort of displacement as *tempo rubato.*\(^{201}\)

Figure 3.2 Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon,* pp. 776-7.

The 1890 edition of Grove’s *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* contains similar definitions of *rubato:*

This expression is used in two different senses; first, to denote the insertion of a short passage in duple time into a movement the prevailing rhythm of which is triple, or *vice versa,* the change being effected without altering the time-signature, by means of false accents, or accents falling on other than the ordinary places in the bar. Thus the rhythm of the following example is distinctly that of two in a bar, although the whole movement is ¾ time.

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\(^{201}\) Ibid., 776-7.
2. In the other and more usual sense the term expresses the opposite of strict time, and indicates a style of performance in which some portion of the bar is executed at a quicker or slower tempo than the general rate of movement, the balance being restored by a corresponding slackening or quickening of the remainder.\textsuperscript{202}

Thus, rubato could also be expressed through the displacement of metrical accents within the measure; for example by strengthening the second and fourth beats in a 4/4 meter, or by the incorporation of contrasting metres (polyrhythm).

**Evidence in cello methods for the use of rubato**

The cello methods considered in this study indicate that rubato was used for expressive purposes by 19\textsuperscript{th}-century Italian cellists, albeit in moderation. Rubato was the exception rather than the rule; there were certain situations where it could be used appropriately, but many more where it could not. Quarenghi refers to the use of the ‘earlier’ rubato in the execution of ornaments, saying that ornamental notes should ‘steal’ time from preceding or succeeding ones, without altering the natural, overall tempo.\textsuperscript{203} He writes that one should not allow oneself to be ‘carried away’ in the heat of performance, to the extent that the contours of the music, represented by intonation and tempo, are distorted. Whilst some small licences of tempo are permissible, and sometimes even indicated by the composer, they should not disturb the natural balance and proportion of the work.\textsuperscript{204} This reference to proportion reminds us again of the prevailing understanding amongst 19\textsuperscript{th}-century musicians of what constituted ‘rhythmical’ playing and the importance of *aplomb* (as discussed above). Quarenghi’s

\textsuperscript{203} Quarenghi, 235.
\textsuperscript{204} Quarenghi, 298.
comments also suggest that licences of tempo were sometimes, but not always, indicated by the composer, and that performers were permitted (to a limited extent) to introduce liberties which were not indicated in the score. Braga says that the performer who is most faithful to the score is the one who is most ‘correct’, and that one should not deviate from the composer’s expressed intentions.\textsuperscript{205} Presumably, however, some licences were permissible where the composer had not made explicit specifications. Quarenghi’s and Braga’s references to the indications of the composer reflect a general tendency in the latter part of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century toward more detailed markings of expression in scores, which deprived performers of the level of artistic licence which was common in the earlier part of the century.

In the first Augner edition of Piatti’s method (exact date unknown, but certainly late-19\textsuperscript{th} century), rubato is addressed indirectly in relation to the execution of grace notes and appoggiaturas.\textsuperscript{206} The section “On Time, Tempo” discusses tempo indications (i.e. Allegro, Adagio, etc.), and also tempo modification, about which we read:

\begin{quote}
CON PIÙ MOTO, with more movement; (this is often used). But if this increase of movement is to be made insensible, or little by little, then the following expressions are to be made use of: POCO a POCO CRESCENDO, or POCO a POCO PIÙ PRESTO...\textsuperscript{207}
\end{quote}

It is particularly interesting that he associates the term crescendo with an increase in tempo. Luigi Forino, on the other hand, explicitly stated that changes in dynamic should not affect tempo or rhythm.\textsuperscript{208}

In Piatti’s edition of Kummer’s method, tempo modification is addressed as an expressive apparatus of the performer, to be used judiciously:

\begin{quote}
Let him also take heed, not to change too often the time, i.e. to hurry or to get slower in certain passages; this would unavoidably lead him to a morbid state of
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[205] Braga, 62.
\item[206] Piatti, Méthode de Violoncelle, vol. 3, 69.
\item[207] Ibid., vol. 1, 33.
\item[208] Forino, Il Violoncello, 289.
\end{footnotes}
constant wavering. Only a reasonable and judicious use of this grace, to represent increased passion, will pleasantly incite the fancy of the listeners.\textsuperscript{209}

Like Quarenghi and Braga, Kummer (and, by extension, Piatti) demonstrates that a considered and moderate use of tempo modification was the ideal. However, the fact that each saw it necessary to caution against overuse suggests that it was subject to abuse by some performers.

Luigi Forino’s works are the most informative of the Italian cello methods on the subject of rubato and tempo modification. Forino maintains that the application of accents and the modification of rhythm are necessary aspects of expression which only the performer can bring to the music. He writes:

> The beautiful convincing interpretation is based on small alterations of colouration, rhythm, accent; all things which elude every control and that cannot be indicated graphically.\textsuperscript{210}

He states that one of the conditions for playing in a “clear and comprehensible manner, which means execution in a fine style”, is “broad and grand phrasing maintained within the limits of a well sustained rhythm though not measured by a metronome”.\textsuperscript{211} Here again, we see that well-sustained rhythm was not considered synonymous with metronomic playing, contrary to what many musicians might think today. However, Forino also specifies that only once the student has attained a rhythmical and even execution, may he introduce the small liberties that are requested by the composer, or dictated by the performer’s own good taste.\textsuperscript{212} Like Quarenghi and Braga, he rejects the abuse of licences of ‘misura’ and \textit{tempi rubati}, and is particularly critical of the rubato of pianists, especially disciples of Chopin. Forino believed that string players were generally more expedient in their use of rubato even, he adds, when performing the ‘modern composers’. This suggests that perhaps more rhythmic licence is permissible in late 19\textsuperscript{th}- and early 20\textsuperscript{th}-century works than in earlier repertoire. He writes:

\textsuperscript{209} Kummer, 30.
\textsuperscript{210} Forino, \textit{Il Violoncello}, 301.
\textsuperscript{211} Forino, \textit{La Tecnica}, vol. 5, 123-4.
\textsuperscript{212} Forino, \textit{Il Violoncello}, 295.
Change in the measure is such that it does not permit you any more to spoil the sovereign beauty of the phrases and their connection... The good and sound effect must be attained, more than with distortions of the measure, with the rich scale of colouration with which our instruments are equipped. Sometimes, for a special effect, it will be permissible to alter the measure, to anticipate or delay a note or group of notes, but here it seems useful to add that it would be an error if these licences were to suffer the effect of colouration: crescendo must not also imply affrettando and vice versa, certainly in the measure, as in the sound, there are some small licences, some small nuances of exquisite effect and which lend themselves very much to expressing of the sensations of our heart. But the artists must make use of this with taste and parsimony, and only when there is reason for it.

The normal state is calm; colour, warmth and distortions in the measure must not be used other than to establish the necessary contrast with that state of the heart.213

Like Quarenghi and Piatti, Luigi Forino associates tempo rubato with the execution of ornaments. He is also of the opinion that, in general, time should be taken from the notes which follow the ornament:

It is a sound rule never to hasten ornamental notes in a piece which is in tempo sostenuto as it is correct and elegant in many cases to steal a small value of the ornamental notes not from the preceding note, but from the following: this however, not always.214

In La Tecnica, Forino includes “rubato (varying the time at different moments)” in a list of “Indications of Time”.215 In the same group he includes con espressione, espressivo and dolce, suggesting that these terms also had implications for tempo.

Whilst the cello methods considered above clearly indicate that modification of accent, rhythm and tempo were permissible for expressive purposes, they do not specify how and in what contexts these techniques could be applied appropriately, when indications

213 Ibid., 289.
214 Ibid., 291.
215 Forino, La Tecnica, vol.1, 103.
were not given by the composer. Fortunately, 19th-century violin and vocal methods do. It will be useful to examine some of these methods in order to establish the criteria against which we will later consider the use of rubato in the cello repertoire.

Vocal contexts

Pre-19th-century vocal sources favour the use of rubato in slow pieces. Tosi refers to tempo rubato in the da capo section of pathetic and adagio arias, and at improvised cadences. Later, tempo rubato was also used in fast pieces. In his 1810 The Singer’s Preceptor, Corri sanctions the use of tempo rubato in the cantabile style and in the allegro agitato, which “should be uttered nearly as speaking in musical notes”, similarly, as Hudson points out, to the recitative. Furthermore, Corri writes:

This Italian licence of Tempo Rubato, may be used in any species of music where there is a leading or predominant melody...

This illustrates an important point about rubato in the early 19th century, and it serves to clarify Corri’s comment that “composers seem to have arranged their works in such a manner as to admit of this liberty, without offending the laws of harmony”. Use of rubato was restricted to the solo voice alone, with the accompaniment keeping strict time. This produced a noticeable dislocation between parts, which was one of the desired effects. For this reason, tempo rubato could only be used effectively where there was a leading melodic voice with an accompaniment which provided rhythmic and harmonic impetus but did not compete with the main voice on a melodic level. Regularity in the accompaniment kept the soloist aware of how much s/he had diverged, therefore allowing for honest restitution of ‘borrowed’ time later on.

As seen above, Manuel García II shared this view of tempo rubato, and indicated in his treatise some of the contexts in which its use was appropriate:

This prolongation is usually conceded to appoggiaturas, to notes placed on long syllables, and those which are naturally salient in the harmony. In all such cases,

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216 Baird, 32.
217 Hudson, 63.
218 Ibid.
219 Ibid., 62.
220 Ibid.
the time lost must be regained by accelerating other notes. This is a good method for giving colour and variety to melodies.\textsuperscript{221}

Like Corri, García used rubato in both the florid and plain styles.\textsuperscript{222} He refers to \textit{temps d’arrêt}, which he says is “the first element of tempo rubato”\textsuperscript{223}, the prolongation of particular tones in passages of equal notes “to heighten effect, or to support the voice on those parts of a bar which might otherwise be passed over”.\textsuperscript{224}

\textbf{Figure 3.4, Temps d’arrêt or prolongation (Garcìa, 1847), as quoted in Stolen Time. The History of Tempo Rubato (Hudson, 1994), p. 66.}

In each case, the prolonged note is approached by leap from another note at least a third apart. García explains that such prolongation:

\ldots by giving support to the voice, permits it to render distinctly that which would lack clarity, and the passages gain thereby much effect.\textsuperscript{225}

Some of the examples García uses to illustrate rubato include the addition of extra pitches, showing that García’s concept of \textit{rubato} was not limited solely to the redistribution of time values within the bar, but also allowed for embellishment.\textsuperscript{226}

Rubato and dynamic changes were considered appropriate techniques for varying repetitions of a motif, and, it seems, could be used interchangeably:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{221} Ibid., 68-9.
\item \textsuperscript{222} García, 187 and 193.
\item \textsuperscript{223} Hudson, 66-7.
\item \textsuperscript{224} Ibid., 66.
\item \textsuperscript{225} Ibid., 66-7.
\item \textsuperscript{226} García, 78.
\end{itemize}
When the second section of a phrase is composed of the same values as the first, its colouring should be sometimes the *tempo rubato* and sometimes the *piano* opposed to the *forte*.²²⁷

When the identical thought is repeated several times in succession, as it is frequently with all composers, especially Mozart; or when the thought pursues an ascending or descending progression [that is, sequence],... each different development should be submitted, according to the sentiment of the phrase, to the *crescendo* or *diminuendo* – the *accelerando* or *ritardando*; in rarer instances, to isolated accents and the *tempo rubato*.²²⁸

He adds that sudden and dramatic changes in dynamic necessitated the use of rubato in order to be effective:

when a pianissimo follows [a forte], it should be separated from the *forte* by a slight rest, striking the note an instant after the bass...This rest affords relief after loud notes, and prepares us for seizing all effects, however delicate, that follow, - especially if the first consonant that ensues after the rest is produced with vigour.²²⁹

It was common practice for rubato to be used at cadences. García writes that it gives them ‘spirit’ and ‘enthusiasm’, and is much preferable to the ritardando.²³⁰ In the following example, this is achieved through the anticipation of the trill in the second-to-last bar (see the second and fifth staves):

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²²⁷ Hudson, 75.
²²⁸ Ibid.
²²⁹ Ibid.
²³⁰ Hudson, 68-9.
García uses a duet from *The Barber of Seville* to illustrate how an ‘animated’ cadence is rendered ‘warmly’:

**Figure 3.6, Rubato in Rossini, *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (García, 1847), as quoted in Stolen Time. The History of Tempo Rubato (Hudson, 1994), p. 72.**

In both of the above examples, tempo rubato is expressed in the rhythmic alteration of a passage written predominantly in equal note values.
García illustrates the rubato of celebrated soprano Giuditta Pasta (1797-1865)\textsuperscript{231} in the following example which introduces unusual rhythmic groupings (five semiquavers in the solo voice against two quavers in the accompaniment), the ‘filling out’ of leaps, and agogic accent in the form of a lengthening of the ‘F’ in the second-to-last bar, which prolongs the dissonance with the accompaniment:

**Figure 3.7, Rubato in Bellini, *Norma* (García, 1847), as quoted in Stolen Time. The History of Tempo Rubato (Hudson, 1994), p. 77.**

Faure, in his *La Voix et le chant* (c. 1886) links rubato with *stentato*, the latter of which he defines as “with pain or trouble, stretched out with effort”.\textsuperscript{232} Faure treated stentato in the same way as rubato – a borrowing, rather than stealing, of time. It consisted of “an effect of broken rhythm without alteration of the meter, as in the tempo rubato”.\textsuperscript{233} He explains that it is a result of the performer giving in to passion, albeit reluctantly:

*Stentato* indicates a retard in the phrase, but whereas the *ritardando* takes place at the will of the singer or the instrumentalist, in the *stentato* the performer seems to want to escape a mysterious pressure and surrenders only to the superior force of a feeling which imposes this retard on him; the notes are heavily stressed and even hammered, without ceasing to be bound together in the most rigorous manner.\textsuperscript{234}

\textsuperscript{231} Braga admired Pasta’s singing. See Braga, 233.
\textsuperscript{232} Hudson, 82.
\textsuperscript{233} Faure in *La Voix et le chant* (c. 1886), as quoted in Hudson, 82.
\textsuperscript{234} Hudson, 82.
Violin contexts

Italian violinists were equally renowned for their use of rubato. Both Leopold and W. A. Mozart admired the expressive playing of virtuoso violinist Regina Strinasacchi (1764-1839), and a 1785 review of one of her performances makes particular note of her use of rubato. As was the case with vocal sources, early violin sources refer to the use of rubato in cantabile passages and adagio movements, though later sources include the use of rubato in faster contexts. Some of the most informative sources on rubato from the 18th-century violin literature are the works of Franz Benda. Benda studied with Johann Georg Pisendel (a student of Torelli) and Johann Gottlieb Graun (who studied with Tartini and Pisendel), and was therefore of Italian musical lineage. Benda actually specified where rubato should be used in some of his works by including the markings *tempo rubato*, *rubato*, and *tempo robato*. Such indications occur within a range of tempi, from fast to slow. Frequently, such examples produce rhythmical dislocation between solo and accompaniment, through the juxtaposition of simple and compound rhythms (two against three), and polymetrical groupings. They are frequently found at cadences, where a dominant chord is emphasized, at the return of a theme or the repetition of a motif, and in chromatic passages.

Rubato in 19th-century Italian violin literature frequently involves agogic accents and syncopation. Examples of *tempo rubato* in Campagnoli’s method demonstrate the prolongation or addition of notes which function as appoggiaturas, in slow tempi. The following extracts are taken from Etude No. 191 (*Adagio*). Figure 3.8 shows the melody in ‘skeletal’ version:

**Figure 3.8 Campagnoli, *Metodo*, p. 120.**

![Figure 3.8](image)

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235 Ibid., 98.
236 Ibid., 90.
237 Ibid., 91.
238 Ibid., 96.
In Figure 3.9 (variation No. 25, marked ‘Tempo rubato’), we see the addition of an appoggiatura in each of the four bars. These appoggiaturas fall on the first beats of bars 2, 3 and 4. In the first bar the appoggiatura is not on the downbeat, however it does occupy most of the bar – thus its importance is emphasized:

Figure 3.9 Campagnoli, _Metodo_, p. 120.

In Etude No. 60 (see Figure 3.10) marked _Larghissimo amoroso_, Campagnoli refers to the lengthening of the first note in 2- and 4-note slurred groups. Presumably not every group is executed in this way – Campagnoli’s use of the symbol > is probably an indication of which notes are to receive this treatment. This is particularly interesting, given that modern interpretations of this symbol usually treat it as a consonant accent. He describes their execution, making it clear, however, that the overall tempo must not be altered:

The first note of the 2-, 3-, or 4-note slurred groups must always be marked and held for a short amount of time, and the other notes must be slurred a little late, losing sound [i.e. with diminuendo], without, however, injuring the evenness of the motion.²³⁹

²³⁹ Campagnoli, XX.
Agogic accents also result from the over-dotting of notes. Campagnoli illustrates this in a fast context (Allegro con spirito), explaining that the semiquaver in the following example is to be played later than expected.  

German violinist Louis Spohr was heavily influenced by the playing of Viotti-disciple Pierre Rode, and demonstrated a clear affinity with the Italian school of violin playing. He discusses rubato in his method, asserting that a ‘consummate mastery of style’ (which was superior to ‘correct delivery’) required:
the occasional deviation from a strict tempo... for the purpose of producing certain effects, as, for instance, an acceleration of time in passages of a fervent or impetuous character, and a slackening or lingering in those episodes expressive of tenderness or pathos.\textsuperscript{241}

He provides the following example and explanation:

**Figure 3.12 L. Spohr, Violinschule, p. 199, bars 27-30, as quoted in Early Violin and Viola. A Practical Guide (Stowell, 2001), p. 101.**

In the second half of the 28\textsuperscript{th} and 30\textsuperscript{th} bars, the first notes of the ascending scale should be dwelt upon somewhat beyond their actual value, this departure from strict time being compensated for by a slight acceleration of the remaining notes.\textsuperscript{242}

Spohr’s rubato consists predominantly of the prolongation of notes which are salient to the harmonic structure. As Hudson points out, he indicates tempo rubato in his *Violinschule* through descriptions in prose. This is not unusual. A rubato comprised of agogic accent was often so subtle as to elude notation. It was probably perceived by the listener as ‘vague’ rhythm, and created a sense of freedom in the performance. Evidently this is what Leopold Mozart was referring to when he wrote “What this ‘stolen tempo’ is, is more easily shown than described.”\textsuperscript{243}

Faure points out the degree of subtlety involved in tempo rubato as practised with *anticipations*:

\textsuperscript{242} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{243} As quoted in Hudson, 90.
It is the process which consists in borrowing from a beat a little of its value in order to give it to the beat that follows. This is what the Italians call tempo rubato.

Strictly, one could write the anticipations as one does syncopations, with which they offer some analogy; but this would be giving it the letter and not the spirit. Employed with discernment, the anticipations give to the rhythm a greater freedom of movement and impart to the melody the stirring character of improvisation while preserving the feeling of the metre.\footnote{Hudson, 83.}

The syncopations to which Faure refers are another, less subtle form of tempo rubato, in which notes were lengthened or shortened to such a degree that the metric organisation of the bar was more noticeably altered.\footnote{Ibid., 64.} In 1822 Haeser describes ‘rubamento di tempo oder tempo rubato’ as both syncopation and the alteration of note values within a single measure or occasionally two consecutive measures.” This syncopation appears to have been a very popular expression of rubato amongst 19th-century Italian violinists in the early-mid century.\footnote{Etude No. 190 quoted above from Campagnoli’s method is an example of rubato in the form of syncopation.}

\textbf{Sincopare, ‘contratempo’ or ‘contratempo’}

The terms sincopare, contratempo and tempo disturbato were, at least until 1850, often used synonymously with tempo rubato. Galeazzi explicitly equates ‘stealing time’ with syncopation:

It is permissible when making diminutions to steal [rubbare] a little of the value of a note and to transfer it to another note; it is a laudable artifice (if it is not abused) even to have a certain flexibility of tempo, provided that at the end all is adjusted and equalized according to the values. This is called by performers sincopare or to play a contratempo, and it is one of the finest resources of espressione (if always used with moderation).\footnote{As quoted in Hudson, 98.}
Galeazzi indicates that time can be ‘borrowed’ for dissonant notes (i.e. appoggiaturas).\textsuperscript{248} He describes the function of appoggiaturas as being the delay of the consonant interval – stealing time from the consonant note in order to emphasize the dissonant one. His subsequent recommendation that repetitions of a passage be varied with diminutions of increasing complexity with each repetition,\textsuperscript{249} suggests that this stretching out of time and addition of dissonances/appoggiaturas was a means of achieving such variety. He writes that any time thus ‘robbed’ or stretched out must be paid back, aligning himself with other late 18\textsuperscript{th}- early 19\textsuperscript{th}-century theorists in his use of the technique. Again, we are reminded of the need for moderation – such an effect should be used only in special, rare cases; otherwise, it loses its effectiveness:

If in music it is permissible to make use of dissonances, which, in the end, are none other than a delay, or a contraction of the neighbouring consonances, the delay or contraction of a few notes will even be permissible, provided that, as I said, it does not degenerate into abuse, not as some people do, who sing for bravura, or always play outside of the harmony (and yet are applauded by the philistines); it is then an insufferable artifice, and to be agreed very difficult for the ear to endure a continuous dissonance of this sort.\textsuperscript{250}

In a 1791 edition of Galeazzi’s Metodo we read that Controtempo\textsuperscript{251} involves a contravention of the expected pattern of strong and weak beats within the bar. It is therefore, by definition, a form of rubato. When required, it is marked by the composer:

If in the execution one alters the nature of the beats of the bar, softening the strong quarter notes, and strengthening the weak ones, an effect results which is called Controtempo, which, when used where the expression requires it, produces a beautiful elegance: in this case it is the responsibility of the composer to mark this sort of expression with the usual letters $p$ and $f$.\textsuperscript{252}

Galeazzi made a clear distinction between Sincopare, Contratempo, stirare, and actual tempo modification. When the latter was required, it was essential then that the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{248} Galeazzi, 232.
\item\textsuperscript{249} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{250} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{251} Francesco Galeazzi, Elementi Teorico-Pratici di Musica (Roma: Pilucchi Cracas, 1791), 243. This edition of the work this spelling, however the 1817 edition uses ‘Contratempo’.
\item\textsuperscript{252} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
accompaniment follow, rather than keep strict time. The accompanist needed to be able to recognize when to follow and when not to.\textsuperscript{253}

In his \textit{L’Art du violon}, Viotti-disciple Baillot also relates rubato to syncopation. Like Faure’s description of \textit{stentato}, there is a sense of the soloist submitting against his will:

\begin{quote}
There is a way of altering or breaking the rhythm measure which derives from the syncopation and is called tempo rubato or disturbato or stolen or troubled time (\textit{temps derobé ou trouble}). This stolen time is very effective, but it would become, by its nature, tiring and insupportable if it were used often. It tends to express trouble and agitation, and a few composers have noted or indicated it; the character of the passage suffices in general to push the player to improvise according to the inspiration of the moment. He must, so to speak, only make use of it in spite of himself; when, carried away by the expression, it obliges him to lose, in appearance, all measured rhythm and be delivered thus from the trouble which besets him. We say that he only loses the measured rhythm in appearance, i.e., that he must preserve a sort of steadiness (aplomb) that holds it back within the limits of harmony of the passage and that it makes it re-enter appropriately in the exact measure of the time. This is the case in which to apply this observation: ‘Often a beautiful disorder is an effect of art.’\textsuperscript{254}
\end{quote}

Viotti is also reported to have used rubato. By all accounts he was an exceptionally expressive performer. Viotti-biographer, François Fayolle (1774-1852) writes:

\begin{quote}
I was fortunate to listen to them performed by Viotti himself, but not as they are written because this great artist, playing his own compositions, always abandoned himself to the inspiration of the moment and did not give more than a little attention to the text set before him.\textsuperscript{255}
\end{quote}

Viotti’s \textit{Violin Concerto No. 19 in G minor} (first published in 1791) was a particular favourite of the composer. He published a revised version of the work in 1818 in Paris, which illustrates (through markings) the sorts of changes Viotti made to the text in

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{253} Galeazzi, (Ascoli, 1817), 266-8.
\bibitem{254} Boyce, 283.
\bibitem{255} Dellaborra, 134.
\end{thebibliography}
performance. In *L’Art du violon*, Baillot, uses a passage from the first movement of the concerto to demonstrate Viotti’s use of *tempo rubato*, which he describes as a pleasing “confusion”. The passage is notated first in the original printed version, entirely in syncopation (see Figure 3.13), then again as a transcription of Viotti’s performance of it (see Figure 3.14):

**Figure 3.13 Baillot, *L’Art du violon*, as quoted in Dellaborra, *Giovanni Battista Viotti*, p. 79.**

![Figure 3.13](image1)

**Figure 3.14, Baillot, *L’Art du violon*, as quoted in Dellaborra, *Giovanni Battista Viotti*, p. 79.**

![Figure 3.14](image2)

In this example, the constant syncopated rhythm is varied in such a way that dissonant notes are given emphasis through anticipation, delay, lengthening, shortening, dynamic variation and variation in articulation. It is clear from the example that there are two purposes to this use of rubato – 1) the variation of a constant rhythm to avoid monotony, and 2) to emphasize dissonant notes. As has been noted previously, these are common criteria for the use of rubato in faster tempi (the movement is marked *Maestoso*, with crotchet = 104).

The second extract (from the third movement of Viotti’s *Violin Concerto No. 18 in E Minor*), illustrates how the opening theme of the *rondo* may be varied.

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256 Ibid., 78.
Again, rubato is employed to vary a repeated rhythm and to heighten the underlying sense of unrest in the passage. This is achieved through the addition of dynamic nuances and accents, prolongation and shortening of notes, and extensive use of syncopation.

Niccolo Paganini used rubato to great effect. The following extract shows that his rubato was of the ‘earlier’ kind; apparently he did not approve of the accelerando or ritardando. Carl Guhr reports:

In order to appreciate him fully we must feel and grieve with him, must follow him in his dazzling flights, and then, with sudden transition, sport with him, and gaily enter into all humours of his fancy; we must not lag behind the master; he himself, when playing, continues steady to the given measure, and is an enemy to accelerando and ritardando...

García tells us that both his own father and Paganini were experts in tempo rubato ‘by phrase’, indicating that entire phrases in the solo part could be embellished with syncopations and other forms of altered rhythm, as well as ‘unusual’ accentuation, whilst the accompaniment kept strict time.

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258 Hudson, 152.
Cello contexts

Most of the cello sources consulted in this study do not discuss rubato in as comprehensive a manner as the violin and vocal sources cited above. However, when considered in the light of information gleaned from the latter two, it is possible to infer from the cello sources that 19th-century Italian cellists used rubato in similar ways to violinists and singers. Rachelle’s reference to accents in the expressive rendition of adagio and cantabile movements (see above) evokes the techniques of agogic accent, contratempo and syncopation which Campagnoli and Galeazzi describe. Rachelle’s method was written in the 1830s –the same decade as those of Spohr and Baillot (who were both said to have been very much influenced by the Italian school of violin playing). We may assume that cellists and violinists at this time used rubato in similar ways. This could also explain the paucity of explicit rubato indications in early 19th-century cello scores; for it would have been understood that general matters to do with taste and style were common to all instruments, and that these were transmitted through the most important or widely-read didactic works (usually for voice, piano, and violin), as well as through the performance tradition.

By the time the methods of Braga, Quarenghi and Piatti were published (in the latter half of the 19th century), it was common practice for composers to write out their own cadenzas, diminutions and ornaments, as well as provide indications for modification of tempo and rhythm in scores. Braga warned students to adhere scrupulously to the markings of tempo and accent indicated by the composer and not to introduce modifications or interpretations of their own design,261 probably because there were performers who took excessive liberties in this respect.

Rubato was indicated in 19th-century Italian cello sources in a variety of ways, though the term ‘rubato’ appears seldom. Accent, crescendo and tenuto markings; terms such as con espressione, espressivo, dolce, stentato, sciolto, cantabile; as well as examples of written-out variations and ornamentation in the cello literature illustrate that the same principles motivated cellists, violinists and vocalists alike in their use of rubato.

261 Braga, 62.
Use of the term ‘rubato’ in cello scores

Luigi Forino uses ‘rubato’, as well as other terms pertaining to momentary tempo modification, in his *Six Croquis Lyriques*. The first of these pieces, the *Angelus*, (subtitled *Sursum Corda*, meaning “Lift up your hearts”) is marked *Andante melancolico*. It contains the marking ‘rubato’ on two occasions in the solo part:

**Figure 3.16, L. Forino, *Six Croquis Lyriques (Angelus)*, bars 11-29.**

An inverted version of the original theme begins in the last bar of the first system (anticipated in the previous bar), lasting four bars. It is then repeated in ‘ornamented’
version, beginning in the fourth bar of the second system. In this repeated version, the accompaniment is unchanged, however the cello part includes the addition of ornamental notes. In the first bar of the third system, we see ‘rubato’ printed under a group of semiquavers. The accompaniment marks the beats, within which the solo part may take liberties, lengthening ‘important’ notes, such as the ‘C’ at the beginning of the group, with the consequential shortening of other notes in the group. We may assume that Forino also intends a sort of ‘free’ rhythm, or perhaps a strengthening of the notes approached by leap, in the manner outlined by García above. If it were merely a case of lengthening the ‘C’, perhaps he would have written simply a tenuto sign or accent as he does in the second bar of the second system. The marking ‘rubato’ appears again in the last bar of the third system, again in relation to groups of semiquavers. This bar is the third of four bars which serve as a sort of transitional passage leading to the next entry of the theme. The basic outline is given in the third bar of the third system, and it is embellished in the subsequent three bars. Again, the accompaniment merely marks the beats within which the solo voice can play ‘freely’. The passage is marked *largamente espressivo* – broadly expressive. This begs the question why Forino included *rubato* as an expression marking. Evidently it could not be taken for granted that cellists would use and know when to use *rubato* without it being marked. In this case we might assume that cellists would have played such a passage in a more metronomic way without the marking. Another possibility is that where Forino marked ‘rubato’, he wished for a more noticeable alteration of rhythm than would ordinarily be expected.

Other types of rubato are also evident in the piece. The marking *con passione* on the fourth bar of the fourth system suggests that rubato may also be intended here (see Figure 3.16). Near the end of the piece Forino marks the closing bar of the final statement of the theme *stentato* (see Figure 3.17). In mid-late 19th-century repertoire, one frequently encounters rubato or tempo modification markings before the final section of a piece. Here the marking occurs in both parts, indicating that solo and accompaniment are to move in concert. This is not surprising, as the piano part doubles the solo line at this point.
The use of accents with the \textit{stentato} marking is not unusual. It appears frequently; and again in the second piece of the \textit{Six Croques Lyriques}, entitled \textit{Au château (Sérénade)} and marked \textit{Andantino grazioso}. Here we see \textit{stentato} in the solo line, again just preceding the onset of a coda, while the accompaniment bears the marking \textit{col canto}, indicating that it is to follow the voice, rather than keep strict time:
Figure 3.18, L. Forino, *Six Croquis Lyriques (Au château)*, bars 71-77.

Whilst Piatti’s *Souvenir de la Sonnambula* does not contain the marking *rubato*, it does indicate a number of rubato techniques. It is useful to compare Piatti’s version of the aria (see Figure 3.19) with Bellini’s original (see Figure 3.20):
Figure 3.19, Piatti, *Souvenir de la Sonnambula*, bars 24-43.
Figure 3.19, bars 44-64.
Figure 3.20, Bellini, *La Sonnambula* (Act 2: *Ah! non credea mirarti*), bars 1-13.
Figure 3.20, bars 14-21.
Figure 3.20, bars 22-29.
Figure 3.20, bars 30-37.
We notice some important differences. Firstly, in bar 30 of Piatti’s version (Figure 3.19), the ornamental figure on the second beat is lengthened in such a way as to make an obvious contrast between the triple meter of the accompaniment and the duple meter of the solo part (see bar 8 of Bellini’s version, Figure 3.20). This creates an improvisatory feel and a heightened sense of rhythmic freedom. Piatti uses a similar figure again in bar 32 (Figure 3.19), where Bellini specifies only a turn (Figure 3.20, bar 10). The same bar (bar 32 in Piatti’s version) is an embellished version of bar 31. The accompaniment does not change, but the cello part presents an ornamented repetition of the previous bar. In Piatti’s version, a four-bar phrase beginning at bar 37 is repeated at bar 41, and varied with the addition of accents (bar 42) and slightly varied rhythm in the solo part (bar 44), whilst the accompaniment does not change. In bar 44, Piatti uses accents (where Bellini provides no marking) to emphasize the juxtaposition of duple and triple rhythms. Piatti marks the triplets in the cello part of bar 34 with accents, whereas the triplets in the accompaniment continue in the regular, legato fashion, therefore producing a discrepancy between the two parts. In bars 48 and 50, Piatti adds ornamental scale passages which again contrast with the triplet accompaniment (see bars 26 and 28 in the Bellini version, Figure 3.20). He also includes accents in bar 49 (bar 27 in Bellini version), as well as trills and grace notes in bars 51 and 52 (29 and 30 respectively). He varies the ornamental figure at the cadence at bar 61 (bar 39 in
Bellini’s version), adding fermatas, accents, the marking *rall.* dynamics, and double stops in sixths. Such figures are not uncommon at final cadence points in Piatti’s works. Again, when executed faithfully in relation to these markings, this serves to create a sense of improvisation and rhythmic freedom in performance. The markings are included to create this effect, and we assume that without them, many cellists would not have interpreted such passages in this way. Alternatively, passages which include such markings may indicate that these were places where the effect was particularly desired by the composer, whereas passages which were not so marked were left to the whim of the performer.

Like Bellini (see Figure 3.20 bar 34), Piatti marks bar 56 *abbandonandosi* in the solo part (see Figure 3.19), indicating that the soloist should ‘abandon himself’ to the demands of expression (i.e. use rubato), and the accompaniment, which doubles the melody at the third and marked *col canto*, is to follow the solo line. It is interesting to note that in the original operatic version, Bellini uses solo cello to accompany the singer at this point. This is indicative of both the vocal nature Bellini attributed to the cello and the character he associated with the instrument; one which was given to the expression of noble, intimate, and heartfelt sentiment.

At the *brilliante* passage of *Andante mosso* section, we see the use of septuplet figures before the repetition of a phrase, and at a transition between ideas. This is reminiscent of Benda’s and Pasta’s use of unusual rhythmic groupings to create a sense of rhythmic freedom and independence from the accompaniment. Note too, that in both cases it is applied to a chromatic scale.

**Figure 3.21, Piatti, *Souvenir de la Sonnambula*, bars 114 and 122.**
It is interesting to consult Carlo Curti’s (1807-1872) *Souvenir sur la Sonnambula variato per Violoncello* for another example of how cellists applied rubato techniques in the same context.

Figure 3.22, Curti, *Souvenir sur la Sonnambula variato per Violoncello*, bars 33-53.
Curti’s piece was composed sometime between 1857 and 1861. His ornamentation is different to Piatti’s and Bellini’s; however, like Piatti, he frequently writes accents (>) where triple and duple rhythms are contrasted. In bar 58 (see Figure 3.22) Curti uses chromatic runs (like Piatti) at phrase ends which move in step. He also provides accelerando and rallentando markings, the latter of which he uses where Piatti and
Bellini mark *abbandonandosi* (see Figure 3.22 bar 64). He specifies that a large portion of the section is to be played on the D-string, which has consequences for the colouring, and perhaps also for speed. The manifestations of *rubato* in Curti’s piece include ornamentation at the ends of phrases, akin to the arhythmic embellishment that violinists such as Benda and Viotti used to create a feeling of improvised ornamentation. These ornaments are, in fact, intended to achieve the effect of *tempo rubato*, and thus are a way of notating *rubato* or temporal flexibility. In addition, the ‘laboured’ delivery of triplet rhythms, indicated through use of accents and *rallentando* markings (for example see Figure 3.22 bars 38, 42, 57, and 61) are also expressions of *rubato*. Accented triplets in the solo part do not coincide with the accompaniment which, for the most part, is not marked *colla parte* or *colla voce*, indicating that some dislodgement between solo and accompaniment may be intended. The four accents in bar 52 probably indicate bow vibrato. In bar 68, Curti begins his cadenza in the manner of Bellini, but then continues differently, incorporating idiomatic vocal figures (such as the *volata*), as well as double stops.

Braga uses chromatic embellishments at the ends of phrases (see Figure 3.23 bars 12 and 16) in the slow movement of his *Primo Concerto*. 
In the Andantino section of his Souvenir du Rhin, the melody is first given in skeletal form, then again in embellished version, with what appear to be written-out trills and other ornamental figures (including chromatic) in irregular note groupings. At bar 67 (see Figure 3.24) we see a group of 9 demisemiquavers, and at bar 68, 10 demisemiquavers, at the end of the phrase before and during the dominant 7th chord (E major 7th), which cadences to A major in bar 70.
Figure 3.24, Braga, Souvenir du Rhin, bars 39-54.
Braga’s pieces for cello and piano, *Romanesca* and *Pergolesi* illustrate the use of rubato as a means of varying a repeated motif, and rubato applied by phrase. In *Pergolesi*, the
opening theme appears first in ‘simple’ version (bars 5-13), then again in bars 13-21, with the addition of syncopated rhythms in bar 18, rhythmic variation in bar 19, and a fermata in bar 20. When the latter portion of the melody reappears in bars 28-30, it is with a crescendo in bar 28, and allargando in bar 29. It appears that the syncopated figure in bar 28 propels the tempo forward somewhat, with the allargando in bar 29 receiving the ‘stolen’ time:

Figure 3.25, Braga, Pergolesi, bars 1-32.

In the bars which immediately follow this section, we see two presentations of a single idea, the first marked più mosso, the second meno mosso, thus creating the effect of give-and-take between phrases.

Figure 3.25, bars 27-45.
The same effect is used in *La Romanesca*, where one part of a phrase is hurried, while another is held back, resulting in balance over the entire phrase. After a *diminuendo* and *rallentando un poco* in bars 21-23, there is a *crescendo* and *accelerando un poco* in bars 23-25. The *forte* and *crescendo con anima* in bars 25-27 is followed by *piano* and *stentate* in bars 27-29. Similarly, the *forte* and *crescendo con anima* in bars 33-35 is balanced by *piano, dolcissimo e molto espressivo* in bars 35-37.

**Figure 3.26, Braga, La Romanesca, bars 20-40.**

A reference to Piatti’s use of rubato is found in the Whitehouse\textsuperscript{262} edition of his *Twelve Capricci for Violoncello Solo Op. 25*. It contains the note:

The tone to be light – almost ponticello in character. The whole Capriccio to be played with freedom of time – virtually rubato. Noticing the varieties of tone marked [i.e. the accent marks] – and the pianissimo at the return of the subject.\textsuperscript{263}

In this case, considering the context and tempo marking (*Allegro quasi Presto*), one might assume that rubato is expressed in agogic accents (lengthening important notes in the melody line, and especially those marked with the sign >) as well as fluctuations in

\textsuperscript{262} William Edward Whitehouse was a student of Piatti at the Royal Academy of Music in London.

tempo (in the sense of ‘borrowing’ time) within phrases. Perhaps the rubato mirrors the dynamic markings, with crescendi accompanied by forward movement and decrescendi holding back. It also seems logical that time be taken before sudden dynamic changes, in the manner described by García above.

Conclusions

It is clear from the foregoing discussion that 19th-century concepts of time and rhythm, and their significance for musical expression, differed from assumptions commonly held about these today. Whereas performers today are more likely to be guided by abstract and scientific notions in this and other aspects of performance, 19th-century musicians’ more general focus on a personal, human-centred response to the musical text, resulted in a very different understanding and use of time. Fidelity to the composer’s intentions was then, and is still, a foremost concern; however, contrary to what performers understand by that today, the 19th-century musician’s was a fidelity to the spirit, rather than the letter of the text. Being ‘faithful’ also required an authentic personal response to the work.

Such an approach, of course, makes it impossible to formulate specific guidelines about tempo modification and use of rubato in 19th-century Italian music, and explains why contemporary sources from the period are so elusive in their treatment of the subject. Whilst, for didactic purposes, some methods provide explanation and illustration of rubato and tempo modification techniques, many acknowledge that such treatment can only communicate the effect in a very limited way, and that the application of such techniques can only really be learnt through live observation and the good example of an experienced artist. Modifications in timing were usually so subtle and nuanced as to elude notation. ‘Correct’ tempo and rhythm was that which resulted from the resonance between the performer’s sentiment and the dramatic and expressive content of the music. Obviously, in addition, a number of external factors influenced a performer’s choice of tempo and use of rubato, including the size of performance venue and musical forces. Delivery, whether vocal or instrumental, had always to be rhytmical; this meant, more than anything else, that it had to be clear – clear in the execution of the details of the text, and clear in its emotional expression. Tempo modification and rubato were indispensable to this cause, a fact to which all the sources here considered attest. Furthermore, it seems that they were indispensable particularly to Italian performance
practice, more so than any other. Beautiful, expressive melody was the defining feature of Italian bel canto composition, whose characteristics also included regular phrasing, a predominantly homophonic texture, and simple accompaniment which didn’t compete with the solo voice. Together, these created the conditions by which the soloist was most free to be expressive; affording him/her the greatest liberties in ornamentation, colouring, and time.

The issue that primarily concerns us here is: how, when, and to what extent modifications in tempo and rhythm were executed in practice. We know that there were certain aesthetic boundaries which could not be crossed, in the interests of formal integrity and good taste. Rubato, as it was practised in the 19th century, was of two basic types; which Hudson refers to as the ‘earlier’ and the ‘later’. The ‘earlier’ type, which was closely related to improvisation and embellishment, involved the redistribution of note values and/or accentuation within the bar or phrase, and allowed for time or emphasis to be ‘taken’ from one note or phrase part and ‘given’ to another. It allowed for temporary fluctuations in tempo, but ‘stolen’ time was always recompensed, thus not affecting the overall progression of tempo throughout the piece. It created a sense of freedom and rhythmic independence of the solo line from the accompaniment. To achieve this, a regular beat was maintained in the accompaniment, so that the digressions of the solo part could be both appreciated and regulated. Manifestations of the ‘earlier’ rubato included the lengthening of notes which functioned as appoggiaturas, or which were either salient to the harmony or structurally significant; the rhythmic variation of passages in uniform rhythm; the rhythmic and/or melodic embellishment of a motif on its repetition; the addition of ornaments; and the use of polyrhythm. These were techniques commonly used in slow movements or those of moderate tempo. In faster contexts, syncopation and over-dotting were more frequently used. Time was ‘borrowed’ for dramatic effects such as sudden changes in dynamic. In such cases, rests were inserted or lengthened to strengthen dramatic impact. For similar reasons, time was ‘given’ to technically-difficult passages, such as those involving large leaps, so that their impact and expressive power could be fully appreciated. Rubato was used where the performer wished to convey intense emotion, particularly of a disturbed or anguished nature. In this way it created a feeling of struggle, manifest in the struggle of the artist to express himself freely within the constraints which art and nature impose. Such rubato could be practiced only where there was a dominant melody, with an accompaniment which provided rhythmic and harmonic support, but did not compete
with the solo part on a melodic level. It was used at cadences (in the form of varying rhythmic patterns, anticipating trills, and lengthening important notes), repetitions of a melody, and before codas and other structurally-significant points. It gave ornaments the improvised feel they were intended to have. Terms such as *vacillare*, *con espressione*, *espressivo*, *dolce*, *stentato*, and *strisciare*, as well as dynamic nuances such as *crescendi* and *decrescendi*, were some of the indications composers used for the earlier type of rubato, as were double-stems, and various accent and articulation markings such as the *tenuto* and *messa di voce*.

What Hudson refers to as the ‘later’ type of rubato involved tempo modification of the entire musical texture, without recourse to temporal compensation. Often the accompaniment was marked *col canto* or *assecondare* to indicate that it should follow the solo line. 19th-century sources indicate that the later type was used by Italian cellists, though to a lesser extent than the earlier type, and more so toward the end of the century than at the beginning. Again, compositional style significantly influenced its use. García wrote: “the compositions of Mozart, Cimarosa, Rossini &c., demand great exactitude in their rhythmic movements”, then added, “Donizetti’s music – and above all Bellini’s contains a great number of passages, which without indications either of rallentando or accelerando, require both to be employed”.264 Obviously fantasias, caprices and pieces with the marking *recitativo* demanded a free approach to tempo and rhythm. Late 19th-century cello literature suggests that, in addition to these pieces, and those passages in which tempo modification is explicitly marked, a slowing of the tempo was generally appropriate for the return of a theme; after a fermata; and in some cases at passages marked *espressivo*, *cantabile*, or *dolce*.265

19th-century Italian cello sources indicate that both types of rubato were used by cellists, though the earlier type was favoured. When they use the term *rubato*, it is invariably this type to which they refer. Both, however, were to be used frugally. As Forino tells us: “the normal state is calmness”266, and balance, or *aplomb*, was of utmost importance. By the end of the century there were two ‘camps’ of musicians – those who clung to the earlier type (which included the chief exponents of 19th-century Italian cello

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265 These terms could also be used to indicate *rubato* of the earlier type.
playing), and those who subscribed to the tastes of the New German School. Verdi referred to the latter in the following remark to Heinrich Ehrlich:

Moreover, what you were just telling me about German conductors and their arbitrary treatment of tempi – that is beginning to spread rapidly in Italy too; it is almost comic to observe how many of our young conductors endeavour to change the tempo every ten bars or introduce completely new nuances into every insignificant aria or concert piece.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁷ Brown, 395.
4. Portamento

*Portamento* (It.) literally means ‘carriage’. The term is used in musical discourse to signify the smooth connection of the two notes by sounding the intervening pitches between them. An audible glide ‘carries’ the voice from one pitch to the other. *The New Oxford Companion to Music* (1983) notes:

A *portamento* style of string playing was popular, for expressive purposes, in the 19th and early 20th centuries, especially with such violinists as Fritz Kreisler, but went out of fashion.268

To understand the use of *portamento* for expressive purposes in the 19th century, we must first be aware of terminological variety in the literature of that time. Galeazzi used the term in his violin method to refer to the positions of the left hand on the fingerboard, as did Tessarini.269 Campagnoli used the term *strisciare*, elsewhere associated with audible gliding, to refer to slurring, as well as to some graces. He uses the term ‘*portamento di voce*’ to refer to ascending appoggiaturas, however he does not suggest that these should be executed with audible gliding. We will see that in some instances, 19th-century use of the term *portamento* was associated with audible gliding; in others, it referred more generally to the ‘putting forth’ of sound, as the following quote from Charles Burney illustrates:

> “But the French voice never comes further than from the throat; there is no *voce di petto*, no true *portamento*, or direction of the voice, on any of the stages”.270

In his *Memoirs of the Opera in Italy, France, Germany, and England* (1851), George Hogarth classified five types of aria, including the *aria di portamento*, which he described as follows:

The *aria di portamento* is comprised chiefly of sustained long notes that express ‘the carriage or sustaining of the voice’. Here the tone quality is most important,

270 Stark, 210-11.
‘for the beauty of sound itself and of vocal sounds in particular, as being the finest of all sounds, is held by the Italians to be one of the chief sources of pleasure derived from music. The subjects proper for this class of air are sentiments of dignity, but calm and undisturbed by passion…the subject of the *portamento* is too grave and serious to admit of the degree of ornament which is essential to the *cantabile.*’ 271

Here again, the term *portamento* is used to refer to the general carriage of the voice, and not to audible gliding.

The *Piccolo Lessico del Musicista* (1902), defines *portamento* as a manner of execution characterised by an ‘emphatic’ legato:

...it is a mode of singing technique, and consists of carrying (raising or lowering) the voice from one note to another without interruption, and differs from *legato* by its slower and considered execution. It is also used on string instruments, on the cornet, and the trombone. After the emission of the first note of an interval, the second is reached by a slight anticipation and is then reinforced somewhat. 272

While Burney’s and Hogarth’s use of the term refers to the general manner in which sound is projected, the above definition alludes to something more. It does not explicitly refer to audible gliding; however the instrumentarium to which it refers is telling; audible gliding is more easily achieved on these instruments than others. Thus, we may conclude that this latter definition is referring to a specific technique used to carry the voice or sound from one note to another in an expressive way. 19th-century vocal and string sources refer to various techniques for effecting such expressive connections. The use of these techniques, and especially *portamento* (or audible gliding), by 19th-century Italian cellists will be the focus of this chapter.

As was the case with *vibrato*, decisions about the application of *portamento* in 19th-century string playing generally were considered the prerogative of the performer, and as a result, it is rarely marked in scores. We will see that in the latter part of the 19th...

272 Amintore Galli, “*Portamento,*” in *Piccolo Lessico del Musicista,* (Milano: G. Ricordi & C., 1902), 361. This resembles the vocal ‘anticipation grace’, which will be discussed later in the chapter.
century, musicians and theorists reacted against what they saw as an ‘abuse’ of
portamento, suggesting that the nature, circumstances and frequency of its use had
evolved over the course of the century, in ways which were contrary to the established
good taste.

The latter part of the 18th century saw significant developments in bow and instrument
making, which simultaneously both reflected and inspired a new performance aesthetic,
characterised by smooth contours, and legato phrases of increasing length. Given this
context, we might assume that portamento was a feature of the contemporary
performance practice. Indeed, this was the case; furthermore it appears to have been a
particular feature of Italian practice. Clive Brown writes:

Whatever the words used to describe it, however, there is every reason to believe
that portamento... already played a significant part in musical performance
during the later decades of the eighteenth century. It seems particularly to have
been cultivated by Italian singers and violinists.273

By the end of the 19th century, portamento had become a mannerism for some
performers, causing cellists and other musicians to caution against its overuse.
Nonetheless, for the latter part of the century portamento was generally considered,
even by the parsimonious, to be an essential technical skill and a highly effective
expressive ornament when used appropriately, particularly in singing and string
playing.274 It is reputed to have originated with vocalists; string players adopted it, and
thus it became one of the means by which instrumentalists could replicate expressive
singing, particularly in dramatic and emotive contexts.275 Gaetano Braga attests to its
origins in the Italian bel canto tradition:

273 Brown, 560. Brown points out that Italian violinist Antonio Lolli (1725 – 1802) was renowned for his
use of portamento. David Milsom in Theory and Practice in Late Nineteenth-Century Violin Performance
quotes Brown: “The extent to which Viotti (born 1755) himself employed it [portamento] is less clear, but
it was certainly used by other, older Italian violinists”. (See David Milsom, Theory and Practice in Late
Nineteenth-Century Violin Performance, An Examination of Style in Performance 1850-1900
(Hampshire: Ashgate, 2003), 76. Stowell, in Early Violin and Viola, reports: “Paganini, among others,
regularly employed glissando with striking effect, both for showmanship and for cantabile execution of
double stopping”. (See Stowell, 61).
274 Forino, Il Violoncello, 287 states: “The sound portamento between one note and another is one of the
great resources/assets of the human voice and of the stringed instruments”.
275 Milsom, p. 76.
The good violoncellist, without being dry and without refusing those most beautiful portamenti di voce that characterize the *bel canto* of our country, must present his own instrument in its genuine character, in its sweet touching and its majestic simplicity that render it much efficacy.\(^{276}\)

The reference to the character of the instrument is important. According to Braga, and indeed other 19\(^{th}\)-century Italian cellists, the cello had an innate sweetness and a majestic simplicity which were not to be compromised and therefore determined to a significant extent how the instrument was played, and the sorts of music deemed ‘appropriate’ to it. Whilst *portamento* was an integral aspect of cello technique, it was not to be used in a manner which compromised the integrity of the instrument. Braga censures the ‘miaowing’ and affected ‘dragging’ produced by some cellists.\(^{277}\) He was not alone in making such rebuffs; the violinists Joachim and Moser criticised the late 19\(^{th}\)-century Franco-Belgian violin school for its excessive use of *portamento*, and divergence from the school “of the old Italians”.\(^{278}\)

Whilst there are explicit references to *portamento* in 19\(^{th}\)-and early 20\(^{th}\)-century Italian cello methods, they are, for the most part, not sufficiently detailed or objective to provide adequate insight into quantitative and qualitative aspects of *portamento* use amongst Italian cellists, when considered alone. Therefore we must also consider other sources, namely those from vocalists and violinists, which Italian cellists were likely to have emulated.\(^{279}\) From these sources, and indications in the repertoire, it is possible to gain a more complete understanding of the contexts (both musical and technical) in which *portamento* was used, how it was executed, how it was notated explicitly, and how its use was implied through other markings, such as fingerings.

We will begin by examining references to *portamento* in relevant cello methods. These references will provide the contextual basis for examination of other sources and repertoire.

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\(^{276}\) Braga, 234.

\(^{277}\) Ibid, 233.

\(^{278}\) Milsom, 79 quotes Joachim and Moser: “without detriment to their musical proficiency otherwise, these French and Belgian virtuosi, although possessed of an astonishing technique of the left hand, have not only entirely forgotten the healthy and natural method of singing and phrasing which originated in the *bel canto* of the old Italians...but they even continue to repudiate it.

\(^{279}\) Since, as has already been stated, *portamento* is understood to have originated as a vocal practice, the vocal literature is particularly relevant here.
Portamento in Cello Methods

Of the cello methods included in this study, seven refer directly to portamento or similar techniques. In his c. 1889 edition of Dotzauer’s cello Method Op. 165, Giuseppe Magrini uses the term ‘strisciare’ to refer to portamento, which he describes as a ‘dragging’ of the finger on the string. We read that this action serves to facilitate technical difficulties (i.e. maintaining continuity of sound over large intervallic leaps), as well as having an ornamental function, though in the latter case, it must be used with discretion. It is clearly only appropriate in solo contexts, and can be executed with one finger or two:

The dragging of the finger on the string allows the artist to connect one sound to another with greatest accord, particularly in troublesome passages; and it produces a beautiful effect when it is executed with taste and without abuse. It is clear that one must not use it in tutti passages, since ornaments are generally not appropriate except in a concerto or in a solo passage which permits the artist to abandon himself to his own whim. The dragging is carried out in two ways: with one finger, or with more; in the latter case, one finger obliges the other to surrender its place.280

The two possibilities for fingering of portamenti (i.e. execution on one finger (see Figure 4.1), or two (see Figure 4.2)) are illustrated with musical examples:

Figure 4.1, Magrini edition of Dotzauer method, p. 94.

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280 Giuseppe Magrini, Metodo per Violoncello di J. J. F. Dotzauer (Milano: G. Ricordi & C., c. 1889), 94.
Regarding the execution of two-finger portamenti, he writes:

One is cautioned that the action of dragging and placing the fourth finger must be immediate, in order that no break is perceived between the two notes Si and Sol.  

Two manuscript editions of Piatti’s method contain no reference to portamento; however, the 1911 Stainer and Bell edition (Whitehouse and Tabb) contains a brief section on glissando, which it translates as ‘gliding’. In the following exercise we see that, as in the previous example, the glide may be executed using one finger, or two:

We are told that the glide should always be executed on the first note of the interval – the ‘old’ note:

In ascending, the slide is made by the finger playing the lower note. In descending, the slide is made by the finger playing the higher note.

In Piatti’s edition of Kummer’s method, ‘gradual sliding’ of the finger is discussed as an effect which may be used infrequently with “intervals of thirds, fourths &c”, presumably meaning that it is not appropriate for smaller intervals (i.e major and minor seconds):

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281 Ibid.
The gradual sliding up or down of the finger, from one note to the other, in intervals of thirds, fourths &c, certainly produces an agreeable effect sometimes; but we must warn the pupil just as much from then continual, or even frequent use of this grace, as we did from the last one we spoke of [vibrato]. Ear and feeling run the risk to be so completely spoiled by these habits, that after some time even the greatest exagerations [sic] in these graces, seem tasteful to the player; while any ear that is not so spoiled would be just as much shocked by them, as by an external moaning and wailing.²⁸³

Quarenghi introduces the *portamento di voce* together with another vocal ornament, the *volata*. He illustrates *portamenti* over one- and two-octave leaps, with the lower note played by the second finger and the upper note by the third. He writes:

The *portamento di voce* is made when, between two notes which must be executed on the same string making a shift of the hand and conserving the same movement of the bow, one makes heard a trail of sound passing from the first note to the second. In this case, as a rule, one should drag the finger which executes the first note quickly on the string, and when the hand has reached the position required for the second note, make the finger which must execute it, fall upon it.²⁸⁴

This is highly informative – it makes explicitly clear some points which are only suggested in the previous examples. Firstly, *portamento* is made between two notes executed on the same string; not on different strings. Secondly, the notes must be executed within the same bow stroke – indicating that no gliding should be heard between notes executed with separate bow strokes. Finally, the finger must be dragged quickly. In contrast to the other descriptions, Quarenghi’s seems only to permit two-finger portamenti. Elsewhere, referring to the fingering of scales, he advises that two successive notes should never be played with the same finger.²⁸⁵ In a section on shifting, he advises that a finger may be moved one semitone higher or lower without moving the hand, but that this movement is to be executed by dragging the finger *quickly* on the string so as to avoid a “nauseating meow.”²⁸⁶ Similar advice is given for

²⁸³ Kummer, 30.
²⁸⁴ Quarenghi, 208.
²⁸⁵ Quarenghi, 197.
²⁸⁶ Quarenghi, 56.
an exercise involving shifts between first and fourth positions, with the addition that the hand should be given an “elastic movement” and the shift executed in such a manner that “the wrist, acting like a spring, makes the hand shoot out from one position to the other.”

Quarenghi does, however, make exceptions; in a study devoted to ‘arcata gettata’ (thrown bow strokes) in his method we see a number of examples of scale-like passages which use the same finger consecutively (see Figure 4.4). All are under a slur and on the same string, however the nature of the bowing (signaled by the dots) means that little or no audible gliding should result in these cases. There are in this piece ascending double-stop passages which use the same fingers consecutively, however, of the single note passages, only certain (but not all) descending ones use such a fingering. There are numerous examples of ascending and descending scale passages using alternate fingers, however it seems that those in descending, which are at the end of a phrase or section, are to be played with one finger only:

Figure 4.4, Quarenghi, Metodo (Studio No. 107), bars 13-14, p. 261.

Figure 4.4, bars 46-48, p. 263.

In the following passage from Braga’s method, the author objects to ‘dragging’, probably referring to an exaggerated gliding which is merely the result of poor shifting technique, rather than intentional, expressive gliding. The meaning of the term ‘portamento’ in this passage is not immediately apparent; it could denote ‘carriage’ of the voice, in the same sense that Charles Burney used the term. However, it could also refer to audible gliding because, as we will later see in examples from Braga’s compositions, he almost certainly did use audible gliding for expressive effect:

287 Quarenghi, 100.
One can categorically assert to be ugly the style of that violoncellist who abuses the left hand shaking it incessantly on the strings with paralytic uneasiness; who in sliding with his hand on the fingerboard, drags it in a manner of drawing from it a sound completely similar to miaowing...

The antithesis of all these flaws will be by consequence conditions necessary for endowing the violoncellist with a beautiful style. He must therefore take care that the left hand presses the strings almost without ever shaking, and that in the passages from note to note and in the changes of position he avoids that so affected manner of dragging. The violoncellist must set himself to sing on his own instrument imitating the Italian bel canto... Pasta, Alboni, Bosio, Frezzolini, Rubini, Lablache and a great number of celebrated singers, that here it is useless to number, had a beautiful portamento and joined without ever dragging from one note to the other, and with the maximum naturalness they knew to carry a sound from the low to the high and vice versa...288

Braga lists Luigi Lablache as an exemplary singer; we know from Lablache’s own singing method that he used portamento for expressive purposes.289

While Vincenzo Loveri’s Primo Corso del Violoncello contains no formal discussion of portamento, it does indicate the use of a gliding motion of the left hand in three studies. They contain a marking – a straight line between two fingerings – and the following explanation:

The small line placed between one number and the other signifies that the finger must be dragged [strisciato] to the indicated position.290

Loveri makes no comment about whether or not the gliding should be audible; therefore this could merely be a reference to the manner in which the left hand should execute the shift. However, some features of his examples suggest that audible gliding may in fact be intended:

- only ascending intervals are marked with the sign;

288 Braga, 233.
290 Loveri, 50.
- all marked intervals are between two notes to be played on the same string;
- the marking appears only in relation to intervals of a fourth or larger;
- all except three of the eleven marked instances occur between notes under a slur. The three which are not under a slur occur between the notes Bb (first finger, first position, on the A-string) and G (fourth finger, fourth position, on the A-string). This interval could easily be played without shifting – i.e. in one position over two strings. However, the specified fingering suggests that some degree of audible gliding may be intended;
- not all position changes on the same string and under a slur are marked with the sign, suggesting that those which are, should be audible, and those which aren’t, should not;
- the marked examples are always two-finger shifts. Instances of one-finger shifts under slurs are not marked with the sign in these studies;
- the three studies are marked Andantino, Cantabile and Allegro animato respectively, and consist mainly of minim, crotchet and quaver note values with frequent slurring and lyrical-style melodies.

The same marking appears in Leonardo Moja’s Dodici Esercizi; however, in this case it is clearly used to indicate the manner of shifting - a gliding motion of the left hand, rather than an intentionally audible effect.\(^{291}\)

An Italian edition of the Dotzauer method contains the marking in one etude, with the explanation:

> The first two parts of the following number contain an exercise for carrying or joining the sounds; such a manner is indicated by a line, and it is executed with one or more fingers.\(^{292}\)

In this etude, every instance except one of a shift under a slur contains the marking.\(^{293}\)

There are same finger shifts, shifts involving a finger change, and shifts from higher to lower and lower to higher finger numbers, over both ascending and descending

\(^{291}\) The marking is used frequently between unslurred notes and where string crossings are inevitable, making it almost certain that the intention is not a musical one.
\(^{293}\) At the end of the first bar of the piece, a shift from fourth finger to an harmonic note played with the third finger does not contain the marking.
intervals. Here the frequency of the marking, coupled with the fact that it occurs on all instances of a shift under a slur except one, suggests that the marking is used to indicate the manner in which the shift should be executed with the left hand (i.e. with finger adherent to the string and sliding), rather than an audible slide.

Luigi Forino’s recommendations are the most informative of the 19th-century Italian cello sources with regards to portamento. In Il Violoncello, il Violoncellista ed i Violoncellisti, we read:

The portamento di suono between one note and the other is one of the great resources of the human voice and of the stringed instruments. It is an effect which, like the vibrato, is used with much parsimony and common sense. It serves to unite two notes, as the human voice does, especially from low to high. As to the expediency of the portamento, nothing can be advised; it all depends on the artistic sense and the good taste of the performer. The abuse and exaggeration of the portamento results in that awful meow that is never condemned enough.

When the two notes between which the portamento occurs are executed with different fingers, with which of the two must the portamento be carried out? With the finger of departure or with that of arrival? The violinist colleagues use the two manners and that is obvious, but in the violoncello world the things are, who knows why, different.

… The change of finger in the change of position with portamento di suono “cuts clearly in two the trait d’union that joins one note to the other”, writes Bazelaire, and he is right. The break which extends between the finger which executes the portamento and that of the note of arrival produces an interruption that the human voice could not even execute. But, excepting the cases in which the two notes between which the portamento occurs are executed with the same finger, it seems to me that that imperceptible interruption would occur equally whether changing the finger at the beginning of the portamento, or changing it on the note of arrival. The best solution is perhaps that of substituting deftly and quickly one finger for the other during the portamento, when this cannot be executed with the same finger. Do not change the bow stroke before the note of arrival. The exaggerated portamento produces the so-called glissé, of which
even more sparing use is made. It is strange that the French should use this French word, Italianised and call this effect *glissando*.\textsuperscript{294}

This passage addresses issues raised in previous examples, but also some new ones. Firstly, Forino acknowledges *portamento* as an expressive resource of vocalism and string playing. The performer determines when and where it is used. Good taste prohibits too frequent and exaggerated use (Forino equates the exaggerated *portamento* with the *glissé*). *Portamento* is used specifically for ascending intervals, and can be executed either with one finger or two. However, Forino raises an important point about the latter case; the process of finger substitution results in an unnatural break in the glide – unnatural, because it does not occur in vocal *portamento*, and is a purely technical constraint associated with string playing. This probably means that one-finger portamenti are preferable. His solution, when these are not possible, is to effect a rapid finger substitution during, rather than at the beginning or end, of the two-finger shift, so as to minimise the effect of the break. This results in part of the glide being executed on the new finger.

In the following excerpt from Forino’s method book, *La Tecnica*, we learn that *portamento* is the result of slow and gentle gliding of the fingers during position changes; presumably more slow and more gentle than one would otherwise do for a position change. Here too, Forino acknowledges its origins as a vocal effect, and, like Braga, identifies it as a characteristic of the *bel canto* tradition. Again, he cautions against overuse:

\begin{quote}
Sound *portamento* is produced by a slower and gentler sliding of the fingers in the changes of position. It produces the same effect as the ‘*bel canto*’ of human voice and can be perfectly imitated by string instruments. It is needless to say that the continuous or exaggerated use of this effect is to be condemned as being affected, effeminate and tiresome.\textsuperscript{295}
\end{quote}

In the same work, a discussion on shifting provides further information about *portamento*:

\textsuperscript{295} Forino, *La Tecnica*, vol. 2, 19.
As the fingers must always press the strings, the change of position produces a sound *portamento* which must be rendered imperceptible in the unbound notes, accomplished quickly in the swift passages, and instead rendered more perceptible in the slow passages, producing, as we shall see later, the so-called *sound portamento*. Care must be taken to avoid the slightest influence of the movements of the left hand upon the right.\(^{296}\)

The technique for shifting is always the same; the finger glides along the string, whilst pressing it. Where there is no slur, the gliding should be inaudible. In fast contexts the gliding is presumably audible, but of rapid speed; in slower contexts it is more audible, and thus the gliding motion slower. The final comment referring to independence of the two hands suggests that the portato bow stroke is used where no audible gliding is to be heard – i.e. the gliding motion of the left hand is smooth and unbroken, whereas the bowing arm ‘breaks’ the slur in order to silence the effect of the gliding.

The earliest of the cello methods considered in this study, Rachelle’s *Breve Metodo* of 1825 does not address audible gliding directly, however in a section discussing position changes, we read that one must change position:

\[\ldots\text{with certainty, and in a manner that the ear does not hear hardness or difficulty.}\] \(^{297}\)

This suggests that audible gliding was not to be heard during position changes. In his exercises, Rachelle does include some examples of same-finger shifts, with and without slurring (most frequently for ascending or descending major and minor seconds, and minor thirds)\(^{298}\), though there is nothing to suggest that any of these shifts should be audible.

These references to *portamento* in cello methods indicate the following:

- *Portamento* originated with vocalism, and was a feature of *bel canto* singing;

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\(^{296}\) Forino, *La Tecnica*, vol. 2, 15.
\(^{297}\) Rachelle, 16.
\(^{298}\) Rachelle, 22-4, and 33.
- *Portamento* was an ornament, usually added at the discretion of the performer, for the purposes of expression. It was to be used with taste and discretion;

- In cello playing, *portamento* was also referred to by the terms *portamento di voce*, *portamento di suono*, *strisciare*, and *glissando*;

- *Portamento* connected two notes at least a third apart which were joined by a slur, and executed on the same string;

- *Portamento* enabled difficult shifts to be executed in a graceful and expressive way;

- It was used in solo playing, rather than chamber or orchestral settings;

- *Portamento* involved using the normal left-hand shifting technique in a more deliberate manner, and without the bow ‘diminishing’ its effect;

- It could be executed using one finger, or two;

- Between two notes played with different fingers, the *portamento* was most commonly executed with the 'old' finger (i.e. the finger which plays the first note). If the finger of the second note was higher than the first (in the sense that the fourth finger is ‘higher’ than the second finger), it was to be placed on the fingerboard immediately upon arrival in the new position. This, however, produced a break in the glide, and therefore as an alternative, some cellists substituted the finger during the *portamento*;

- Whereas Forino’s and Loveri’s examples suggest that *portamento* was used more for ascending intervals, other sources (such as Piatti’s and Quarenghi’s methods, as well as Piatti’s edition of Kummer’s method) demonstrate its use in both ascending and descending intervals;

- The degree to which the *portamento* was perceptible depended in part upon the speed with which the gliding motion was executed. It is impossible to glean quantitative information from the sources in this respect; Piatti advocates gradual sliding, Quarenghi; quick, Braga criticized ‘dragging’. It is plausible, and indeed apparent from Luigi Forino’s sources, that the speed of gliding was dependent on the tempo of the piece; slower gliding for slow contexts, and faster gliding for fast ones;

- *Portamento* should not be heard between notes which are not slurred. It should be executed more quickly, and therefore be less perceptible, in faster passages, and be more perceptible in slow passages;

- The misuse of *portamento* was considered a ‘sin’ comparable to the overuse of left-hand vibrato;
- The exaggerated portamento was referred to as glissé.

**Portamento in late 18th- and early 19th-century Italian Violin methods**

The earliest of the 19th-century Italian cello methods consulted in this study, Rachelle’s 1825 cello method, does not discuss portamento. Italian violin methods can be useful in redressing the paucity of information in pre- and early 19th-century cello sources.

Woldemar refers to the Couler à Mestrino in his 1801 edition of Leopold Mozart’s violin method. It is a form of expressive portamento, executed on one finger, which the Italian violinist Mestrino was reported to have used in slow movements:299

**Figure 4.5, Woldemar’s Couler à Mestrino, as quoted in Stowell, Violin Technique and Performance Practice, p. 99.**

While neither Tartini nor Geminiani discuss portamento directly, some of their comments about fingering and shifting suggest that portamento was less prevalent in their playing than it was in the playing of late 19th-century violinists. In Tartini’s *Regole per arrivare a saper ben suonare il Violino* (c.1771), we read:

> If the hand has to be shifted several times during a passage, it should be done between the staccato notes, not the legato, in order that no gaps are heard in the latter case.300

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299 Stowell, *Early Violin and Viola*, p. 204 n. 74.
In order to interrupt the legato with ‘gaps’, one would be trying to make the left-hand shifts inaudible. This, therefore, was a basic premise. Furthermore, Tartini states that fingerings should be chosen for comfort.\footnote{Ibid., 56.}

In Geminiani’s *The Art of Playing the Violin* (1751) there is an obvious avoidance of fingering consecutive notes with the same finger:

**Figure 4.6, Geminiani, *The Art of Playing the Violin*, p. 2.**

Referring to the above chromatic scale, we read:

> The position of the fingers marked in the first scale (which is commonly practised) is a faulty one; for two notes cannot be stopped successively by the same finger without difficulty, especially in quick time.\footnote{Francesco Geminiani, *The Art of Playing on the Violin*, ed. David D. Boyden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), [4].}

Perhaps it is possible that the common 18\textsuperscript{th}-century practice of filling in larger intervals with scales and ornamental figures was the expressive equivalent of the 19\textsuperscript{th}-century *portamento*. In Galeazzi’s method, we observe that scales and ornamental figures were still used this way in the 1790s. Galeazzi addresses the issue of audible gliding directly, saying that in gliding the fingers of the left hand from one position to another, one must not allow the bow to make intermediary sounds heard.\footnote{Galeazzi (Ascoli, 1817), 150.} He writes that if a passage can

\[\text{\footnotesize \textsuperscript{301} Ibid., 56.} \]
\[\text{\footnotesize \textsuperscript{303} Galeazzi (Ascoli, 1817), 150.} \]
be played without changing position, this should be done so.\textsuperscript{304} Where an ascending shift is necessary, the player must take care to move the hand the minimum distance possible.\textsuperscript{305} Ascending intervals greater than a second in the higher positions can be played by stretching the fourth finger a half a tone, or a whole tone above its normal position, to avoid shifting.\textsuperscript{306} Consecutive shifts with the fourth finger (both in ascending and descending) produce a certain ‘dragging’, “which is difficult to avoid and produces a very bad effect.” For this reason, he advocates fingerings which do not involve consecutive uses of the same finger.\textsuperscript{307} Shifts over large intervals, he says are ‘extremely dangerous’ and should not be made without grave necessity, and only by experienced players.\textsuperscript{308} They should be made with a very rapid shift of the left hand, and the player must be prepared to ‘save’ himself with an ornamental passage if he miscalculates the shift.\textsuperscript{309}

Terminological variety can create confusion in these sources. While Galeazzi uses the term \textit{portamento} to refer to hand positions, and \textit{strisciare} to refer to audible gliding, Campagnoli uses the latter term throughout his method to refer to ‘slurring’, and \textit{‘portamento di voce’} in the way that some used the French term \textit{port de voix}; to designate an appoggiatura.\textsuperscript{310} Unlike Geminiani and Galeazzi, Campagnoli advocates consecutive uses of the same finger, particularly for leaps of a third, and for chromatic passages. The following passage from Study No. 166 in his method illustrates consecutive uses of the first finger and of the second finger. Note, however, that none of the examples of consecutive uses of the same finger occur under slurs:

\textbf{Figure 4.7, Campagnoli, \textit{Metodo (Studio No. 166)}, bars 1-5, p. 105.}

It is accompanied by the note:

\textsuperscript{304} Ibid., 149.
\textsuperscript{305} Ibid., 154.
\textsuperscript{306} Ibid., 162.
\textsuperscript{307} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{308} Ibid., 165-6.
\textsuperscript{309} Ibid., 166.
\textsuperscript{310} Campagnoli, XXVII and 54.
When the melody ascends or descends by intervals of a third on the same string, one makes use of the first and the first [finger], or the second and the second [finger].

Study No. 208 is marked “Irregular manner of sliding on the fingerboard with every finger playing on one string”, and contains passages which use consecutive first, second and third fingers (but not the fourth) in ascending and descending leaps, with and without slurring:

**Figure 4.8, Campagnoli, *Metodo (Study No. 208)*, bars 14-69, p. 134.**

Regarding the chromatic passage which concludes study No. 166:

**Figure 4.9, Campagnoli, *Metodo (Study No. 166)*, bars 28-30, p. 105.**

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311 Ibid., XXXIV. 115
He writes:

When the passages descend by half tones, one must make with the hand the smallest possible movement, withdrawing/pulling back only a little the little finger.\textsuperscript{312}

Here we see that notes with the same name (i.e. ‘F’ and ‘F#’), are usually assigned the same finger. An ascending chromatic passage in Study No. 211 uses a similar fingering pattern in reverse:

**Figure 4.10, Campagnoli, *Metodo (Studio No. 211)*, bar 20, p. 137.**

![Figure 4.10](image)

However, the following example uses a combination of same finger shifts in the lower positions, and alternate fingers in the upper registers:

**Figure 4.11, Campagnoli, *Metodo (Studio No. 230)*, bars 1-23, p. 148.**

![Figure 4.11](image)

With regard to one study by Corelli in which multiple hand positions are employed, Campagnoli writes that the shifts should be executed rapidly and the position changes not audible:

\textsuperscript{312} Ibid.
Ascending to third position, or descending to first, the movement of the hand must be made with great speed and force, so as not to make this change [of position] heard.\textsuperscript{313}

In a note to another such study, we read:

Finding oneself in the first position with the passage ascending gradually on the same string, use the first finger, sliding it with rapidity. When the position is taken in a jumping manner, it will be done during an open string or a rest, or when the notes make the largest leap and the hand the smallest possible.\textsuperscript{314}

Regarding the execution of a study in double stops, Campagnoli notes that the fingers must be slid along the string in such a manner that the movements are not heard:

It will be good to practice the double stops in thirds which ascend gradually, sliding the first and third fingers rapidly together on the same strings, in such a manner that one does not notice the movements of the hand and fingers.\textsuperscript{315}

According to Baillot’s \textit{L’Art du violon}, Viotti favoured fixed hand positions over fingerings that involved shifting.\textsuperscript{316} Burney reminds us that Geminiani did not use \textit{portamento}, though some of his contemporaries did:

Geminiani... was certainly mistaken in laying it down as a rule that ‘no two notes on the same string, in shifting, should be played with the same finger’, as beautiful expressions and effects are produced by great players in shifting, suddenly from a low note to a high, with the same finger on the same string’.\textsuperscript{317}

These important violin sources from the late 18\textsuperscript{th} and early 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries indicate that violinists generally sought to eliminate audible evidence of shifting. To achieve this, some avoided same-finger shifts (such as Geminiani and Galeazzi) though others, such as Campagnoli, permitted such shifts in ascending and descending chromatic scales, and

\textsuperscript{313} Ibid., XXXIII.
\textsuperscript{314} Ibid., XXXIII-XXXIV.
\textsuperscript{315} Ibid., XXXVI.
\textsuperscript{316} Boyce, 357-8.
\textsuperscript{317} Stowell, \textit{Early violin and Viola}, 59.
ascending and descending intervals of a third executed on one string. However, as we have seen, Campagnoli clearly states in some contexts that the gliding motion should not be audible. In the 20th century, Sfilio proposed that such audible gliding could be eliminated by avoiding the use of the same finger on successive notes,\(^{318}\) and by using extensions.\(^{319}\) Not one of the late 18th- and early 19th-century Italian violin sources considered here refers to audible gliding for expressive purposes. However, contemporary reports indicate that they did use it (i.e. Woldemar’s reference to Mestrino’s use of expressive gliding, and Lolli’s reputation for using portamento).\(^{320}\) It appears that, at least in the first half of the 19th-century, violinists achieved ‘expressive’ connection of two distant notes (i.e. a third or more apart) through the use of a number of means, that included scales and ornamental ‘fillers’, as well as audible gliding. These alternatives to gliding will be discussed in a later part of the chapter.

**Portamento and glissando in 19th- and 20th-century cello and violin playing**

With such variability in the terminology used to describe audible gliding, it is important to be able to distinguish between that which was intentional and expressive, and that which was merely the result of faulty shifting and bow technique. Some cellists, as we will see, referred to the former as *portamento*, and the latter as *glissando*, though many other musicians used the two terms interchangeably, causing considerable confusion. The conflicting definitions in the entries for *portamento* and *glissando* in the New Harvard Dictionary of Music (1986) illustrate the ambiguity inherent in many definitions of these terms:

> **Glissando**: A continuous or sliding movement from one pitch to another... On stringed instruments such as the violin... the sliding movement may produce a continuous variation in pitch rather than a rapid succession of discrete pitches. This is often indicated by a straight or wavy line drawn between the starting point and ending pitches and is sometimes termed *portamento*, though glissando remains the prevalent term for this effect in musical scores. Some writers have preferred to restrict the meaning of glissando to the motion in which discrete

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319 Ibid., 32.
320 Brown, 560.
pitches are heard, reserving *portamento* for continuous variation in pitch, but musical practice is not consistent in this respect. Ambiguity in the use of the term glissando is most likely to occur with respect to stringed instruments, which are capable of both effects.

*Portamento*: A continuous movement from one pitch to another through all of the intervening pitches, without, however, sounding these discretely. It is principally an effect in singing and string playing, though for the latter and for other instruments capable of such an effect, the term glissando is often used [for distinctions between the two terms, see Glissando]. In vocal music, the *portamento* may be indicated by connecting with a slur two pitches that are sung to different syllables. If two pitches are sung to the same syllable, with the slur simply indicating this fact, a *portamento* is indicated by the term itself.  

Luigi Forino describes *glissando* as an exaggerated form of *portamento*. Hugo Becker, whose playing Piatti respected and for whom the great Italian cellist was a mentor, maintains that the mechanical process (of the left hand) involved in executing *portamento* and *glissando* is the same, however, since *portamento* is expressive, and its use determined by artistic criteria, it involves more deliberate and considered gliding; whereas *glissando*, being merely the result of the left hand shifting action, is unintentional and its effect must therefore be minimized. However, he concedes that this distinction is not universally accepted. Van der Straeten defines *portamento* as being more deliberate than glissando:

Both consist in connecting two slurred notes with each other, and they are practically one and the same, except that the term “*portamento*” applies to a more deliberate way of sliding from one note to another, than that which is implied by the former term.

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322 Forino, *Il violoncello*, 288 states that the French Italianised the word *glissè* into *glissando*, which is an exaggerated form of *portamento* of which even scarcer use is made. In *La Tecnica*, vol. 2, 19, Forino states that it is used only in very special cases.  
Luigi Forino’s distinctions are helpful in understanding the use of the two terms in his father’s, Ferdinando Forino’s, Tarantella. In this piece, the term *con portamento* appears once, whereas *glissando* appears on six occasions. *Con portamento* is used for a sequence of ascending and descending sixths to be played on one string (see Figure 4.12, bars 46-52). The same passage is repeated twice, the second time without the *con portamento* marking (see Figure 4.12, bars 62-68).

**Figure 4.12, F. Forino, Tarantelle, bars 46-70.**

![Figure 4.12, F. Forino, Tarantelle, bars 46-70.](image)

**Figure 4.12, bars 89-100.**

![Figure 4.12, bars 89-100.](image)

The term *con portamento* appears between single-stopped notes on one string, whereas most instances of the marking *glissando* (four out of a total of six) are between slurred double-stops (see Figure 4.12, bars 92, 96, and 100). It is important to consider that the intonation of double stops is more reliable if there is a degree of audible gliding between them, and a legato execution is dependent not only on the smooth carriage of the bow, but also of the left hand. The two instances in which *glissando* appears on single notes, the marking refers to the interval A-F#, where the note A is most likely played with the open string, and the F# played with the fourth finger, as marked (see Figure 4.12 bars 49 and 65). Perhaps here the *glissando* marking is necessary, because
without it, the player would ordinarily not make a gliding shift from an open string. In the context of this piece, it appears that the older Forino, like his son, uses the *con portamento* marking to indicate a lesser degree of audible gliding, and *glissando* for more exaggerated gliding, especially where the performer, in the absence of such a marking, might be inclined not to do it.

Such an interpretation seems even more plausible when we read that audible gliding was not always intended in passages of slurred double stops; Campagnoli recommended that double stops be played with a gliding action of the left hand and fingers, but that this action should be inaudible:

> Double stops in thirds which ascend by degrees must be played by sliding quickly forwards the first and third fingers upon the same strings, and this in such a manner as not to let either the movement of the hand or the fingers be perceptible.\(^{325}\)

*Glissando* to a harmonic note is marked in Cesare Casella’s *Chanson Napolitaine* for cello and piano (1911). In the following excerpt, the *glissando* decorates repetitions of the note ‘E’ in various octaves, before the return of the opening theme, marked *pp*:

**Figure 4.13, C. Casella, *Chanson Napolitaine*, bars 40-44.**

![Music notation showing glissando]

Milsom points out that famous 19\(^{th}\)-century violinists Joachim and Moser were not in favour of *portamenti* to open strings because they were “technically and stylistically unnecessary”.\(^{326}\) A *portamento* to a harmonic note was, however, advocated by Spohr:

> During the clear vibration and distinct intonation of the Harmonic tone, the howling can be avoided by the rapid gliding on of the finger.\(^{327}\)

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\(^{325}\) As quoted in Stowell, *Violin Technique*, 101.

\(^{326}\) Milsom, 82-3.

\(^{327}\) Ibid., 92.
The following passage from Stowell’s *Early Violin and Viola* connects Paganini’s use of *glissando* with the execution of double stops, in a manner reminiscent of the example by F. Forino discussed above. Stowell does not, however, acknowledge the evidence on which he bases this statement:

Paganini, among others, regularly employed glissando with striking effect, both for showmanship and for cantabile execution of double stopping. Exploitation of the *glissando* and *portamento* as an ‘emotional connection of two tones’ (invariably in slurred bowing and with upward shifts) to articulate melodic shape, preserve uniformity of timbre or emphasize structurally important notes became so prevalent in the late 19th century that succeeding generations reacted strongly against it.\(^{328}\)

In *Violin Technique and Performance Practice*, he illustrates Paganini’s use of the techniques with the following examples. It is not clear, however, what distinction Paganini made between *glissando* and *portamento*:

**Figure 4.14.** Paganini’s use of *glissando* in passages on one string, and in *cantabile* passages with double stopping, as quoted in Stowell, *Violin Technique and Performance Practice*, p. 101.

\[^{328}\text{Stowell, } \textit{Early Violin and Viola}, 61.\]
Perhaps we might assume that *portamento* (audible gliding) is intended for the slurred intervals, and that glissando with distinct pitches is intended for the chromatic passage. This interpretation accords with the opinion of Sfilio, who argues that Paganini did not execute chromatic passages using the same finger consecutively:

**Figure 4.15, Paganini’s fingering of the chromatic scale, as quoted in Sfilio, *Advanced Violin Technique*, p. 24.**

![Fingering Image]

This fingering shows us how Paganini could – according to the unanimous testimony of witnesses – execute chromatic passages that were so rapid and sure, without the slightest whining slur, that they resemble a string of pearls. Such a whining slur *smiagolio* is caused by the same finger being used on two successive notes, a system that, although based on the generally adopted principle that modified notes with the same name as the natural note must be stopped with the same finger as the latter, produces an ugly effect when played at speed, and presents a significant obstacle to smooth rapidity.\(^\text{329}\)

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\(^{329}\) Sfilio *Advanced Violin Technique*, 25.
This contrasts with what we see in the method of Campagnoli, where notes with the same name are played with the same finger. Sfilio writes that portamento, or gliding, “must be heard only when it is necessary from the point of view of diction”. He addresses the function of the bow in determining the audibility of the gliding, and writes:

The portamento only exists in that that bow makes the shift heard.\(^{331}\)

In his *Nuova Scuola Violinistica Italiana*, we read that for a portamento to be executed:

...all that needs to be done is draw the bow at a regular speed during the passage of the fingers from one position to the other; this passage should be consistent and soft, with no uneven movements, and above all with very little pressure on the string.\(^{332}\)

In order to avoid the ‘mewing’ or ‘whining’ sound to which so many players objected, Sfilio advises that the bow speed not be too fast, or accelerated, nor the pressure of the bow on the string increased, during the change of position of the left hand.\(^{333}\) If the position change is not to be heard at all, Sfilio recommends that the bow speed be reduced during the shift.\(^{334}\) He writes:

If the bow is then slowed at the moment of the shift, the portamento will not be heard. Mastery of this is also very useful – as the portamento is a means of expression, the player will be able to use it only where the interpretation demands, without being forced, as many players are, to make every shift audible. When these are frequent, in rapid passages and pieces, and also in cantabile passages with significant extension on a single string, one can imagine the exhausting, unartistic effect they produce.\(^{335}\)

\(^{330}\) Sfilio, *Nuova Scuola Violinistica Italiana*, 58.
\(^{331}\) Sfilio, *Advanced Violin Technique*, 32.
\(^{332}\) Sfilio, *Nuova Scuola Violinistica Italiana*, 58.
\(^{333}\) Sfilio, *Advanced Violin Technique*, 32.
\(^{334}\) Sfilio, *Nuova Scuola Violinistica Italiana*, 58.
\(^{335}\) Sfilio, *Advanced Violin Technique*, 32.
Another gliding effect encountered in string sources is the *glissé*. Luigi Forino equates *glissé* with an exaggerated *portamento*, and defines it as follows:

The exaggerated *portamento* produces the so-called *glissé*, which is used even more frugally. It is strange that the French should use this word, which is French, and Italianize it, calling it *glissando*.336

Luigi Forino’s *Secondo Concerto* contains a recurring descending octave passage in separate bows, marked *glissé*:

**Figure 4.16, L. Forino Secondo Concerto (first movement), bars 155-157.**

Elsewhere, a chromatically descending passage in single notes, played entirely with the third finger, does not contain the marking:

**Figure 4.16, L. Forino, Secondo Concerto (first movement), bars 112-116.**

In his *Serenata in Mare*, a descending third under a slur is marked *glissé*:

**Figure 4.17, L. Forino, Serenata in Mare, bars 65-68.**

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In the *Mazurka* from his *Six Croquis Lyriques*, the marking *glissé* appears on a slurred descending fourth, before the final return of the opening melody:

**Figure 4.18, L. Forino, *Six Croquis Lyriques (Mazurka)*, bars 76-81.**

All of the above examples of *glissé* and *glissè* in Forino’s works occur within descending intervals.\(^{337}\) It is also interesting to note that the marking occurs both within slurred and unslurred contexts. The slurred examples do not contain fingerings; however, it would be logical to assume in both cases that the *glissé* is executed on one finger (in both cases, the first finger). Forino’s definition of *glissé* as an ‘exaggerated *portamento*’, and his use of it in the above examples, suggests a very slow and deliberate gliding motion of the left hand. However, for other string players, *glissé* was not equivalent to *glissando* or *portamento*. Francesco Sfilio defines *glissé* as a composite of two movements - gliding and vibrato simultaneously:

The *glissé* – usually played with vibrato. This leads to an irregular glissé, often jerky, with interruptions, and above all uncertain execution. To produce a smooth, consistent glissé two distinct movements of the hand and the fingers should be made at the same time. The first movement brings the hand back...

Second movement: the finger carrying out the glissé beats on the strings with a very nervous motion, but very lightly and softly, never leaving it completely, and without stiffening. The finger should make this movement continually and consistently, with no concerns about its going back, while the wrist and the forearm, descending from the highest to the lowest position, controls at the same time as the action of the finger the production of the glissé from the high note to its close.

If the glissé upwards is to be made, the movement of the finger is identical to the downward, while only the wrist, followed by the forearm, rises to the desired note by bending.\(^{338}\)

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\(^{337}\) It is assumed here that *glissé* and *glissè* mean the same thing.

Sfilio acknowledges that most players execute this technique with an oscillating vibrato movement of the left hand, during the glide. He, however, proposes that it be done using a different vibrato technique – that of altering the pressure of the finger on the string whilst it is executing the gliding motion. He provides an exercise for practising the glissé:

**Figure 4.19, Sfilio, Glissé exercises, Nuova Scuola Violinistica Italiana, p. 103.**

![Glissé exercise](image)

This is accompanied by the comment:

> When practising, the open string is always played, without in principle worrying too much about intonation; this – as soon as the finger has become accustomed to making the same movement without lifting from the string – will become sure and perfect.\(^{339}\)

He notes that glissé is more common in descending than ascending intervals, thus confirming the tendency observed in L. Forino’s examples. A passage in Piatti’s *Capriccio per Violoncello solo sopra un tema della Niobe di Pacini, Op. 22* illustrates another variant of glissés. It appears before the return of the main theme:

**Figure 4.20, Piatti, Capriccio per Violoncello solo sopra un tema della Niobe di Pacini, Op. 22, bar 34.**

![Glissé passage](image)

Here the marking appears in combination with a trill. The four markings for the third finger are confusing, as one would naturally assume that a glissé is to be executed on

\(^{339}\) Ibid., 103.
one finger. In this case we may assume that a vibrato-type (rotatory) movement of the left-hand is required for the execution of the trill with the third and fourth fingers.

One can imagine that a similar technique (though without the trill) is required in the following passage from Study No. 113 in Quarenghi’s method. The ascending glide, out of which one is to make distinct pitches audible, introduces the return of the opening theme of the piece, ornamented with trills:

**Figure 4.21, Quarenghi, Study No. 113, bars 114-123, p. 295.**

![Figure 4.21](image)

A similar passage, this time in descending, marks the return of the main theme (in ornamented version) in the fourth of Luigi Forino’s *Deux Mazourkas*. Here an alternative fingering is also given, which confirms that distinct pitches are intended:

**Figure 4.22, L. Forino, Deux Mazourkas, bars 90-99.**

![Figure 4.22](image)

It is highly likely that 18th- and 19th-century violinists and cellists used bow techniques similar to those outlined by Sfilio to control the audibility of left hand gliding. Gliding, both audible and inaudible, was certainly a feature of 19th-century Italian string technique. Changing positions invariably involved a gliding movement of the left hand fingers on the fingerboard. The audibility of this gliding movement was determined by the conduct of the bow, and the speed of the shift. Exaggerated gliding effects were made by adding a trill or vibrato movement to the gliding motion, whilst the bow maintained constant pressure and speed of stroke. In these contexts, the string *glissando*
or glissé resembled the glissando practised on the piano and the harp – with distinct, definite pitches. An alternative to this involved smooth gliding of the left hand, accompanied by separate bow strokes for each note (i.e. with no slurring).

**Vocal portamento**

Two types of *portamento* existed in 19\(^{th}\)-century vocal practice, and these were used either discretely or combined. According to Vaccai, the first, sometimes referred to as ‘slurring’, involved the smooth connection of two notes with a minimal degree of audible gliding. This sort of *portamento* was used when two notes occurred on the same syllable. The other type was executed between two notes on different syllables. This second type connected the two notes in a legato fashion; however, it also involved a rhythmic alteration of the music. This could be realised in two ways – either by anticipating the second note, which some called an ‘anticipation grace’, or by delaying it, the ‘leaping grace’.\(^{340}\) García reported that the anticipation grace was more common in the 19\(^{th}\) century, and the leaping grace more so in the 18\(^{th}\) century.\(^{341}\) Vaccai rejects vocal ‘slurring’ in favour of the second type of *portamento*, which he describes as follows:

> By carrying the voice from one note to another, it is not meant that you should drag or drawl the voice through all the intermediate intervals, an abuse that is frequently committed – but it means, to *unite* perfectly, the one note with the other. When once the pupil understands thoroughly how to unite the Syllables, as pointed out in the first Lesson, he will more easily learn the manner of carrying the voice as here intended: of this however, as before observed, nothing but the voice of an able Master can give a perfectly clear notion. There are two ways of carrying the voice. The first is, by *anticipating* as it were almost insensibly, with the vowel of the preceding Syllable, the note you are about to take as shown in the first example. In Phrases requiring much grace and expression, it produces a very good effect; the abuse of it however, is to be carefully avoided, as it leads to Mannerism and Monotony.

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\(^{341}\) Ibid.
The other method, which is less in use, is by deferring, or *postponing* as it were almost insensibly the note you are going to take, and pronouncing the Syllable that belongs to it, with the note you are leaving. 342

**Figure 4.23,** Vaccai, *Practical Method of Italian Singing,* anticipation grace, as quoted in Elliott, *Singing in Style,* p. 140.

![Anticipation Grace](image1)

**Figure 4.23,** Vaccai, *Practical Method of Italian Singing,* leaping grace, as quoted in Elliott, *Singing in Style,* p. 140.

![Leaping Grace](image2)

Lablache’s discussion of *portamento* seems to incorporate both the idea of the anticipation grace with audible gliding. In the following example, the anticipation graces are clearly evident; audible gliding is suggested in his use of the word *strascinamento,* which is translated as ‘gliding’:

**Figure 4.24,** Lablache, *Metodo completo di canto,* p. 31.

![Portamento Example](image3)

It [*portamento*] consists of abandoning the first pitch a little before the full duration of its value in order to glide the voice to the following pitch, anticipating it in an almost unnoticeable way. 343

342 Ibid.
343 Lablache, 102.
Though the 19th-century Italian cello methods don’t discuss these graces, examples are found in the literature. In the cello part of Alessandro Rolla’s *Duetto No. 3* for violin and cello (1821), we find a ‘leaping grace’ in the first movement:

**Figure 4.25, Rolla, Duetto III (Allegro Moderato), bars 31-32 (cello part).**

The interval B to G could be executed either on one string, with a shift and a degree of audible gliding, or on two strings, with no shift and no audible gliding. However, considering the tempo of the movement (Allegro), the latter option seems the most likely.\(^{344}\)

The ‘anticipation grace’ is oftentimes seen at cadences. The following excerpts from Piatti’s *Capriccio per violoncello solo sopra una tema della Niobe Op. 22* are examples of the ‘anticipation grace’, and resemble vocal melismas, which were typically sung to one syllable:

**Figure 4.26, Piatti, Capriccio per violoncello solo sopra una tema della Niobe Op. 22, bars 8-9.**

**Figure 4.26, bar 140.**

\(^{344}\) Note that the passage is played one octave lower than written, according to the convention of the time.
The fingering of the second example (see Figure 4.26, bar 140) suggests that some degree of audible gliding is intended between the C-sharp and the F-sharp, and again between the F-sharp and the E.

Valerie Walden addresses the use of a *portamento* in preparing cadences with reference to cellist Arthur Broadley:\(^{345}\):

In presenting what he considered to be the average view of *portamento*, Broadley outlined specific guidelines detailing the effects with which he was familiar. He stated that there were two ‘active’ methods of using *portamento* for expression: the ‘glide’ could be applied to pitches as a means of preparing a cadence, or it could be introduced ‘in imitation of that produced by vocalists when two notes are taken on a vowel sound; the only difference to be observed by the cellist is that the interval, and consequently the glide, must not be so strongly marked’. ‘Passive’ forms of *portamento*, according to Broadley, covered difficulties inherent to the instrument, for instance bridging awkward leaps. He also remarked that some players applied *portamento* to detached strokes, anticipating the bow change in order to create an appoggiatura effect. Another exaggerated effect was induced when a strongly marked ‘glide’ was completed with a *sforzando*, a technique popularized in England by the violinist John Dunn.\(^{346}\)

We may deduce from this that what Broadley called ‘active’ *portamenti* were those which were intentional and applied for expressive purposes, whereas ‘passive’ *portamenti* were those which were the unintentional result of on-the-string shifting. These ‘passive’ *portamenti* are probably the same as what some cellists and violinists referred to as *glissandi* (see above). Most interesting is the comment that the cellist is not to make the glide as “strongly marked” as a singer might when executing two notes on the one vowel sound. This could be an indication that cellists’ *portamenti* were generally more discreet than those of singers.

\(^{345}\) Arthur Broadley (b. 1872) was a prominent English cellist. He studied with David Lee and taught at the Brighton School of Music. He wrote a number of books, including *Chats to Cello Students* (1899).

An illustration of such a portamento may be seen in Guido Papini’s arrangement of Giordani’s vocal work, Caro Mio Ben, for cello and piano. Here we see an example of an ‘anticipation’ grace in the cello part, leading into the final statement of the main theme in the right hand of the piano part (see Figure 4.27, bar 26). It is specifically marked with a diminuendo to pp. The piece is marked Larghetto sostenuto.

Figure 4.27, Giordani, Caro Mio Ben, bars 25-28.

Portamento markings in cello scores

There are occasional markings for portamento in Italian cello works of the latter part of the 19th century. These indications take the form of signs – lines drawn between two note heads (as discussed in the examples from Loveri above); terms such as strisciare or portamento; and fingerings which seem to favour audible gliding. These indications, and the contexts in which they appear, support the observations made above about portamento usage amongst 19th-century Italian string players.

Piatti introduces the marking strisciato toward the end of the first movement of his Concerto Op. 26, at the final return of one of the principal themes. The ascending glide over the interval of a tenth gives added emphasis to the C-sharp, marked sf:

Figure 4.28, Piatti, Concerto per Violoncello Op. 26 (first movement), bars 215-221.
Braga’s work for cello and piano *Varenna* contains the marking *strisc.* (*strisciare*) eight bars before the end of the piece. It is marked *Andante con moto*, and opens and closes with a lyrical, arching melody, slurred in one-bar or two-bar units. Where the marking *strisc.* appears, a long high F is tied to a middle C, the latter of which forms the upbeat to the last (partial) statement of the main theme in *pp* dynamic.

**Figure 4.29, Braga, Varenna, bars 110-111.**

In the *Andante sostenuto* section of Braga’s *Souvenir de Il Trovatore* a slurred, rising third motive is marked with the fingering 2-2.

**Figure 4.30, Braga, Souvenir d’Il Trovatore, bars 17-20.**

This suggests that Braga means for a *portamento* to be used intentionally, as there are other ways to finger the passage which do not involve shifting. Interestingly, vocal recordings of the opera characteristically demonstrate *portamento* on the same notes.  

At the corresponding point in Leonora’s aria, the text reads:

*D’amor sull’ali rosee*  
*On the rosy wings of love,*

*Vanne, sospir dolente*  
go, pained sighs

*Portamenti* are heard within the words *D’amor, ali, vane* and *sospir.* In this context, *portamento* is an expedient means to represent the pained sighs of the character Leonora. This particular example highlights the relevance of vocal performance practices to those for cello. It indicates that cellists did in fact attempt to emulate the performance practices of singers, at the very least when they were playing arrangements of vocal repertoire. Evidently effects such as word painting were not to be lost in

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instrumental renditions of vocal works. Some examples of rising thirds receive similar treatment in Braga’s *Prima Meditazione*, from the *Quattro Meditazioni Lugubri*. The piece is marked *Andante sostenuto* and *dolce*. A variety of fingerings are given for the recurring rising third motif, including the two types with which *portamento* can be executed – the first bar with a change of finger, and the third and eleventh bars with a same-finger shift (3-3).

**Figure 4.31, Braga, *Prima Meditazione*, bars 1-4.**

In Luigi Forino’s *Sulla Laguna*, marked *Andante tranquillo*, the marking *con molto port. di voce* appears at a passage to be executed on the G- and C-strings (see Figure 4.32). In this case it is most likely that Forino is referring to ‘putting forth’ the voice, as he uses the term ‘*portamento* di suono’ when referring to audible gliding in other sources.\(^3\)

**Figure 4.32, L. Forino, *Sulla Laguna*, bars 38-43.**

In the *Mazurka* from his *Six Croquis Lyriques*, fingerings coupled with the markings *appassionato* and *molto espressivo* suggest *portamento* over intervals of a third:

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Criteria affecting the use and execution of portamenti

19\textsuperscript{th}-century vocal and violin methods contain references to appropriate loci and contexts for portamento use. Whilst these cannot be interpreted as definitive rules regarding its universal application, such references may nonetheless be indicative of general performance practice trends. García cites impassioned texts, and the expression of tender feelings as suitable contexts for the use of portamento:

The circumstances in which it is fitting to use the portamento are difficult to define precisely and could scarcely be determined in a precise manner by means of general rules. One can say however that the portamento will be appropriate anytime when, in impassioned language, the voice would move under the impression of an energetic or tender feeling. Omit the portamento in Mozart’s phrase: “E sposa in me”, and the tender expression would disappear. But this means, for the very reason of its effectiveness, should be used only with reservation; by being lavish with it, one would risk making the performance weak and listless.\textsuperscript{349}

He describes how the portamento should be performed; it must be executed in a manner befitting the sentiment of the piece or passage:

\footnote{García, 84-5.}
The *portamento* is a means, by turns energetic or gracious, to colour the melody. Applied to the expression of vigorous feelings, it should be strong, full and rapid...Used in tender and gracious movements, it will be slower and more gentle.  

This accords with what contemporary violinists reported. As it has already been noted, though Campagnoli (1751-1827), Galeazzi (1758-1819), and Viotti (1755-1824) seem not to have favoured gliding effects, the younger Paganini (1782-1840) used *glissandi* and *portamenti* to great effect in cantabile passages. Baillot, a student of Viotti, referring to *portamento* as *port de voix*, said that it is used to express tenderness.  

Bériot, a protégé of the Viotti school, and husband of opera diva Maria Malibran (whose father was Manuel García I), wrote that *portamento* is:

...not only allowable, but indispensable if we would render all the tender, plaintive and sorrowful expressions of the sentiments of the soul.”

He added that it could be used in moderation to express misery and sorrow, but was not appropriate in sacred music, where “it destroys all the grace and majestic simplicity.” It is interesting to compare this with Gaetano Braga’s warning about *portamenti* and ‘dragging’, and his concern with maintaining the integrity of character of the cello, “in its sweet touching and in its majestic simplicity that render it much efficacy”.  

David Milsom points out that, of the examples Bériot lists for which *portamento* is not appropriate, many are simple in character and in a major key. Based on the examples above, we cannot say that this observation is representative of *portamento* use among 19th-century Italian cellists. They used expressive gliding in both major and minor keys. The examples do suggest, however, that expressive gliding was used in major keys to highlight important structural points, such as the return of a principal theme or at a cadence, whereas in minor keys they seem to be used more to accentuate a particular note or interval. Furthermore, we can draw the following conclusions about appropriate loci for expressive gliding in 19th-century Italian cello repertoire:

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350 Ibid., 82-3.  
352 Milsom, 80.  
353 Ibid., 78.  
354 Ibid.  
355 Braga, 234.
It was commonly reserved for legato, cantabile contexts; it was used where particularly impassioned delivery was required, but also in soft, *dolce* contexts; it was used to give emphasis to particular notes or beats; it was used to vary the repetition of a melody or an idea; it was very often used to introduce the final statement of a melody or theme; it was used for both ascending and descending intervals, with descending glides often accompanied by a diminuendo, and ascending ones by a crescendo; in more brilliant or showy contexts, the gliding would be executed as a *glissé* (i.e. with left-hand vibrato), or with the addition of trills, or with separate bow strokes.

The examples also show that audible gliding was more commonly used to connect a strong beat to a weaker one. Similarly, David Milsom shows that in examples given by Bériot, *portamenti* are usually placed on strong beats.\(^{356}\)

**Dynamic considerations**

There is a tendency in the cello literature for ascending *portamenti* to be accompanied by *crescendi*, and descending *portamenti* accompanied by *decrescendi*. Luigi Forino’s exercises for the execution of *portamento* in *La Tecnica* illustrate this, though he writes in a note that the exercises should also be practiced “with the opposite colouring”, presumably meaning the opposite dynamic shaping.\(^{357}\) Magrini’s and an anonymous edition of the Dotzauer *Method* contain a study marked with *portamenti* which also exhibits the common ascending-crescendo, descending-decrescendo trend.\(^{358}\) Baillot condones the practice, with the exception that *portamenti* to very high notes should involve a softening of the latter.\(^{359}\) On the other hand, cellists Becker and Rynar advocate that *portamenti* should always be accompanied by a *diminuendo*, effected through a lessening of both the pressure on the bow and its speed.\(^{360}\) 19th-century vocal practice reflects the practice common in string playing; Lablache states quite definitely:

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\(^{356}\) Milsom, 82.
\(^{357}\) Forino, *La Tecnica*, vol. 2, 19.
\(^{359}\) Stowell, *Violin Technique and Performance*, 317.
\(^{360}\) Becker and Rynar, 193-4.
This gliding must always increase in strength every time the voice ascends to a higher note and must diminish when it descends to a lower one.\textsuperscript{361}

He adds in a footnote that one must avoid a crescendo in descending portamenti, as this produces “the most unpleasant semblance of a yawn”.\textsuperscript{362}

**Portamento direction**

In the Italian editions of the Dotzauer Method, portamento examples are given for both ascending and descending intervals. Piatti illustrates glissando in ascending and descending, and his edition of Kummer’s Method speaks of “the gradual sliding up or down of the finger”.\textsuperscript{363} The same is true of Quarenghi’s examples. On the other hand, all the examples included in Loveri’s Primo Corso del Violoncello are in ascending. In Il violoncello, Luigi Forino writes that portamento serves to unite two notes, “especially from low to high”.\textsuperscript{364} In La Tecnica, however, portamento exercises are given for both ascending and descending intervals. The examples from the performance literature examined above indicate that portamenti were executed in both ascending and descending, however glissé and gliding effects combined with vibrato, trills, or separate bowing, tend to have been used more in descending.

Burney, in conjunction with his reference to Geminiani, mentions only ascending portamenti:

...as beautiful expressions and effects are produced by great players in shifting, suddenly from a low note to a high, with the same finger on the same string’.\textsuperscript{365}

Similarly with Bériot – Milsom observes that he most frequently uses portamenti for ascending intervals.\textsuperscript{366} Surprisingly, however, James Stark in Bel canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy suggests that descending portamenti are more common in the vocal

\textsuperscript{361} Lablache, 102.
\textsuperscript{362} Ibid., n.13.
\textsuperscript{363} Kummer, 30.
\textsuperscript{364} Forino, Il Violoncello, 287.
\textsuperscript{365} Stowell, Early violin and Viola, 59.
\textsuperscript{366} Milsom, 82.
literature. However, he also mentions that Mancini (1774) used it equally in ascending and descending,\textsuperscript{367} as did evidently García,\textsuperscript{368} Marchesi,\textsuperscript{369} and Lablache.\textsuperscript{370}

**Portamento intervals**

The examples above indicate that *portamento* was predominantly used on intervals of a third or larger. Quarenghi’s exercises for *portamento* only include the intervals of an octave and two octaves, suggesting that he may have used it even more rarely than most.

Walden addresses Broadley’s use of ‘passive’ forms of *portamento*, bringing attention to another motivation for it – the bridging of uncomfortable or awkward leaps.\textsuperscript{371} It seems possible that this ‘passive’ sort was like the *glissando* – it described the shifting action as a technique rather than an expressive device. Certainly, string players may have used such ‘passive’ forms over large shifts as an auditory aid since it is easier to estimate a shift when one can hear the intermediary notes. Galeazzi, aware of the dangers involved in large shifts, advises that when the performer misses a shift, either by falling short of or over-shooting it, s/he must disguise the error by means of an appoggiatura, chromatic scale, or other ornament.\textsuperscript{372} Paganini’s notation of chromatic passages, however, suggests that during the first part of the 19th century, violinists were using both ornamental figures and audible gliding as alternative means to fill in large leaps in an expressive way.

Turning to the vocal literature; Mathilde Marchesi’s exercises for the practice of *portamento* consist of slurred leaps over intervals of a third or larger. Lablache explicitly states that the interval must be at least that size:

> The true *portamento* takes place chiefly between two notes at least a third apart and in rather slow tempos.\textsuperscript{373}

\textsuperscript{367} Stark, 165.
\textsuperscript{370} Lablache, 31 and 102.
\textsuperscript{371} Stowell, *The Cambridge Companion to the Cello*, 192.
\textsuperscript{372} Galeazzi, (Ascoli, 1817), 166.
\textsuperscript{373} Lablache, 102.
Though he adds in a footnote:

The *portamento* is also done, although very rarely, between two notes proceeding stepwise. This occurs only in a very slow tempo and never twice in a row.\(^{374}\)

Francesco Lamperti advises against the use of ‘anticipation’ and ‘leaping’ graces, and audible gliding, for scale-like motion – intervals of a tone or semitone:

In any genre of singing, when the notes pass through joined degrees, one must neither anticipate nor delay the note which follows, nor make heard the dragging of the interval.\(^{375}\)

This comment suggests that graces and audible gliding were appropriate, and in fact used, for larger intervals, just as they were in string playing.

*Portamento alternatives*

As we have seen, Galeazzi’s * Metodo* indicates that string players also used means other than *portamento* to ‘fill in’ large leaps. The *volata* was one possibility, and like the *portamento*, it too had its origins in singing. Treccani defines the *volata* as:

...one of the ornaments of singing, consisting in the rapid succession of a group of notes in scale.\(^{376}\)

Lablache’s method devotes a number of exercises to the *volata*, which in the English version is translated as ‘roulade’. In it, we read:

The roulade [*volata*] in singing is a rapid series of notes, stepwise or not, and of semitones. To perform it a great vocal lightness is necessary. If such lightness is not naturally possessed, it must be acquired with regular study, following the precepts already set out... on how to perform legato notes.

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\(^{374}\) Ibid., n. 15.


We add here that, in order to perform the roulade well, one must:

1. Study it slowly at the beginning, to assure correct intonation.
2. Increase the intensity in ascending scales.
3. Articulate the first notes of descending scales with some firmness, gradually decreasing the degree until the lowest note.
4. Accelerate the tempo gradually, aiming at the notes that begin the strong beat of the measure. 377

Examples of improvised use of the volata can be heard in recordings of the aria *O rendetemi la speme*, from Bellini’s *I Puritani*. Cecilia Bartoli’s interpretation includes the use of descending volate between the syllable ‘me’ of ‘speme’ and the word ‘o’ (F to C-flat), as well as on the ‘scia’ and ‘te’ of ‘lasciate’ (F to B-flat). 378 Maria Callas executes the ornament on the same syllables, but also in ascending between the syllables ‘spe’ and ‘me’ of ‘speme’ (B-flat to G) and the word ‘o’ and the syllable ‘la’ of ‘lasciate’. 379

Figure 4.34, Bellini, *O rendetemi la speme* from *I Puritani*, bars 1-5.

Quarenghi introduces the volata alongside the portamento di voce, and his exercises combine the two ornaments in alternating succession. This suggests that they might have been used interchangeably as expressive ornaments.

Elsewhere, such as in Figure 4.36, he provides written-out examples of *volate* in studies such as the following:

**Figure 4.36, Quarenghi, *Metodo* (Study No. 102), bars 6-31, p. 238.**

He also indicates an abbreviation for the *volata*, though this is not used in subsequent studies in the method, nor does it appear with any frequency in the repertoire, whether by him or other cellist-composers:
We might assume that the *volata* should be realized in string playing in the manner described by Lablache above; namely lightly and quickly.

In addition to the *volata*, Galeazzi suggests another similar ornament – the *conducimento*, and writes:

> The *Conducimento* is none other than a portion of scale which serves to unite together two distant notes between which there is large leap, like a fifth or sixth; it can be ascending or descending, according to the direction of the leap, however it is not always just a simple scale; it is often accompanied by a mordent, or some other similar tasteful *gruppetto*, so that it turns out more agreeable and pleasing. Continuous use of *conducimenti* is made in the *cantabili*, it is the best means to unite the various parts with agreeable melody.\textsuperscript{380}

This implies that extemporising and ornamenting were considered part of the performance practice vocabulary. Of the *volata*, Galeazzi writes:

> The *volata* is a full scale of one or two octaves, which one usually makes before the beginning of a phrase... it is made in ascending because it is ordinarily applied to the high notes; it must be made rapidly all in one bow stroke; and taking care to render every note well. Sometimes some mordents, or other similar ornaments, are added to the *volata*.\textsuperscript{381}

\textsuperscript{380} Galeazzi, 225.  
\textsuperscript{381} Ibid.
Conclusions

From this examination of sources it is apparent that no single source type (cello, vocal, or violin method) contains a complete discussion of *portamento*, its various manifestations, and the tastes, techniques, and aesthetics which governed its use in different musical contexts. However, when we consider them together, information from each helps us to understand better what is presented in the others.

*Portamento*, the term used today to refer to audible gliding, originated in vocalism and was a characteristic feature of *bel canto* singing. Therefore, 19th-century Italian instrumentalists, including cellists, imitated singers in their use of it. There are, however, some important technical differences between singing and string playing which affected how they used *portamento*. In singing, *portamento* results from a conscious effort on the part of the singer; the singer passes from one note to another, consciously sounding the intermediary notes between them. On the other hand, the technique of shifting practised by string players; namely that of gliding the finger/s of the left hand, while pressed on the string, from one position to another, will always result in audible gliding unless the player takes steps to silence it with the bow. Therefore, string players must, in some situations, make a conscious effort to avoid audible gliding. This discrepancy, and the practices which result from it, help to clarify questions about *portamento* performance practices. For example, *portamento* tended not to be marked in vocal scores; it was an embellishment added by the performer at his/her discretion. We cannot say with certainty, based on a vocal score, where singers would have used *portamento*. On the other hand, cello scores contain clues in the form of fingerings and other markings which indicate where it might have been intended and where it was certainly not. This information is particularly valuable for the study of 19th-century Italian vocal works today. While we have few or no recordings that can be considered representative of early- or mid-19th-century vocal style, string arrangements of vocal works, with their fingerings, bowings, and other markings, can tell us a good deal about how the works may have been sung by contemporary singers.

The history of *portamento* use indicates a constant ebb and flow in its popularity from one generation to the next. It seems that each generation reacted against the excesses, or the prudence, of preceding ones. Violinist Geminiani (1687-1762) avoided audible gliding in his playing, but Antonio Lolli (1725-1802) and Niccolò Mestrino (1748-
were both reported to have used it for expressive purposes with great effect. In fact, according to research by Clive Brown, audible gliding was a feature of Italian singing and violin playing in the late 18th century. From our examination, it is clear that it was also a feature of cello playing at that time. Sources from the first decades of the 19th century indicate a reaction against the earlier trend, with violinists Campagnoli and Galeazzi cautioning against audible gliding in shifting, and not mentioning its use as an expressive resource at all. Instead, they suggest volate, conducimenti, and other scales and embellishments as expressive means to ornament an interval. Another important representative of the ‘classical’ Italian school of violin playing, Viotti, appears to have had a similar attitude towards portamento, as his fingerings indicate that he favoured set hand positions. Similarly, early 19th-century vocal methods such as that of Vaccai warn against ‘dragging’ the voice over an interval, suggesting ‘anticipation’ and ‘leaping’ graces as alternatives. The earliest of the 19th-century Italian cello sources consulted in this study, Rachelle’s Breve Metodo of 1825, makes no mention of audible gliding for expressive purposes; instead, its comment that the hardness and difficulty of position changes should not be made audible indicates agreement with violin and vocal practices of the time. Of course, there were always exceptions. Paganini, who proved himself exceptional in many respects, was reported to have made a feature of audible gliding for expressive effect. However, in the early decades of the 19th century, the anticipation and leaping graces to which Vaccai refers seem to have been generally more popular in violin and cello playing than audible gliding. It is possible that these graces were used with some degree of audible gliding in slow contexts, however in fast contexts they were most likely not.

By mid-century, audible gliding as an expressive resource is commonly addressed in all three source types, but there is invariably a warning not to misuse it or to use it too frequently. This suggests that, at this time, portamento was being widely misused.

Vocal and cello sources state that audible gliding is usually permitted between notes at least a third apart. We begin to see reference to its use in faster contexts as well as in slow passages. García in his vocal treatise indicates that the speed of gliding (and I would also add its degree of audibility) must be suited to the speed and character of the passage it adorns. Portamento is deemed appropriate for impassioned expression – whether tender, energetic, or graceful; to express sadness or joy. In string playing, the speed of the portamento was determined by the speed of the left-hand shift. Its
audibility was controlled by the pressure and speed of bow during the shift. Use of the portato stroke, for example, could render the gliding motion inaudible. Portamenti of all types could be executed with every sort of dynamic shading, thought it was common to assign a crescendo to ascending ones and a decrescendo to descending ones.

In the latter half of the century, exaggerated gliding effects are sometimes indicated in scores. Again, terminology is inconsistent with regard to these devices. They included slower and more obvious gliding, sometimes referred to as glissando or glissé. The former term was also used to refer to passages of distinct pitches (i.e. chromatic scales), which were often written out by the composer. The latter term could also refer to audible gliding combined with a simultaneous vibrato movement. The vibrato movement might involve an oscillatory movement of the left hand, or variation of the pressure of the gliding finger on the string. Another possibility was to combine the gliding movement with trilling. These effects, like portamento, were practiced over both ascending and descending intervals. Still, frequent protests against portamento misuse, ‘dragging’, and ‘meowing’ suggest that many players misused this and similar effects.

19th-century cello sources indicate that cellists saw portamento as an expressive device which they could use in particularly emotive or impassioned contexts, in the manner that bel canto singers used it. This meant that it connected two slurred notes, usually at least a third apart, and it was executed on one string using either one or two fingers. It was reserved for solo contexts. The speed of the gliding was determined by the mood and character of the passage, and reflected in the speed of the left-hand shift. The audibility of the portamento was determined by the use of the bow; by slowing the bow speed and lightening the pressure on the bow, one could reduce the audibility of the gliding. Cellists used portamento, but also other alternatives, to draw attention to a particularly expressive note or interval, to ornament a note or motif on its repetition, and at important structural points such as cadences and the final statement of a recurring melodic idea.

What is perhaps most interesting to learn from the examined sources is that, whereas today’s cellists might only consider audible gliding as an expressive means to nuance an interval, 19th-century Italian cellists considered a number of possibilities and alternatives. These included the anticipation and leaping graces, chromatic passages, and the use of scale and other ornamental figures to delineate the passage from the one note to the other. Whilst the popularity of audible gliding waxed and waned throughout
the century, such alternatives were used consistently by Italian cellists throughout most of the century.
5. Vibrato

A precise and comprehensive investigation of the use of vibrato in instrumental and vocal performance prior to the 20th-century is challenged by a number of factors. Firstly, the paucity of relevant sound recordings of 19th-century musicians leaves us dependent on opinions expressed in contemporary written accounts of their performance practices.\footnote{The first sound recordings were made at the beginning of the 20th century. Celebrated 19th-century artists, such as the violinist Joachim, were some of the first to produce such recordings. Whilst these audio documents may be representative of late 19th-century performance practices, it is unclear to what extent they are indicative of earlier practices.} However, we now know that such written accounts do not always reflect the actual performance practices of 19th-century instrumentalists reliably. Since the advent of recording, it has been observed repeatedly that musicians’ written descriptions do not always correlate well with how they actually play or sing,\footnote{See Robert Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style. Changing Tastes in Instrumental Performance, 1900-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 2, 143-144, 154.} and we have no good reason to believe that 19th-century instrumentalists, singers and authors differed in this regard. Furthermore, the ideals and practices reported in text by a select group of celebrated performers cannot be presumed to represent accurately the ‘status quo’ of performance generally among their contemporaries. Secondly, there are significant cultural and generational performance differences; we cannot assume, for example, that modern sensibilities of either musicians or audiences can be used reliably as a basis for interpreting 19th-century aesthetic values and tastes or that there was a unique pattern to these. We will see that 19th-century Italian cello sources seem to indicate a more frugal and nuanced use of vibrato than is common today. However, protests against “incessant shaking” with “paralytic nervousness” and vibrato “abuse”\footnote{Braga, 233.} communicate to us little about the nature and frequency of vibrato use in ways that we can understand and so replicate today.

It is important for us to remember that the method-writers were addressing their contemporaries – people who were familiar with the aesthetic tastes and practices of their day. If we understand these tastes and practices, we are in a better position to interpret the perspective offered by the cello literature. Only then is it possible to make informed judgements about 19th-century vibrato use; for example how it was executed, its amplitude and speed, the contexts in which it was used, and its type (bow vibrato, left-hand vibrato, etc).
Recent investigations into pre-20th-century use of vibrato in string playing have focused heavily on information from violin and vocal sources.\(^3\)\(^8\)\(^5\) Whilst these are likely to reflect general tastes and practices of the time, we need confirmation of the equivalent influence on cello performance. 19th-century Italian cellists were mindful of preserving the integrity and ‘character’ of the instrument; its “touching sweetness” and “majestic simplicity.”\(^3\)\(^8\)\(^6\) This had implications both for the style of music written for the cello, and the way that the instrument was played. What might have been considered to be acceptable use of vibrato for the singer or violinist may not have been equally acceptable for the cellist. Therefore, while such information can give us important indications about the aesthetic sensibilities of people in the 19th-century and their preferences regarding musical expression, we need confirmation from cello sources of how these were applied to cello performance. This chapter will look at 19th-century Italian cellists’ attitudes towards vibrato usage in light of current research about general 19th-century practices, and, in addition, consider how these attitudes offer a new perspective to the study of vibrato usage in the 19th century.

To interpret 19th-century discussions effectively, one firstly needs to be aware of variability in the use of musical terminology for ‘vibrato’ across regional and temporal boundaries. In the 19th century, the singer’s ‘vibrato’ was equivalent to the 20th-century string player’s ‘tremolo’ – the reiteration of a single pitch. *Grove’s Dictionary* of 1889 says:

> It is strange that vibrato on the bowed instruments is the tremolo of the voice, while the tremolo in instrumental music (the rapid reiteration of the same note by up and down bow) more nearly resembles the vocal vibrato.\(^3\)\(^8\)\(^7\)

During the 19th century, the terms ‘vibrato’, ‘vibrate’ and ‘vibrante’ were also used to indicate a style of delivery which was “strongly marked”, “bold”, “heroic”, or characterized by vibrant tone.\(^3\)\(^8\)\(^8\) In fact, *The Cambridge Italian Dictionary* includes in its definition of the term vibrato, the adjectives “shaken, flung, hurled; forceful,
vigorous." In Campagnoli’s violin method of 1797 (1827/R1852), the word ‘vibrato’ is clearly used in this sense, and it is related to the use of the bow, rather than the left hand:

The bow must be pulled vibrato and staccato; vibrato, such that the resulting notes are ended well and decisively, not sluggishly or asthmatically; but so that they all end briskly; pushing, one lengthens the bow [stroke] more than pulling.

In Study No. 72 of his method, Campagnoli includes the marking vibrate over a passage containing accents under slurs:

Figure 5.1, Campagnoli, Metodo, bars 1-31, p. 34.

390 Campagnoli, X.
Here too, the marking *vibrate* appears to refer to the manner in which the accented notes are delivered with the bow, as, elsewhere in the method, Campagnoli uses the terms *tremolamento* and *tremolo* to refer specifically to left-hand vibrato.\(^{391}\)

Braga writes that ‘vibrant singing’ is one of the principal requisites of the good cellist.\(^{392}\) This could explain Quarenghi’s use of the word ‘*vibrate*’ in his *Capriccio per Violoncello*.\(^{393}\) As Figure 5.2 illustrates, the motif is given first in slurred form; later, it is fragmented, the articulation changed, and it is marked *vibrate*. Perhaps this is an indication that, in the first instance, it should be played in a more lyrical manner, and in the second, boldly. Such an interpretation is certainly consistent with the marked articulation:

**Figure 5.2, Quarenghi, *Capriccio per Violoncello*, bars 160-166.**

![Figure 5.2, Quarenghi, *Capriccio per Violoncello*, bars 160-166.](image)

**Figure 5.2, bars 212-223.**

![Figure 5.2, bars 212-223.](image)

A passage in Braga’s *La Violette des Alpes* contains the marking ‘*vibrato*’ on one occasion.\(^{394}\) Here too, a more vibrant tone and energetic delivery (especially of the long notes) would be in keeping with the change to a more animated piano accompaniment. This might be achieved through left-hand vibrato, or by other means. Variety in tone and character could also be effected through a nuanced use of the bow.

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\(^{391}\) Campagnoli, XXX.

\(^{392}\) Braga, 11.

\(^{393}\) Guglielmo Quarenghi, *Capriccio per violoncello: con accompagnamento di pianoforte* (Milano: Ricordi, 1859), 5 (cello part), 11 (piano score).

It is, roughly, only within the past hundred years that the term ‘vibrato’ has assumed its present meaning in string playing—namely an oscillation of the left-hand producing undulation of pitch. The left-hand technique that we associate with vibrato today was in the past also referred to as ‘tremolo’, ‘close shake’, ‘ondulation’, ‘pulsation’, ‘balance’ or ‘sons vibrés’ in string sources. Let us first consider the use of the term ‘vibrato’ in conjunction with this left-hand technique.

**Left-hand vibrato**

Whereas many string players today consider left-hand vibrato a regular constituent of good tone, 19th-century musicians used it judiciously, reserving it for particularly expressive notes. Cellist Guglielmo Quarenghi does not use the term ‘vibrato’, but instead refers to a ‘tremor’. He writes:

> And here the prepared palette of colour, to which we may add a certain tremor which some give to the left hand during a long note, of which I advise you to be very parsimonious so as not to appear an old paralytic.\(^{395}\)

The choice of words here is significant—“some” cellists, not all, and there is a clear warning against too frequent use. This cautionary advice is the sole reference to left-hand vibrato in Quarenghi’s entire, comprehensive cello method. In fact, most 19th-century Italian cello sources are similarly relatively silent in their treatment of the subject. For example, a manuscript edition of Piatti’s method makes no reference to vibrato; neither does the first, 19th-century Augner edition of the same work. A 1910 Augner version of the method edited by W.E. Whitehouse (Piatti’s student) and Tabb,

\(^{395}\) Quarenghi, *Metodo di Violoncello*, 224.
indicates additions to the original work, which Piatti reportedly communicated verbally to Whitehouse, and lists vibrato as one such addition. In the 1911 Stainer and Bell edition (also edited by Whitehouse and Tabb) vibrato is described as a left-hand technique producing pitch-undulation, for the purpose of expression, to be used at the discretion of the performer:

This term, though rarely written in music, is essentially a feature of artistic interpretation. The use of it vitalizes the tone and increases the power of expression.

The German cellist Hugo Becker, one of Piatti’s students, tells us that Piatti himself used vibrato sparingly, and his violinist colleague Sivori, not at all. Apparently, frugal use of vibrato was a characteristic of the classical 19th-century Italian school, and considered desirable:

Certainly the old classical schools in Italy and France did not favour the frequent use of vibrato. Paganini’s only pupil: Sivori (1815-1894), who had a wonderful tone, cultivated a style of playing with no vibrato at all. Alfredo Piatti, the greatest Italian cellist, used vibrato rarely and then only in a very discreet manner. ...  

An 1858 concert review by Eduard Hanslick praises Piatti for not using a continuous vibrato:

…We found it just as invigorating in the adagio not to encounter that ongoing vibrato which so many cellists take as being the same as “feeling”.

However, inherent in such a comment is the suggestion that there were cellists who used vibrato continuously. This notion is also implied in Braga’s comment:

One can categorically assert to be ugly the style of that violoncellist who abuses the left hand, shaking it incessantly on the strings with paralytic nervousness...

396 Piatti, Violoncello Method, ii.
397 Piatti, Method for Cello, ii and 14.
398 Becker and Rynar, 202.
399 Quoted in Barzanò and Bellisario, 240.
He must therefore take care that the left hand presses the strings almost without ever shaking…...400

Luigi Forino, in his method published in 1922, similarly expresses concern at the widespread misappropriation of left-hand vibrato:

The use of vibrato has so far entered into the habits of performers and listeners that, nowadays in spite of all pedagogical advice for moderation, there is not one artist who does not abuse it.401

How then, and under what circumstances did the 19th-century authors consider left-hand vibrato to be used appropriately by their contemporary Italian cellists? Indications of this can be found in the inclusion of various forms of notation for left-hand vibrato in 19th-century cello compositions.

Notation of vibrato

Prior to the 20th century, many expressive and ornamental techniques were used at the initiative of performers. Essentially, what the composer provided was a basic canvas, which the performer interpreted and brought to life through colouring and delineation, in a manner befitting both the style of the piece, and contextual conventions. Therefore, it is not surprising that we rarely encounter explicit vibrato markings in 19th-century scores. Where they do occur, most frequently in didactic sources, the indication is given using a horizontal, wavy line.402 Campagnoli uses such an indication in his violin method to represent left-hand vibrato, which he refers to as tremolamento or tremolo, and defines as follows:

It is an ornament which derives from nature itself, used to embellish a final note, or a held note; to produce vibrato on the violin, one must lean the finger on the string with force, and make some small movements with the hand, forwards towards the bridge and backwards against the fingerboard.403

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400 Braga, 233.
401 Forino, La Tecnica, vol. iii, 82.
402 This sign was also commonly used to indicate bow vibrato, as will be discussed in a subsequent section.
403 Campagnoli, XXX.
That Campagnoli describes vibrato as being derived from nature itself, suggests that it was an integral part of violin playing, even if it was not intended to be used continuously. In addition to its use on final notes and held notes, Campagnoli indicates that vibrato is also used in conjunction with the symbols <, >, and the *messa di voce* <>. In the extract in Figure 5.4, marked ‘*ondeggiamento*’, the top line of the stave shows the passage as written, and the bottom line as it is played. The numbers ‘1’ and ‘2’ in the bottom lines are used not to represent fingerings, but rather, the rotatory movement of the hand:

**Figure 5.4, Campagnoli, *Metodo*, p. 70.**

Campagnoli explains:

> The strong point of the movement of the hand is indicated each time by the figure 2, because it is the first note of a beat or half-beat [tempo]. The strong point declines for this same reason on the note marked by the figure 1.

Presumably this means that the highest part of oscillation (i.e. when the hand is most inclined towards the bridge) occurs on the beats or half beats, marked by the figure ‘2’, and the lowest point (i.e. when the hand is least inclined toward the bridge) in between these, marked by the figure ‘1’. It is interesting to note that each of the examples involves syncopation.

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404 Campagnoli, *Metodo*, XXX and 70.  
405 Campagnoli, XXX.
Piatti’s edition of Kummer’s method also uses the wavy-line symbol, and describes the purpose and execution of vibrato as follows:

Sometimes the player can give a little more brilliancy and expression to a note by a certain oscillation, which is produced by placing the finger firmly upon the string, and letting the hand make a tremulous motion...\(^{406}\)

The marking appears in two *cantilena* etudes in the method. The first, provided in Figure 5.5, is designated ‘*Cantabile espressivo*’ and *dolce*.\(^{407}\)

\(^{406}\) Kummer, 30.
\(^{407}\) Ibid., 68. Etude No. 70 contains four examples of vibrato indicated by a wavy line.
Vibrato is indicated on four notes; in bars 4, 15, 24, and 28. Each of these notes is relatively long - at least a dotted crotchet in length. In the first instance, vibrato is used as one of a number of techniques for ornamentation. The opening four bars of the piece may be considered as two statements of one single idea, which is two bars in length. This idea is given in its simple, unadorned form at the outset, then in bars 3 and 4 it is ornamented. Ornamentation is achieved through modification of rhythm (the crotchet ‘A’ in bar 1 becomes a quaver in bar 3, and the minim ‘F♯’ in bar 2 becomes a dotted crotchet in bar 4), the addition of a passing note (the ‘B’ in bar 3), and a change in the
harmony (bar 2 is in D major, bar 4 in G major). Thus, whereas the F# in bar 2 belongs to the prevailing harmony of the bar, the F# in bar 4 forms a dissonance with the underlying G major chord. In the latter case, the F# is an expressive note, and is therefore marked with the vibrato sign.

The second instance occurs at bar 15, where vibrato is marked at the cadence, emphasizing the second beat of the bar. The third instance, in bar 24, again emphasizes the second beat of the bar, and the leading note function of the F#, which resolves to G in bar 16. It also adds to the effect of the crescendo in bar 24. Finally, in bar 28, the flageolet note is marked p and with the vibrato sign. This is particularly interesting because it confirms that vibrato was used on flageolet notes.

The second etude, provided in Figure 5.6, contains five notes marked with vibrato; namely in bars 2, 3, 4, 10, and 12. In all except one of the examples (that in bar 3), the vibrated note functions as an appoggiatura.\textsuperscript{408}

Figure 5.6, Kummer, Violoncello School, pp. 72-73.

\textsuperscript{408} Ibid., 72-3. Etude No. 77
Three of the vibrated notes are minims (bars 2, 3, and 4), and the other two are crotchets (bars 10 and 12). The minim examples occur on downbeats, and the crotchet ones on 3rd beats of a 4/4 bar. The crotchet examples occur within a section marked *sotto voce*.

From the examples above, we may conclude that vibrato is appropriate in the following contexts:

**Figure 5.7**

| - where the markings *cantabile*, *espressivo* or *dolce* appear; |
| - in moderate to slow tempi; |
| - on long notes; |
| - on final notes; |
| - on harmonics; |
| - over a range of dynamics; |
| - to vary a motif on its repetition; |
| - on syncopated notes, or to give emphasis to otherwise ‘weak’ beats; |
| - on melodically expressive notes, such as appoggiaturas, dissonances, and others which are foreign to the harmony; |
| - at moments of tension, but also at moments of repose. |

To the modern player, there appear to be many ‘missed opportunities’. The first *cantilena* contains a total of one-hundred-and-two notes, of which only four are marked with the vibrato sign; in the second, there are five out of eighty-two.

Other cello sources, such as Merighi’s edition of Dotzauer’s method, also advocate the use of vibrato on long, sustained notes:

On the very long notes one sometimes uses a sort of shake, or vibration, which is obtained by tilting the finger placed on the string forwards and backwards with moderate speed. 409

Luigi Forino uses the sign <> (also associated with the *messa di voce*) in conjunction with exercises based on varying vibrato intensity.410 In so doing, he links vibrato intensity with dynamic intensity.

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The *messa di voce* is applied to passages with notes of various lengths. These exercises seem to imply that the intensity of the vibrato is to be varied in accordance with variation in dynamic intensity. In addition, Forino writes: “Adapt the vibrato to the intensity of expression”.\(^{411}\) This association of vibrato with dynamic intensity and variety of expression, particularly in the context of the *messa di voce*, is observed in other treatises. Violinists Baillot\(^ {412}\) and Campagnoli also used the techniques in combination.\(^ {413}\) In his method, Campagnoli refers to ‘The Four Divisions of the Bow’, which he notates as follows:

\(^{410}\) Forino, *La Tecnica*, vol iii, 83.
\(^{411}\) Forino, *La Tecnica*, vol. iii, 83.
\(^{412}\) Pierre Baillot was a student and disciple of Giovanni Battista Viotti, and hence an exponent of the ‘Italian school’.
\(^{413}\) Brown, 552.
This is accompanied by the following remark:

In every division, and principally in the first, the finger must make some small movements alternating from the bridge to the fingerboard. These movements must be very slow in soft passages, and a little livelier in forte ones; however, this manner of drawing the sound must be used rarely.⁴¹⁴

This clearly indicates that left-hand vibrato is intended on long notes marked with the articulations <<, <, and >, which suggests that when one encounters the *messa di voce* marking (<<) in 19th-century contexts, vibrato is also implied, or at least appropriate. On the other hand, in the previous century, Tartini asserted that the *messa di voce* and vibrato should not be used in combination.⁴¹⁵ Campagnoli adds that vibrato must be used on the first note of the bar in every time signature and, in lively pieces, on the first note of every half bar. This is interesting, considering that all of his examples of left-

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⁴¹⁴ Campagnoli, XVI and 20 (Etude No. 41).
⁴¹⁵ Giuseppe Tartini, *Regole per arrivare a saper ben suonare il Violino*, 16.
hand vibrato realization involve syncopations. He writes that, if necessary, vibrato can also be applied to double stops and ¾ bars.

Luigi Forino maintains that vibrato gives “soul, life and warmth to the notes” and “imitates the voice of the singer when under the impulse of passion.” Could it be that where one encounters such terms as con calore, con espressione, brillante, con passione, appassionato, etc. in scores, vibrato may be appropriate? This would accord with the use of vibrato in singing, as described by Forino. Elsewhere cellists indicate that vibrato “vitalizes the tone and increases the power of expression,” and gives “a little more brilliancy and expression to a note.” This lends further credence to the idea that vibrato is intended in at least some instances where accent markings (>) appear in scores.

Finally, Luigi Forino indicates that thumb vibrato can be used to good effect on artificial harmonics, but that natural harmonics and open strings should be avoided in vibrated passages unless they are of short duration. This is because the juxtaposition of vibrated and non-vibrated notes in close proximity would create unevenness in the sound. Such statements are at variance with the examples from Piatti’s edition of the Kummer method, noted above, and are perhaps a reflection of a changing attitude which developed between the years in which Kummer’s and Forino’s methods were written. We might conclude from this that, by the 20th century, there was a prevailing trend towards homogeneity in sound, one manifestation of which was the application of vibrato to entire passages, as opposed to selected notes.

Execution of left-hand vibrato

Nineteenth-century Italian cello methods contain varying descriptions of the execution of vibrato. Some focus on movement of the finger, while others on that of the wrist,
hand or arm. Merighi’s and Magrini’s editions of the Dotzauer method state that, to produce vibrato (which they refer to as *tremolo* or *tremito*), the finger is inclined backwards and forwards on the string with moderate speed.\(^{425}\) Quarenghi refers to a shaking of the hand.\(^{426}\) The later editions of Piatti’s method (edited by Whitehouse and Tabb) recommend a wide vibrato, and describe a movement of the hand, generated by the wrist. The thumb is released from the neck during vibrato of the fourth finger, probably to facilitate width of movement.\(^{427}\)

In one source, Luigi Forino describes a movement of the finger, which is followed by the hand. He too emphasized the necessity of a wide vibrato, and for this reason advises that, as a general rule, the thumb be removed from neck. The removal of the thumb in both Piatti’s and Forino’s methods may be indicative of a more stationary position of the thumb generally on the back of the neck, so that, in order to vibrate at all, it had to be released.

As with other ornaments, Forino considered variety in vibrato essential. Speed and width of vibrato were to be varied in accordance with emotional intensity:

> We detest that continuous and involuntary vibrato of slow and uniform undulation that produces a very tiresome effect. The vibrato must be intentional and graduated according to a scale of intensity.\(^{428}\)

It is interesting to note that 19\(^{th}\)-century methods tend to focus on movements of the finger and/or hand, whereas 20\(^{th}\)-century methods (and 20\(^{th}\)-century editions of earlier methods) refer to wrist and arm movements, as well as releasing the thumb from the neck. These two different sets of movements produce very distinct outcomes in sonority. A vibrato movement generated by the finger or the hand is naturally smaller in amplitude than one produced by a movement of the wrist and arm. This suggests that the vibrato used by nineteenth-century Italian cellists may have been smaller in amplitude, and therefore more discreet, than that common in the twentieth century.

\(^{425}\) Merighi, 38-9.  
\(^{426}\) Magrini, 94-5.  
\(^{427}\) Quarenghi, 224.  
\(^{428}\) Forino, *Il Violoncello*, 286.
Amplitude and speed of vibrato

Campagnoli maintains that left-hand vibrato movements should be very slow in soft dynamics and a little faster in louder contexts.\(^{429}\) He writes that vibrato can be executed in three different ways: slowly, with gradually increasing speed, and quickly. He distinguishes between the three by using wavy lines of varying lengths (and thus with varying numbers of waves in them) – a shorter line with fewer waves for the first type, a slightly longer one for the second, and even longer for the third.

Figure 5.10, Campagnoli, *Metodo*, p. 70.

However, his explanation of these symbols is confusing:

The longer lines represent simple quavers, and the small ones the demisemiquavers: it is necessary to make as many movements with the hand as there are lines.\(^{430}\)

The illustration suggests the opposite of what Campagnoli asserts – that the shortest of the three lines (which denotes slow vibrato) indicates slower and fewer movements of the hand at a quaver speed, and that longer lines represent more numerous movements of the hand at a quicker speed (i.e. demisemiquavers).

Quarenghi and Braga disapproved of the sort of vibrato that resembled “paralytic shaking”, perhaps in part because such a vibrato was monotonous. Luigi Forino writes:

We detest that continuous and involuntary vibrato of slow and uniform undulation which produces a really tiresome effect. The vibrato must be intentional and graduated according to the scale of intensity.\(^{431}\)

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\(^{429}\) Campagnoli, XVI and 20 (Etude No. 20).

\(^{430}\) Campagnoli, XXX and 70 (Etude No. 127).

\(^{431}\) Forino, *Il Violoncello*, 286.
Instructions relating to left-hand posture provide further clues about amplitude of vibrato. Some cellists recommend playing with the greatest possible number of fingers on the fingerboard, so as to enable firmer pressure on the string and thus clearer and more resonant sound. Luigi Forino’s reasoning for this advice is based on stability of the hand and fingers. In some methods it is not apparent whether or not this is general advice to be adhered to by all players, or if it is a precautionary measure aimed at less-advanced players. In the case of Forino, the latter seems more likely. However, early 19th-century cellists may have adopted the practice widely. The practice of holding down as many fingers as possible on the fingerboard results in a vibrato of smaller amplitude, particularly when playing with the third and fourth fingers. The alternative - releasing all fingers except the playing finger and, in addition, releasing the thumb - is physically conducive to a wider vibrato.

The emphasis in Merighi’s edition of the Dotzauer method on a motion of the finger during vibrato has already been noted. Francesco Galeazzi, in his 1791 violin method, describes a trembling motion of the hand which results in the finger “bending this way and that”, and seems to suggest a vibrato of small amplitude:

> There are many who add to the above-mentioned device another, called “tremolo”: this consists in pressing the finger down well on the string to make it held firmly, and then impressing on the hand a certain paralytic and trembling motion, such that the finger bends from this part to that, and results in wavering intonation and a certain trembling...

Galeazzi comments that such movements produce “verissime stonature” (true off-keydness), emphasizing the effect of pitch variation. Almost one hundred years later, Luis Alonso’s *Le Virtuose moderne* (c. 1880) describes a finger vibrato used by Italian violinists, which, depending on interpretation, may or may not be different to Galeazzi’s:

> “finger vibrato... is made by stopping the string with the finger while at the same time making the imitation of a trill with a higher finger but without this latter

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432 Rachelle, 3.
finger touching the string; this primitive vibrato is no longer used, only Italian players still do it.434

There are two possible ways of interpreting this passage. In the first, the vibrato is generated by a vertical movement of both the playing finger and the higher finger, which results in variation of pressure of the playing finger on the string. This results in a vibrato with minimal pitch deviation. The second interpretation is that, as in Campagnoli’s description of vibrato, there is a rotatory movement of the hand. This would imply that trills were performed using the same movement. If the imitation of such a trill is not to permit the higher finger touching the string, the movement must be kept relatively small. Perhaps this is further evidence that the “primitive” vibrato of 19th-century Italian players was of smaller amplitude than that common in the 20th century. It could also be indicative of regional diversity in performance practice in the late-19th century, since, according to Alonso, only Italian players still did it.

Quarenghi’s 1877 method refers to a tremolio of the left hand,435 and Braga’s method of 1873 states that one should almost never tremolare.436 The implications of the use of these terms, which in English translate to ‘trembling’ or ‘shaking’, are unclear – is it a movement of wide or narrow amplitude, and slow or fast? The 1911 edition of Piatti’s method (Whitehouse and Tabb) expressly states that vibrato is not a trembling motion, but rather a wide movement of the left hand acquired by a slow, semi-circular motion initiated by the wrist. This implies that the trembling motion, by contrast, is narrow and fast. Vibrato is first practiced on the second finger, possibly to enable a more stable and balanced position of the hand. Again, Whitehouse and Tabb’s comment regarding the thumb is of interest – it should remain attached to the neck except when vibrating on the fourth finger, when it can be momentarily released to enhance the width of the vibrato.437

In his method La Tecnica, Luigi Forino describes a vibrato movement initiated by the arm. This too suggests a wider vibrato than that initiated by movement of the finger or hand. He recommends that the vibrato be more intense - presumably meaning faster and

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434 As quoted in Brown, 536.
435 Quarenghi, 224.
436 Braga, 233.
perhaps also wider - in the upper registers of the instrument.\footnote{438} He explains, citing Galeazzi’s comment that vibrato is not to be found in the playing of those in possession of good taste, that vibrato was not part of the traditional Italian school of violin playing. According to Forino, the increasing frequency of its use in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century came about in response to changing compositional styles and new demands with regard to sonority.\footnote{439} Forino himself, however, is of the opinion that vibrato is a special effect, and should therefore be treated as such:

The sweet and gentle voices of spinets and of the first pianofortes were succeeded by those of the grand pianos: from the different type of music and the greater demands of sonority came therefore the necessity for an effect suitable to obtaining greater intensity in the sound and a more warm and ingratiating quality of voice. Thus the use of vibrato, but every well-balanced artist must consider it really as an effect, and as such, use it with parsimony and, above all, with common sense.\footnote{440}

It is impossible to deduce clear, quantitative indications about speed and amplitude of vibrato from the above descriptions. However, it appears that, generally speaking, vibrato speed decreased, whilst amplitude increased, throughout the 19\textsuperscript{th} century and into the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, as vibrato began to serve new functions. Whereas it had once been used for purely ornamental and expressive purposes, vibrato became increasingly important to sonority and sound projection, and evolved accordingly, using wider amplitudes and possibly also slower speeds. This is reflected in technical instructions for its execution, in which there is a growing trend in later sources towards movements initiated by larger body parts (i.e. wrist, hand, or arm, as opposed to finger), and which result in a larger movement of the vibrating finger. Even the style of vibrato which had developed by the early twentieth century is unlikely to resemble that in common use today.

\footnote{438} Forino, \textit{La Tecnica}, vol. v, 122.  
\footnote{439} Forino, \textit{Il Violoncello}, 285.  
\footnote{440} Ibid.
Other contexts in which vibrato could and should be employed

Vibrato could be used where phrases called for increased warmth and intensity, but also to express extreme emotions such as fear, agitation, anxiety, joy, rage, etc. However, in so doing, it was to be the exception rather than the rule. Vibrato would lose its effect if used too frequently. As Luigi Forino writes:

> It is logical that one must, in certain places where the phrase requires it, increase the intensity and the warmth of the sound, but it is not acceptable that the sense of calm and serenity be disturbed. The effect is precisely in the contrast between calm, vigour, agitation, anxiety etc. Without this contrast the effect is lost and the playing will become... extremely monotonous.\(^{441}\)

In Piatti’s edition of the Kummer *Method* we read:

> We would however warn the pupil here, not to let this practice [vibrato] become a habit, and thus the leading style of his playing. He must never unlearn the art, to be able to draw with sharper outlines.\(^{442}\)

Braga proposes that cellists ‘sing’ on their instruments, imitating the great Italian *bel canto* tradition, and names Rubini and Lablache as two musicians whose singing he admires.\(^{443}\) It is unusual that Braga, considering his attitude to left-hand vibrato, should mention the former. Rubini’s *Twelve Lessons in Modern Singing* contain no reference to vibrato; however, there is no doubt that Rubini used it. In fact, it has even been suggested that he introduced vibrato to operatic singing.\(^{444}\) Rubini attracted much attention and a good deal of criticism for his prominent vibrato. Some attributed it to aging (even when he was in his 30s), suggesting it was slow and wide, as this is the general tendency with aging voices. Amongst his detractors was Manuel García II, who apparently reported that an:

\(^{441}\) Ibid., 285-6.
\(^{442}\) Kummer, 30.
\(^{443}\) Braga, 233.
eminent vocalist [Rubini] could not eliminate tremolo from his aging voice, and turned it to his advantage as a mannerism to display intense emotion, and the Paris audience loved it, and others imitated it.  

Stark interprets García’s use of the term ‘tremolo’ in this context to mean vibrato (i.e. involving oscillation of pitch). García is also reported to have said:

The tremolo is an abomination – it is execrable. Never allow it to appear, even for a moment, in your voice. It blurs the tone and gives a false effect.

According to García’s student, Hermann Klein, the use of vibrato was common in Italy; it was a ‘sin’ which had its origins in the mid-19th century at the Paris Opera. However, despite such protestations, it may be that García and Klein did not reject vibrato per se, but rather, they objected to a particular type of vibrato; namely the sort practiced by Rubini. In the following passage from his Treatise on the Art of Singing, García himself alludes to four different techniques – ‘shake’, ‘tremolo’, ‘quavering’ and ‘tremor’ – and describes under what circumstances they should be used:

There is a kind of inner agitation which comes to us from the fullness of an experienced feeling, and which is betrayed outwardly by the faltering or the hysteria of the voice, and from the delivery. This state of the soul, which is called emotion, is the necessary disposition which should take place with anyone who wants to act powerfully on others. If this agitation is caused by indignation, excessive joy, terror, exaltation, etc., the voice is emitted by a kind of shake...

When the same agitation is produced by a grief so vivid that it completely dominates us, the organ experiences a kind of vacillation which is imparted to the voice. This vacillation is called tremolo. The tremolo, motivated by the situation and managed with art, has a certain moving effect.

The tremolo should be used only to portray the feelings which, in real life, move us profoundly: the anguish of seeing someone who is dear to us in imminent danger, the tears which certain movements of anger or of vengeance draw from us, etc. Even in these circumstances, the use of it should be regulated with taste.

445 Stark, 135.
446 Ibid., 136.
447 Ibid., 136-7.
and moderation; as soon as one exaggerates the expression or the length of it, it becomes tiresome and awkward. Outside of the special cases which we have just indicated, it is necessary to guard against altering in any way the security of the sound, for the repeated use of the tremolo makes the voice tremulous. The artist who has contracted this intolerable fault becomes incapable of phrasing any kind of sustained song. It is thus that some beautiful voices have been lost to the art. The quavering of the voice is, in all the possible cases, only an affectation of feeling which certain people take for true feeling. Some singers believe, wrongly, that their voices are made more vibrant by this means, and, the same as several violinists seek to increase the strength of their instruments by the undulation of the sound. The voice can vibrate only thanks to the brilliance of the timbre and the power of the emission of the air, and not by the effect of the tremor.448

It is difficult to ascertain from this exactly what each of the four terms – *shake, tremolo, quavering* and *tremor* – might mean for the 21st-century musician performing 19th-century repertoire. Looking at the first paragraph, it seems possible that ‘shake’ might signify vibrato as we understand it today. Certainly other musicians, such as Francesco Geminiani, referred to vibrato using the same term.449 In this passage, *tremolo*, on the other hand, could refer to either vibrato or tremolo in their 21st-century guises. However, one sentence makes the latter option seem the more likely:

Outside of the special cases which we have just indicated, it is necessary to guard against altering in any way the security of the sound, for the repeated use of the tremolo makes the voice tremulous.450

The reference to altering the security of *sound* rather than the security of *pitch* suggests that this might be a description of reiteration of the same pitch, or *tremolo* in the modern sense. ‘Quavering’ and ‘tremor’, on the other hand, are used interchangeably. Again, García refers to undulation of *sound*, rather than undulation of *pitch*. He then adds that the misguided ‘quavering’ of some singers and violinists leads them to believe that their sound is made stronger and more vibrant by such means. This could be interpreted in

448 García, A Complete Treatise, 148-51.
449 Geminiani, preface, 8.
450 García, A Complete Treatise, 148-51.
two ways; either that he is referring to a vibrato of pitch undulation, or to a sort of slow, measured undulation of sound, which was realized as bow vibrato in string playing, and often referred to as *ondulato*.

It is clear that García’s use of the ‘shake’ and the ‘tremolo’ was determined purely by the requirements of expression; to portray intense emotion in a powerful way. Therefore, neither of these was a regular constituent of tone. Such an interpretation accords with musical examples from his method. In these, tremolo (probably of pitch undulation) is indicated on both long and short notes; never over entire passages, but rather on particular notes or groups of notes. García uses the wavy line to indicate which notes receive tremolo:

*Figure 5.11, García, A Complete Treatise on the Art of Singing: Part Two, p. 150.*

Opinions of other musicians about García’s use of vibrato are conflicting. James Stark argues that the vocal technique that García taught is not only highly conducive to vibrato, it almost makes it unavoidable. Extant recordings of García’s students’ students, such as Nellie Melba’s 1904 recording of *Caro nome*, and Blanche Marchesi’s 1936 recording of *The Sicilian Cart Driver’s Song*, demonstrate a constant or semi-

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Stark, 134.
constant use of vibrato. The vibrato is, however, discreet by today’s standards. On the other hand, Hermann Klein seems to report a contrary view:

Though his [García’s] own voice might tremble with sheer weight of years, he never, to my knowledge, brought out a pupil whose tones were marred by the slightest shade of vibrato.452

However, the trembling to which Klein refers is the slow and wide vibrato common to aging voices, so what he appears to be saying is that such a vibrato was not used by García’s students, and this concurs with recorded evidence.

We can deduce from this that García and his students used a number of ‘vibrato effects’ for expressive purposes. These involved both undulation of pitch and undulation of sound. Such effects were applied frugally and were certainly not used continuously. He may also, however, have used in a continuous or semi-continuous way, a sort of discreet pitch undulation which would be described as a ‘small’ or ‘narrow’ vibrato today, but which was considered germane to beautiful sound, but quite independent from the wide and slow vibrato of aging voices, in the 19th century. According to Carl Seashore’s studies, such a vibrato is naturally present in most voices, most of the time.453 The difference for cellists, however, is that they have to actively and consciously produce such a vibrato if they are to emulate it. All of the 19th-century written evidence examined here suggests that they did not do this.

**Other types of vibrato**

19th-century Italian cellists placed great emphasis on the role of the bow in expression. They relied heavily on bowing effects; seemingly more so than left-hand ones, for expressive nuance. One reason for this might have been the rich variety of colour offered by the use of gut strings. Gut strings are typically more responsive to nuances in bow articulation than are modern synthetic or metal strings. It has been suggested that

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452 Ibid.
the more frequent use of vibrato in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century coincided with the growing popularity of steel strings, in compensation for their inherent lack of tonal sensitivity.\textsuperscript{454} Luigi Forino reiterates the superior function of the bow:

\begin{quote}
Neatness of execution, beauty of style and correct interpretation depend more upon the complete mastery of the bow, than on the left hand.\textsuperscript{455}
\end{quote}

Bow vibrato provided another means of colouring the sound, and appears to have been used interchangeably with the left-hand variety. G. Moens-Haenen refers to it as ‘measured vibrato’, and maintains that this bow technique was used regularly for dramatic effect throughout the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. It was typically indicated by the composer, though could also be added at the performer’s discretion:

\begin{quote}
It is used mainly to convey fear and awe, but also supplication and mercy... Measured vibrato was still used freely by Italian opera composers of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century to denote feminine mourning passions. As a technical exercise it was still taught to string players at the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century; symphonies of the latter half of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century still have passages with measured vibrato, suggesting that not only in opera orchestras was continuous vibrato (left-hand vibrato for strings) not established before the introduction during the 20\textsuperscript{th} century of metal strings.\textsuperscript{456}
\end{quote}

Similar to the \textit{portato} bow stroke, it was executed by varying the pressure on the bow. Staccato dots over repeated notes in soft passages of slow movements were generally understood to call for this stroke; sometimes the same effect was indicated with a horizontal wavy line. In cello sources of the era it was often referred to as ‘\textit{ondulato}’, and was assigned a specific character or affect:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Ondulato} consists of a light and smooth interruption between notes under a slur... A very light inflection of the stick, of intimate and tender character, coloured in piano or pianissimo.\textsuperscript{457}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{455} Forino, \textit{La Tecnica}, vol. i, X.
\textsuperscript{456} Moens-Haenen, 525.
\textsuperscript{457} Forino, \textit{Il Violoncello}, 273-4.
Merighi’s edition of the Dotzauer method indicates that bow vibrato be executed thus:

It is a composite of many joined notes, of which one makes heard the *forte* at the commencement of each bar or half bar. Sometimes one can on the very long notes use this ornament that results from the vibration of the sounds.... Although these experiments are not to be completely rejected, good taste prescribes that they be used seldom, all the more because the art of obtaining a beautiful, clean, round and clear sound is completely independent of them.\(^{458}\)

An anonymous Italian edition of the same method indicates the technique using dots under a slur.\(^{459}\) The Paris Conservatoire cello method, compiled by Viotti’s disciple Baillot, with Levasseur, Catel and Baudiot, uses the horizontal wavy line and describes the stroke as follows:

The undulating or pulsatory bow-stroke, which is indicated by this mark [wavy line], is a compound of many swelled notes, every one of which should have its loudest part at the commencement of every counted portion, or of every half count, of the measure. The same gradations of force that are produced on a single string, are also produced in the course of a succession of several notes, and even on whole passages. Without these gradations, which the player should endeavour to observe, or to supply properly by his own judgement where not indicated by the composer, the music fails in clearness and effect, and consequently in attraction. The violoncellist cannot observe them with too much attention, whether playing a solo or only an accompaniment...\(^{460}\)

Evidently the stroke was not only intended for repetitions of a single note, but also for passages of changing notes. Such an explanation accords with use of the wavy line in Piatti’s *Introduction et Variations sur un theme de Lucia di Lammermoor*. At the outset the sign is explained thus:

\(^{458}\) Merighi, 39.  
The sign [horizontal wavy line] is a slur but almost staccato. It is applied both to repetitions of one note, and to passages of changing notes. Sometimes it is used in conjunction with accents [>, at other times not.

Figure 5.12, Piatti, *Introduction et Variations sur un theme de Lucia di Lammermoor (Andante Cantabile)*, bars 4-6.

![Figure 5.12](https://example.com/figure5.12.png)

Figure 5.12 (*Andante lento*), bar 8.

![Figure 5.12](https://example.com/figure5.12.png)

Figure 5.12, (*Andante lento*), bars 9-10.

![Figure 5.12](https://example.com/figure5.12.png)

Figure 5.12, (*Andante lento*), bar 32.

![Figure 5.12](https://example.com/figure5.12.png)

The presence of passages marked with dots under slurs suggests that, in this instance, these called for a stroke different to that indicated by the wavy line. In this example, the wavy line appears only in slow and soft sections of the piece, and those marked *cantabile*. By contrast, passages containing dots under slurs appear in faster sections. There is an example of a long note (a dotted minim) marked with 3 inverted accent signs underneath (<<<), probably indicating 3 pulsations of the beat – bow vibrato. Perhaps we may speculate that this was the convention for marking bow vibrato over a

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462 Ibid., 1-3 (cello part).
single note, whereas the wavy line was used to indicate the same thing over two or more notes. Or, alternatively, that the accents represent left-hand vibrato.

**Figure 5.12, (Andante lento), bar 30.**

![Figure 5.12](image)

Context determined the significance of dots under slurs. In faster and more brilliant passages it signified a crisp articulation, whereas in softer, *dolce* passages it called for bow vibrato. Indications for bow vibrato, including the wavy line and dots under slurs, are to be found in 18th- and 19th-century orchestral and operatic scores. Usually they are in accompanying parts in slow, cantabile-style movements.

**Figure 5.13, Cambini, Symphonie Concertante in C Major, p. 19, bars 200-204.**

![Figure 5.13](image)

**Figure 5.13, Cambini, Symphonie Concertante in C Major, p. 32, bars 29-30.**
Such indications are less commonly found in solo repertoire. Perhaps in this context the performer could decide whether or not to use it. Certainly most discussions of bow vibrato associate the technique with soft, sweet and intimate type passages. Clive Brown refers to Cambini’s use of bow vibrato:

...Cambini suggested in 1800 that this style of bowing should be used whenever *piano, dolce* or *piano dolce* were written even though the composer had not specifically indicated a portato bowing; to mark this bowstroke, Cambini used either dots or a wavy line.\(^{463}\)

Brown asserts that the convention of using the wavy line to indicate bow vibrato/portato was less common by the end of the 19\(^{\text{th}}\) century, eventually to be replaced by tenuto lines under a slur. The wavy line continued to be used to indicate left-hand vibrato and tremolo.\(^{464}\)

However, notational conventions amongst violinists were by no means uniform. The fourth of Campagnoli’s “4 Divisions of the Bow” appears to illustrate a sort of dynamically-graduated bow vibrato. In it, Campagnoli uses accents to distinguish between alternating soft and loud notes:

![Figure 5.14, Campagnoli, Metodo, p. 20.](image)

He refers to this type of bowing as ‘*suoni coloriti*’, or ‘coloured sounds’, and writes:

Bow stroke divided into five parts, that is, in three weak accents, and two strong accents. No. 1 indicates *piano*, No. 2, *forte*. Each forte accent is preceded and followed by a weakness [which is?] delicate, whether one is pulling or pushing


\(^{464}\) Ibid., 609.
The colouring given to the different sounds produces the most beautiful effect in music. In melody, colouring corresponds to the *chiaroscuro* and movement of painting...\(^{465}\)

For all four divisions, including the above, Campagnoli states that left-hand vibrato should be added, indicating that bow vibrato and left-hand vibrato were used in combination.\(^{466}\) The following passage from Merighi’s edition of the Dotzauer method suggests that bow vibrato could be used interchangeably with left-hand vibrato:

Some artists learn the same effect with a movement of the wrist that is called *ondulato*, and is indicated with this sign.\(^{467}\)

The fact that “the same effect” could be achieved using bow vibrato suggests that perhaps there was a type of finger vibrato which did not produce a pronounced variation in pitch. This method describes left-hand vibrato as being produced by tilting the finger forwards and backwards. But what is actually meant here by “forwards and backwards”? It could be either a parallel or perpendicular movement in relation to the string, depending on the point of reference. A movement perpendicular to the string would produce an undulation in the sound but a less obvious variation in pitch. In 1934, violinist Francesco Sfilio (a student of Sivori and therefore direct ‘descendent’ in the ‘school’ of Paganini) proposed a method of producing vibrato based on a vertical movement of the finger. He reported that this produced an undulation in sound, but no variation in pitch:

...the danger of the vibrato producing false notes had been noted: now this risk has been totally eliminated. The vibrato, therefore, is produced, according to this new method, with a vertical movement of the finger on the string, together with a slight lateral inclination of the same finger: in other words, the string must be lowered and raised vertically, exploiting its elasticity, without ever lifting the finger off it totally, with alternating slight and greater pressure. At the same time the finger must be inclined towards the bridge. I have already said that a vibrato produced with a lateral oscillation of the finger behind and in front of the correct

\(^{465}\) Campagnoli, XVII.
\(^{466}\) Ibid., XVI.
\(^{467}\) Merighi, 39.
position of the note will result in false notes, because in this case, the habitual excess finger pressure, especially in the vibrato, causes the hand to stiffen so much that the forearm too, takes part in the movement, increasing the oscillation to the point false notes are produced: or stiffening the hand and squeezing the fingers produces the unpleasant effect of the hysterical vibrato, colloquially described as “bleating”.  

The Piccolo Lessico del Musicista, published in Milan in 1902, equates vibrato with the Latin word pressus, meaning ‘pressing’ or ‘pressure’, which could also suggest a vertical rather than a horizontal movement in the context of string playing. Sfilio was not alone in objecting to a vibrato which produced a marked alteration in pitch. In 1796, Italian violinist Francesco Galeazzi wrote that left-hand vibrato produced:

...a vacillating pitch and a certain continual trembling not unpleasing to those people [who do it]; but these are most genuine discords which can please only those who are accustomed to them and which should be entirely banned from music by anyone equipped with good taste.

He then went on to say that such a vibrato could be replaced by the more tolerable bow vibrato (which he calls tremolo).

Finally, the violinist Alonso refers to “vibrato by attraction or sympathy.” By bowing a note on one string, whilst at the same time fingerling the same pitch or its octave on another, one creates a more vibrant sound through sympathetic resonance. Campagnoli advocated its use as a means for achieving evenness in sound across different strings:

To modify the inequality which is heard from one passage to another, and to rectify the difference [in sound] which is naturally present between the uncovered string and the covered one, which results from the different thicknesses of strings, one uses the unison, which is the beginning of consonances.

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468 Sfilio, Advanced Violin Technique, 33-5.
469 Brown, 527.
470 Ibid., 536.
471 Campagnoli, XI.
Naturally, this sort of ‘vibrato’ could be used most effectively on long notes. It is seldom used today, perhaps partly due to the frequent use of regular left-hand vibrato, which is inhibited by such a technique. However, it would seem that this, in alternation with bow and vertical finger vibrato, was used by 19th-century players as a means of colouring the line and achieving uniformity in the sound, where, due to a more limited learned range of expressive effects, the 21st-century player would perhaps only use continuous left-hand vibrato.

Conclusions

We need to keep in mind that any interpretation of how 19th-century cellists used vibrato in performance must be made from indications or notations in scores, a variety of written descriptions about its use and the evidence of early recordings. The quality of these materials ranges from consistent and objective in recommendations from some 19th-century methods, down to rejections of its use by some treatise-writers as a ‘self-conscious indulgence’ of performers. No definitive quantitative or qualitative advice concerning the application of vibrato can be gleaned from this literature as a whole. Nonetheless, in spite of such inconsistencies, and perhaps even because of them, the literature is a valuable source of information for performers today. Firstly, it shows that 19th-century musicians used a number of effects involving pitch and sound undulation, both separately and in combination, for expressive purposes. There was regional variation in the application of these effects, as well as discrepancies between what was considered ‘common’ practice, and the practices of celebrated performers and method writers. Secondly, the literature shows that an understanding of the broader 19th-century Italian musical context is imperative for interpreting the meaning behind such subjective and seemingly inconsistent materials. It points out that there are often more questions to be asked, and more possibilities to explore than might be immediately apparent to the present-day instrumentalist upon first reading of a 19th-century work.

Among the various sources there is great inconsistency in the terminology used to refer to vibrato effects, however, the string sources, because of their descriptions of the technical execution of these effects, are generally clearer in distinguishing between them, so they can be a useful resource in the interpretation of vocal sources. They also provide evidence of a style of delivery referred to as vibrato, which had little or nothing to do with undulation of pitch or sound.
In the last 250-300 years, the use of left-hand vibrato in string playing (in Italy and elsewhere) appears to have alternated between two extreme positions, with various compromises occurring in between them. Only 45 years separated Geminiani’s recommendation that left-hand vibrato “should be made use of as often as possible” and Galeazzi’s warning that it “be entirely banned from music by anyone equipped with good taste”. No doubt, some of the more extreme opinions influenced performance, though it is interesting to see across the literature on vocal, violin and cello performance, that there were variations in actual practice. Examples above show that even cellists such as Quarenghi and Braga who, in their methods, were critical about the use of left-hand vibrato, did in fact use it, albeit in a very circumspect way. We have seen that reports about other celebrated Italian string players, such as Piatti and Sivori, indicate that they used vibrato frugally by late-19th/early 20th-century standards. Not one source consulted in this study, vocal or instrumental, explicitly advocates the use of continuous vibrato; in fact, most caution against overuse. While the tendency in the early and mid-19th century was to use vibrato on single notes or small groups of notes, in the 20th century it was more often applied to entire passages or phrases to maintain uniformity of sound within these units. String sources suggest that vibrato amplitude increased and speed decreased over this time period. This was reflective of a changing aesthetic, and was possibly also the cause of some changes to left-hand technique. Whereas in the 19th century we hear of cellists leaving multiple fingers on the finger board, and describing vibrato movements of the finger and hand, 20th-century cellists speak of releasing fingers, and the thumb, to facilitate wider vibrato, and a vibrato movement generated by the wrist or arm.

New demands for sound projection brought on by larger venues and the resultant performing demands, as well as new compositional styles and changes to instruments, saw vibrato being applied in new ways. It is interesting to note that the constant, audible vibrato commonly heard in string playing after the mid-20th century coincided with the increased use of steel strings.

It seems that, in both singing and string playing, various vibrato techniques could be used interchangeably to achieve the same purpose. This level of variability and resultant inconsistencies in the nomenclature create difficulties for our interpretation of the

472 Geminiani, preface, 8.
473 Brown, Classical and Romantic Performing Practice, 527.
literature. Singing methods provide clarification on some aspects of the application of these techniques for expressive purposes; however, one significant point must be kept in mind: vibrato (in the sense of undulation of pitch) is naturally present in most human voices, even untrained ones. It can be intensified under the effect of certain emotions, but is always present, at least, in a discreet form. The vocal technique propounded by certain ‘schools’ (such as that of Manuel Garcia II) may even have been conducive to the constant or semi-constant use of such a discreet vibrato.

On the other hand, in string playing, all vibrato techniques, whether used discreetly or overtly, must be consciously learned and applied. The rejection of “incessant shaking” of the left hand makes it clear that constant left-hand vibrato was not acceptable in 19th-century Italian string playing. Perhaps one way in which cellists emulated the ‘natural’ vibrato of the human voice was with ‘vibrant’ (resonant) tone. Braga emphasized the importance of this. A clear distinction must be made between techniques which were considered necessary for good tone production, and vibrato techniques applied for expressive purposes. The cello literature suggests that 19th-century Italian cellists used left-hand vibrato frugally, and principally in the contexts outlined in Figure 5.7. Its use was determined solely by the expressive demands of the music, and it was considered appropriate only where the performer wished to convey intense emotion. For this reason it was used sparingly. Whereas Romberg specified that vibrato be applied only to the beginning of a note, 19th-century Italian cellists made no such recommendation. Based on the evidence in Italian cello treatises, it is likely that they applied vibrato differently. There was a tendency amongst Italian string players to use the messa di voce on long notes, and to combine left-hand vibrato with it. The change in intensity of the vibrato was to mirror the change in dynamic intensity, thus making the vibrato most intense at the loudest part of the note, but constant throughout its entire duration. Numerous 19th-century Italian string sources indicate that variation in vibrato amplitude and speed was necessary, and most associate variation in vibrato intensity with variation in dynamic intensity. Overall, Italian descriptions relating to the width and speed of vibrato, and the physical aspects of its execution, suggest a smaller, faster and generally less-conspicuous vibrato than is generally the custom today. In addition to left-hand vibrato, Italian cellists also used bow vibrato, usually in soft, dolce

474 Braga, 233.
475 Ibid., 11.
contexts. They certainly used bow- and left-hand vibrato interchangeably and may have also used them in combination. They used unisons of ‘vibrato of sympathy’ to achieve homogeneity of sound in passages which encompassed multiple strings.

Viewed from a broader perspective, the 19th-century Italian cello literature indicates that cellists (and other musicians) practiced much greater variety in the kinds of expressive nuance they used, than is the norm today. In string playing, this was expressed in greater colouration or tonal nuance with the bow. The literature also illustrates that there was considerable variation in the terminology and symbology used to depict such nuances, showing that we must always read markings with care and beware of using uninformed assumptions, based on 20th-century understanding of terminology and symbology, to interpret 19th-century usages.
Conclusion

This study was undertaken with the aim of addressing the significant lacunae on 19th-century Italian cello playing in recent cello historiographies. In meeting this aim, it has identified a considerable volume of new and important information to contribute to our understanding of the performance practices, teaching methods, and compositions of 19th-century Italian cellists. However, in so doing it has also identified areas of broader significance and in which further research is likely to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of 19th-century Italian vocalism as well as 19th-century performance practices generally. This research has further found that, in the 19th century, there was still great variability in regional performance practices, such that we cannot reliably base interpretations of 19th-century performance in general on assumptions gleaned from a familiarity with the known practices of particular countries or only selected regions.

Based on the evidence examined in this study, we may draw a number of conclusions. Firstly, opera dominated the musical culture in 19th-century Italy, and its influence extended to instrumental music, including cello playing and composition. Italian composers and cellists conceived of the cello as inherently vocal and developed performance and compositional styles which reflected this conception. Consequently, a significant portion of 19th-century Italian compositions for cello are explicitly ‘operatic’, in that they are either based on themes from contemporary bel canto operas, or written in the style of bel canto vocal works. It is therefore logical that they be interpreted and performed according to the aesthetic principles of the bel canto tradition.

The term bel canto refers to a vocal technique, a compositional style and, most importantly, an aesthetic. It was an Italian phenomenon which grew out of a desire to create a style of vocalism which was both expressive and beautiful. It was shaped significantly by qualities of the Italian language, and of the castrato voice, however its application was not merely limited to singing. 19th-century Italian musicians explicitly stated the importance and centrality of the bel canto aesthetic in cello playing. Others implied its importance by stressing qualities which were fundamental to the aesthetic, such as beautiful, resonant, unforced tone; impeccable intonation; the perfect and effortless execution of ornaments and passagework; clear and varied articulation; use of
an extensive palette of timbres and colours; the tasteful application of portamento, vibrato, nuanced articulation and other ornaments for the purpose of expression.

Because of the influence of bel canto, 19th-century Italian cellists used a much greater variety of expressive effects than cellists are accustomed to use today. These related principally to sound, tempo and rhythm, vibrato, and portamento, as well as other forms of ornamentation. Each of these aspects was treated in a conscious and deliberate way; different colours and qualities of sound represented specific emotions or atmosphere; irregularities in tempo and rhythm expressed states of agitation or calm; vibrato lent the expression a particular sweetness, tenderness, poignancy, or vibrancy, depending on which of the numerous left-hand or bowing techniques associated with it were used; notes were connected in special ways to emphasize the expressive quality of particular intervals, and to delineate aspects of the musical structure. In addition, each of these effects was considered part of a broader range of ‘embellishments’, or techniques for creating essential variety and depth of expression. Whereas late 19th-century Italian cello works typically indicate where such techniques should be applied, earlier works did not. We might assume that cellists in the early 19th century improvised such embellishment, as was the known practice amongst singers at the time. This study has evidenced the enormous variability in notational conventions used to indicate expressive devices such as vibrato, portamento, and rubato, both within the 19th century and since. Without an understanding of these conventions, and of the bel canto aesthetic, modern performers are at risk of misunderstanding and misinterpreting some of the most important features of bel canto composition.

After the mid-19th century, the practice of bel canto singing was in rapid decline. It is no coincidence that this happened concurrently with the demise of the castrato. Bel canto can never truly be realized in singing again since the loss of the castrato voice. However, bel canto, probably from its earliest conception, was cultivated in Italian cello playing, continuing into and throughout the 19th century. Though we will never know for sure how the 19th-century Italian bel cantists played and sang, through a study of the compositions, methods and playing descriptions of 19th-century Italian cellists, we gain insight and new perspective on the bel canto aesthetic.

Although there is still much work to be done in the field of 19th-century performance practice research generally, this study makes it clear that the bel canto tradition played...
an integral part in 19\textsuperscript{th}-century musical composition and performance, particularly in Italy. Until recently, \textit{bel canto} has been treated as a ‘secret’ or ‘mystery’ mainly related to vocal music, and subsequently often misinterpreted and misunderstood. Its relevance to instrumental performance is frequently overlooked. Critical appraisal of Italian vocal and instrumental sources from the 17\textsuperscript{th} to 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries offers a means by which this important influence on performance practice can be addressed. This investigation has demonstrated that instrumental sources are particularly relevant and offer different perspectives on ‘singing’. It has also shown that cello sources, many of which contain accurate and objective descriptions of technical procedures, can help us to understand better some of the more subjective and unscientific descriptions given by singers about aspects of performance practice such as sound production, the use of \textit{portamento}, and the execution of vibrato. Clearly, both modern instrumentalists and singers of Italian music can benefit from the study of \textit{bel canto} and its expression in various contexts.

The tradition of Italian cello playing in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century represents a rich source of information to this end.
Appendix

Quoted material in original language versions (translations are author’s own)

Bel canto chapter

Footnote 37, page 16

Il professore Quarenghi pubblica tre Fantasie per violoncello che più a buon dritto si potrebbero chiamare Pot-pourris: per un istromento così dolce e appassionato, che nel canto simula ed emula la voce, eccellente è il sistema di attenersi alla maggiore semplicità delle melodie, tanto più poi se queste appassionate melodie appartengono alle divine ispirazioni del Donizetti e di Bellini. – Nelle composizioni adunque del Quarenghi e nello stesso suo Capriccio originale anziché concetti musicali, modulazioni e forme peregrine egli è da cercare e da lodare la convenienza della trascrizione all’indole speciale dell’istromento, l’eleganza delle variazioni, il brio degli intermezzi e delle cadenze, il legame appropriato dei vari pensieri fra di loro.

Footnote 42, page 17

Il bel cantare è il colorire le frasi secondo il buon gusto artistico detta. Come nel nostro comune linguaggio, così nelle frasi musicali esiste un accento, una inflessione maggiore o minore nell’intensità del suono che rende chiaro e delineato il procedere della frase melodica.

Footnote 44, page 18

Lo stile è l’arte di presentare le idee con chiarezza, eleganza, naturalezza, energia e potenza. Esso scaturisce dal pensiero ben ordinato e dal completo equilibrio delle nostre facoltà intellettuali. È necessario adattare i nostri mezzi meccanici al genere del brano e ciò sia detto tanto per quanto si riferisce alla qualità sopra richieste, come per quanto si riferisce al carattere proprio delle varie epoche e de’ vari autori. Lo stile si riflette principalmente sulla buona e tradizionale esecuzione tecnica del brano...è strettamente collegato alla
padronanza dei mezzi tecnici...Il corretto modo di fraseggiare, secondo il giusto accento melodico, è una delle qualità essenziali per possedere un bello stile.

Footnote 52, page 19

Il sig. Pezze ci fece gustare il bellissimo Souvenir de la Sonnambula di Alfredo Piatti. Egli raggiunse la perfezione così nella difficoltà e finitezza come nel sentire, e fra poco sarà certo giudicato degno di poter gareggiare con qualunque rinomanza violoncellistica, non solo d’Italia, ma ben anco con quelle d’oltremonte che ci vengono dal giornalismo di Francia e di Germania cotanto encomiate.

Footnote 54, page 19

Il Pezze, già allievo del milanese Conservatorio, ora primo violoncello al Teatro di Sua Maestà, suonò così dolcemente le composizioni del Mariani, che tutti ne rimasero pieni di ammirazione. La sua cavata è robusta e nel tempo stesso dolcissima: canti gli adagi con soave espressione; franco e sicuro è il suo maneggio nei passi di bravura, perfetta l’intonazione.

Footnote 61, page 20

Il Pezze è un giovane d’alte e nobili forme, che, se non si raccomandasse per la somma bravura, si raccomanderebbe e si raccomanda per la bella persona; un giovine appena uscito dal Conservatorio di Milano, e che già suona il violoncello col talento d’un artista provetto. Il gentil suonatore vale principalmente negli adagi, nell’espressione, nel sentimento. Qui è inarrivabile; il suo archetto parla, freme, si lagna, vi tocca in ogni guisa il cuore, con la eloquenza del soave suo magistero. E, come nell’appassionato e nel flebile, egli è egualmente forte in que’pezzi, che si domandano di bravura...Il maneggio appunto dell’arco, è in lui mirabilissimo, o accarezzi questo, col molle passaggio, nelle note legate, le corde, o le percuota, colpeggianto negli staccati...
Footnote 62, page 20

Il signor Pezze... fu superiore a qualunque elogio. Elgi possiede qualità di stile che gli sono proprie. Il violoncello si colora e si vivifica sotto il suo arco arricchendosi di tutte le gradazioni rinchiusa tra il forte ed il piano. Alla delicatezza aggiunge la forza, e la sue maniera sempre contenuta, ricorda la saggia scuola del celebre Merighi.

Footnote 64, page 21

Il Pezze è già favorevolmente conosciuto dai milanesi, ed è infatti uno fra i più distinti suonatori di questo difficile e simpaticissimo strumento. La sua cavata è forte, pastosa, penetrante: la sua intonazione irreprensibile: l’espressione purissima, non affettata; i suoi effetti spontanei, e nulla sentono del ciarlatanesco.

Footnote 65, page 21

Le note del Venzano sono così dolci ed espressive che scendono sino all’anima, ed ogni volta ch’ egli eseguisce cosa anche di minor importanza possede sempre il magico segreto di scuotere il plauso del pubblico.

**Sound chapter**

Footnote 78, page 27

...tanta mole di suoni trasse dall’eloquente istrumento, tanta ne diffuse, tutte percorrendo le inestricabili vie dell’armonia. A me somigliavano quei suoni a voci distinte, mirabili, profetiche; ogni sillaba serbava ed esprimeva, o m’inganno, un concetto.
Footnote 83, page 27

L’arco è al violoncello quello che il polmone è alla voce, cioè non soltanto una sorgente di emissione, ma un efficace meccanismo a cui spetta di regolare e quasi di plasmare la voce stessa.

Footnote 86, page 28

Maniera di far sortire il suono dall’strumento. Si adopera soltanto per gli instrumenti ad arco e a fiato.

Footnote 87, page 28

La vostra cavata, che a quest’ora avrà acquistato maggior forza, guardate di conservarla limpid, e di timbro sempre uguale.

Footnote 88, page 28

Il suo tocco, la sua cavata, la dolcezza, la perfetta intonazione, e più di tutto il soavissimo portamento, lo fanno degno di quei clamorosi plausi che si ebbe con spontanea chiamata fuori.

Footnote 90, page 29

...la quantità di suono unita ad una bella qualità, ad un bel timbro.

Footnote 98, page 30

Dipende dunque dal suonatore che egli stesso cerchi il posto, onde il suono sia rotondo, puro e vibrante.

Footnote 108, page 32

Da qualche tempo alcuni violoncellisti usano aggiungere alla consueta guarnizione in pelle o in metallo della bacchetta dell’arco, un grosso
rivestimento di caucciù o di altra sostanza. Per giustificare tale aggiunta antiestetica dicono che l’arco è così più saldamente stretto dalle dita. Non sappiamo comprendere questa giustificazione dato che una maggiore scorrevolezza delle dita offre una maggiore sensibilità nell’arco, cosa questa assai preziosa e dato che i violinisti, che in fatto di arco possono esserci maestri, non hanno sentito un tale bisogno.

Footnote 129, page 34

La parte superiore del braccio dovrà essere sempre avvicinata al corpo; l’avambraccio dovrà seguire tutti i movimenti dell’arco.

Footnote 137, page 36

Per ottenere un bel suono, bisognerà condurre l’arco con facilità e leggerezza ed attaccare le corde senza durezza in un perfetto accordo tra i movimenti dell’arco e quelli delle dita della mano sinistra.

Footnote 155, page 38

Se con troppa forza si appoggerà e condura l’arco usciranno una voce cruda ed inamabile; se troppo lievemente debole e fiacca. Per evitare l’uno e l’altro difetto dovrà lo studioso bilanciarne la forza...

Footnote 157, page 38

Il signor Braga suonò alcuni pezzi con molta purezza, palesando buon gusto ed eleganza nell’esecuzione dei cantabili, nel trillo ed in altri diversi abbellimenti. La sua cavata, secondo quei giornali, è debole si, ma aggragevole [aggradevole?]; buonissimo il maneggio dell’arco.

Footnote 168, page 41

...la voce uscirà più chiara quanto la pressione delle dita che agiscono su le corde, sarà più forte.
Occorre poi far notare all’allievo che la pressione delle dita sinistre, con la leggerezza delle destre, sono in assoluto contrasto e che bisogna perciò poco a poco acquistare l’indipendenza delle due mani in modo che si completino nella forza e nella morbidezza in un impiego così contrastante.

**Tempo and Rhythm chapter**

Chi non intende il Ritmo è impossibile, che possa mai dare giusta espressione a ciò che si suona, o canta. Egli è nella musica, ciò che il Metro è nella Poesia, ed anche qualche cosa di più preciso: non istabilisce il Ritmo solamente, ciò che volgarmente chiamasi il tempo, ovvero le sue parti, il che dicesi battuta, ma caratterizza, e dà senso alle parti stesse della battuta.

Quantunque il ritmo abbia relazione con la metrica pure non deve confondersi con questa. Si può avere anche una metrica perfetta e non essere ritmici. Il ritmo è qualità che sfugge ad ogni controllo, esso si mantiene chiaro anche attraverso alterazioni di tempo. Lo sforzo dell’insegnante potrà essere di qualche utilità per i giovani che non siano provvisti naturalmente di questa qualità. Il Vercheval ci dice che “il ritmo estetico è il soffio dell’artista” ed io aggiungo che il ritmo è la qualità più importante per rendere chiara e comprensibile l’esecuzione.

Eseguendo con ritmo ogni figurazione risulta netta, limpida in perfetto à plomb anche là dove il rubato, i rallentanti o gli stringendo alterano sensibilmente la misura, giacchè, chi ha sentimento ritmico eseguisce anche queste alterazioni in perfetto ritmo. Un rallentando, per esempio, deve essere eseguito in modo proporzionale, ogni nota successiva dovrà essere alquanto e proporzionalmente più lunga della precedente, così, al contrario, negli affrettando e in tutte quelle piccole licenze che le indicazioni scritte dall’autore richiedono.
Si riguarda l’accento in generale come l’anima di tutta la musica; quando essa non è espressa dagli accenti diviene monotona, languente ed insulsa.

L’Accento musicale negli iustrumenti a corda si forma dalla condotta dell’arco, colla quale si può dare maggiore o minor forza alla nota, e per tal modo si suonerà con espressione e l’Adagio ed il Cantabile; sarà nondimeno necessario molto esercitarsi nel maneggio di questo.

Tempo rubato, heisst eigentlich ein entwendetes Zeitmaass, oder eine Bewegung, die aus einer andern Taktart entwendet worden isst. (Siehe Imbroglio.) Viele verstehen aber auch unter diesem Ausdruck diejenige Vortragsart, bey welcher die innerlich langen Noten des Taktes, die eigentlich den Accent bekommen, schwach hingegen die innerlich kurzen Noten scharf und mit Accente vorgetragen werden; z. B... Auch versteht man unter diesem Ausdruck dasjenige Verfahren eines Solosaengers oder Concertspieler, wo er mit Vorsass einige nach einander folgende Noten der Melodie so verziehet, dass dadurch eine Verwirrung im Takte zu entstehen scheinet, die er aber sogleich wieder dadurch hebt, dass er die folgenden Noten wieder in der Ihnen angemessenen Eintheilung vortraegt. Ein Beyspiel dieser Vortragsart, die man ueberhaupt nur Virtuosen zu seltenen Gebrauche ueberlassen muss, laesst sich durch Noten nicht ausdruecken.

Footnote 210, page 57

La bella efficace interpretazione si basa su piccole alterazioni di colorito, di ritmo, di accento, cose tutte che sfuggono ad ogni controllo e che non possono indicarsi graficamente.

Footnote 213, page 58

L’alterazione della misura è tale da non permettervi più di gustare la sovranà bellezza delle frasi ed il loro nesso....L’effetto buono e sano deve essere raggiunto, più che con l’alterazione della misura, con la ricca scala di colorito della quale i nostri strumenti dispongono. Qualche volta, per uno straodonario effetto, sarà lecito alterare la misura, anticipare o ritardare una nota o alcune note, ma qui mi sembra utile aggiungere che sarebbe errore che queste licenze subissero l’influenza del colorito: il crescendo non deve significare anche affrettando e viceversa, indubbiamente nella misura, come nella sonorità, vi sono delle piccole licenze, delle piccole sfumature d’uno squisito effetto e che assai si prestano per esprimere le sensazioni dell’animo nostro. Ma di ciò l’artista deve usare con gusto e parsimonia solo quando ve ne ha motivo. Lo stato normale è la calma; il colore, il calore e la alterazioni di misura non devono servire che a creare il necessario contrasto con quello stato d’animo.

Footnote 214, page 58

È sana regola il non precipitare mai le note di abbellimento in un brano a tempo sostenuto come è corretto ed elegante in molti casi il rubare il piccolo valore delle note di abbellimento non alla nota precedente, ma alla seguente: questo però non sempre.

Footnote 239, page 65

La prima delle due, o tre, o quattro note strisciate deve sempre essere marcata e sostenuta un po’ di tempo, e le altre devono essere strisciate un po’ tardi perdendo il suono, senza però nuocere al movimento nella eguaglianza.
Se nella Musica è lecito il servirsi delle dissonanze, che alla fine altro non sono che un ritardo, o una stiracchiatura delle prossime consonanze, sarà ancora lecito il ritardare, o stiracchiare alcune poche note, purchè, come dissi, ciò non degenerì in abuso, nè si faccia come taluni, che per bravura cantano, o suonano sempre fuor d’armonia (eppure vengono dagli ignoranti applauditi); è allora un artificio insoffribile, ed esser convien ben duro d’orecchio per sopportare una simile continua dissonanza.

Qualora nell’esecuzione si altera la natura de’colpi della battuta smorzando i quarti forti, e rinforzando i deboli, nasce un’effetto, che dicesi Controtempo, e che fatto, ove l’espressione lo richiede, produce una meravigliosa eleganza: tocca in tal caso al Compositore a segnare questa specie di espressione con le solite lettere p. f.

Ho avuto la fortuna di ascoltarli eseguiti da Viotti stesso, ma non come sono scritti perché questo grande artista, suonando le proprie composizioni, s’abbandonava sempre all’ispirazione del momento e non portava che un po’ d’attenzione al testo sistemato davanti a lui.

Portamento chapter

...è un modo della tecnica del canto e consiste nel portare (elevare od abbassare) la voce da una ad altra nota senza interromperla, e differisce dal legato per la sua più lenta e posata esecuzione. Lo si usa pure sugli strumenti d’arco, nel corno a mano, nel trombone a tiro. Emesso il primo suono di un intervallo, si perviene al secondo anticipandolo leggermente e poi rinforzandolo alquanto.
Il bravo violoncellista, senza essere arido e senza rifiutare quei bellissimi portamenti di voce che caratterizzano il bel canto del nostro paese, deve presentare il proprio strumento nel suo genuino carattere, nella sua dolcezza toccante e nella sua maestosa semplicità che lo rendono tanto efficace.

Lo strisciare il dito sopra la corda facilita all’artista di poter legare con maggior aggiustatezza un suono coll’altro, particolarmente nei passi incomodi; e produce un bell’effetto allorché sia eseguito con gusto e senza abusarne. Egli è evidente che non si debba servirsene nel tutti, poiché gli abbellimenti in generale non istan bene se non in un concerto, od in un assolo, che concede all’artista di abbandonarsi al proprio estro. Lo striciare si effettua in duie maniere: con un solo dito, o con più; in quest’ultima maniera un dito obbliga, per così dire, l’altro a cedergli il suo posto.

Avvertasi che l’azione dello strisciare e del porre il quarto dito dev’essere immediate, affinché non scorgasi verun intervallo fra le due note Si, Sol.

Il Portamento di voce si pratica allorquando fra due note che si devono eseguire sulla stessa corda facendo uso del trasporto di mano e conservando lo stesso movimento d’arco, si fa sentire, passando dalla prima alla seconda nota, una strisciata di suono. – In questo caso abbiate per massima di strisciare velocemente sulla corda col dito che impiegate ad eseguire la prima nota, e quando sarete giunti colla mano alla posizione richiesta dalla seconda nota fate sov’essa piombare il dito che la deve eseguire.
Si può affermare categoricamente esser brutto lo stile di quel violoncellista il quale abusa della mano sinistra tremolandola incessantemente sulle corde con irrequietezza paralitica; quello che nello scorrere colla stessa mano sulla tastiera, vi striscia in modo da cavarne un suono affatto simile al miagolare...

L’antitesi di tutte queste pecche sarà per conseguenza condizione necessaria per dotare il violoncellista di un bello stile. Dovrà dunque aver cura che la mano sinistra preme le corde senza quasi mai tremolare, e che nei passaggi da nota a nota e nei cambiamenti di posizione eviti quel modo così affettato di strisciare. Deve il violoncellista proporsi di cantare sul proprio strumento imitando il bel canto italiano... La Pasta, l’Alboni, la Bosio, la Frezzolini, Rubini, Lablache e un gran numero di celebri cantanti, che qui è inutile annoverare, avevano un bel portamento e legavano senza mai strisciare da una nota all’altra, e colla massima naturalezza sapevano portare un suono dal grave all’acuto e viceversa...

La lineetta posta fra un numero e l’altro significa che il dito dovrà essere strisciato sino alla posizione indicata.

Le due prime parti del seguente numero contengono un esercizio per portare ossia legare i suoni, tale maniera è indicata da una linea e s’eseguisce con uno o più diti.

Il portamento di suono fra una nota e l’altra è una delle grandi risorse della voce umana e degli strumenti ad arco. È un effetto che, come il vibrato, va usato con molta parsimonia e con molto criterio. Esso serve per unire, come nella voce umana, due note più specialmente dal basso all’acuto. Sulla opportunità del portamento nulla può consigliarsi, tutto dipende dal senso artistico, dal buon gusto dell’esecutore. L’abuso e l’esagerazione del portamento ci porta e quel
detestabile miagolio non mai abbastanza condannato.
Quando le due note fra le quali avviene il portamento si eseguiscono con dita differenti, con quale delle due devesi effettuare il portamento? Con il dito di partenza o con quello di arrivo? I colleghi violinisti usano i due modi e ciò è pacifico, ma nel mondo violoncellistico le cose stanno, chissà perchè, differentemente.

Il collega Bazelaire del conservatorio di Parigi scrive: Ici, nous partons en guerre...et le combat sera rude...Nous ne nous faisons aucune illusion: nos adversaires sont nombreux et déterminés. Parole un po’ grosse per una divergenza un po’ piccina! Il cambiamento di dito nel cambiamento di posizione con portamento di suono “taglia nettamente in due il trait d’union che lega una nota all’altra” scrive Bazelaire ed ha ragione. L’intervallo che passa fra il dito che eseguisce il portamento e quello della nota di arrivo produce una interruzione che la voce umana non potrebbe neppure eseguire. Ma, salvo i casi in cui le due note, fra le quali avviene il portamento, si eseguiscano con lo stesso dito, a me sembra che quella impercettibile interruzione debba avvenire ugualmente sia cambiando il dito all’inizio del portamento, sia cambiandolo sulla nota di arrivo. La migliore soluzione è forse quella di sostituire abilmente e rapidamente un dito all’altro durante il portamento quand questo non possa eseguirsi con lo stesso dito. Non cambiare l’arcata prima della nota d’arrivo. Il portamento esagerato produce il cosidetto glissé del quale va fatto uso anche più parco. È strano che i francesi usino questa parola, che è francese, italianizzata e chiamano questo effetto glissando.

Footnote 297, page 110

...con sicurezza, ed in modo, che non si senta all’orecchio, nè durezza, nè stento.

Footnote 311, page 115

Quando la melodia ascende o discende da intervalli di terza sulla medesima corda, servesi del primo e primo, o del secondo e secondo dito.
Quando i passaggi discendono da mezzi toni, devesi colla mano fare il minimo movimento possibile ritirando soltanto alcun poco il mignolo.

Salendo alla terza posizione, o discendendo alla prima, il movimento della mano deve farsi colla più gran rapidità e violenza, per non far sentire questo cambiamento.

Trovandosi alla prima posizione che il passaggio ascende gradatamente sulla medesima corda, servesi del primo dito sdrucchiolandolo con prestezza. Quando si prende la posizione saltando, lo si farà nel tempo d’una corda vuota, d’una pausa, o nel tempo che le note formano il più gran salto e la mano il meno possibile.

Sarà bene esercitare i doppi suoni delle terze che ascendono gradatamente sdrucchiolando con prestezza il primo e terzo dito insieme sulle medesime corde, di modo a non accorgersi dei movimenti della mano e delle dita.

Il portamento esagerato produce il cosidetto glissé del quale va fatto uso anch’esso più parco. È strano che i Francesi usino questa parola, che è francese, italianizzata e chiamano questo effetto glissando.
In qualunque genere di canto, quando le note passano per gradi congiunti, non si deve nè anticipare nè ritardare la nota che segue, nè far sentire lo striscio delle comme.

...uno degli abbellimenti del canto, consistente nella rapida successione di un gruppo di note in scala.

Il Conducimento altro non è che una porzione di scala, che serve per unire assieme due note tra di loro distanti per qualche salto un po’ grande, come di quinta, os sesta: può anch’egli esser ascendente, o discendente, secondo che il salto sale, o scende, peraltro non è sempre una semplice scala; si accompagna bene spesso col mordente, o con qualche altro consimil gruppetto di gusto, acciò riesca più grato, e piacevole (Es. 19. Tav. VI). Ne’ cantabili si fa continuo uso de’ conducimenti, nè vi è miglior mezzo per unire con grata melodia le varie parti.

La volata è una scaletta intiera di una, o due ottave, la quale si fa per lo più precedere il principio di una clausola, o senso musicale; si fa ascendente perché si applica d’ordinario alle note acute; ella si deve fare tutta in un’arcata rapidamente; e procurando di rendere ogni nota ben sensibile. Talvolta alla volata si aggiunge qualche mordente, o altro consimile ornamento (vedi Esempi 20, 21).
Vibrato chapter

Footnote 390, page 151

Si deve tirare l’archetto vibrato e staccato; vibrato, cioè che i suoni che ne risultano siano ben finiti e risoluti, non languenti od asmatici; ma che finiscano tutti prontamente; spingendo si allunga l’archetto più che non si fa tirando.

Footnote 395, page 153

Ed ecco preparata la tavolezza del colorito, alla quale possiamo aggiungere un certo tremolio che alcuni danno alla mano sinistra durante un lungo suono, della qual specie di colore vi consiglio ad essere molto parchi per non sembrare un vecchio paralitico.

Footnote 398, page 154

Sicher ist, daß die alten klassischen Schulen in Italien und Frankreich einem reichlich angewandten Vibrato abhold waren. Der einzige Paganini-Schüler: Sivori (1815-1894), der einen wundervollen Ton hatte, pflegte überhaupt nicht zu vibrieren. Alfredo Piatti, der größte Violoncellist italienischen Geblüts, wandte das Vibrato selten und nur in sehr dezenter Weise an...

Footnote 400, page 155

Si può affermare categoricamente esser brutto lo stile di quel violoncellista il quale abusa della mano sinistra tremolandola incessantemente sulle corde con irrequietezza paralitica...Dovrà dunque aver cura che la mano sinistra prema le corde senza quasi mai tremolare...

Footnote 403, page 155

È un abbellimento che deriva dalla natura stessa adoperato per ornare una nota finale, o una tenute; per produrre il tremolamento sul violin bisogna appoggiare
con forza il dito sulla corda e fare colla mano dei piccoli movimenti in avanti verso il ponticello ed indietro contro la tastiera.

Footnote 405, page 156

Il forte del movimento della mano viene ogni volta marcato dalla cifra 2, perchè essa è la prima nota d’un tempo o mezzo tempo (B). Il forte cade per questa stessa ragione sulla nota marcata dalla cifra 1.

Footnote 409, page 160

Nei suoni molto sostenuti si fa uso qualche volta d’un specie di vibrazione (Tremolo), o tremito, che si ottiene inclinando il dito posato sulla corda con moderata celerità innanzi e indietro.

Footnote 414, page 162

Ad ogni divisione, e principalmente alla prima, il dito deve fare dei piccoli movimenti alternativi dal ponticello alla tastiera. Questi movimenti devono essere lentissimi nel debole, ed un po’ più vivi nel forte, ma devesi usare raramente questo modo nel filare i suoni.

Footnote 428, page 164

Detestiamo quel vibrato continuo ed involontario ad ondulazione lenta ed uniforme che produce un effetto addirittura opprimente. Il vibrato dev’essere voluto e graduato in una scala d’intensità.

Footnote 430, page 165

Le linee più lunghe rappresentano semplici crome, e le piccolo le biscrome: bisogna fare altrettanti movimenti colla mano, quanto vi son linee.
Detestiamo quel vibrato continuo ed involontario ad ondulazione lenta ed uniforme che produce un effetto addirittura opprimente. Il vibrato dev’essere \textit{voluto} e graduato in una scala d’intensità.

Non manca chi ai suaccennati artifici ne aggiunge un altro detto “tremolo”: fan consistere questo nel calcare bene il dito sopra la corda per fare la tenuta, e poi imprimendo alla mano un certo moto paralitico e tremolante, fan sì che il dito si pieghi o da questa o da quella parte e ne risulti un’intonazione vacillante ed un certo tremolio...

Alle voci dolci e soavi delle spinette e dei primi pianoforti succedettero quelle dei grandi pianoforti a coda: dal differente genere di musica e dalle maggiori esigenze di sonorità apparve dunque la necessità di un “effetto” adatto ad ottenere maggiore intensità nel suono ed una qualità di voce più calda e più insinuante. Ecco l’uso del vibrato, ma ogni artista bene equilibrato dovrà considerarlo come un vero e proprio “effetto” e come tale usarlo con parsimonia e soprattutto con criterio.

Che si debba in dati punti, ove la frase lo richieda, accrescere l’intensità ed il calore del suono è logico, ma che la calma e la serenità debbano essere del tutto bandite, è fatto che non può, non deve ammettersi. L’effetto sta appunto nel contrasto fra la calma, il vigore, l’agitazione, l’ansia, ecc. Cessato il contrasto, cessa il buon effetto ed il vostro suonare diventerà...estremamente monotono.
Footnote 457, page 174

L’*ondulato* è costituito da una leggera e morbida interruzione fra note divise da legatura e a volte unite da una stessa legatura...Leggerissima inflessione della bacchetta, carattere intimo e affettuoso, colorito piano o pianissimo.

Footnote 458, page 175

Ciò è un composto di molti suoni uniti, di cui si fa sentire il *Forte* al cominciamento di ciascun tempo o mezzo tempo. Talvolta si può nei suoni molto tenuti usare un abbellimento che risulta dalla vibrazione dei suoni...Sebbene però questi esperimenti non sieno affatto da rigettare, ciò nondimeno il buon gusto prescrive di non usarne che di rado, tanto più che l’arte di ottenere un bel suono netto, rotondo e chiaro, vi è affatto indipendente.

Footnote 461, page 176

Le signe [horizontal wavy line] c’est une *legatura mais quasi staccato*.

Footnote 465, page 179

Colpo d’archetto diviso in cinque parti, cioè in tre accenti deboli, e due accenti forti. N. 1 indica il piano, N. 2 il forte. L’accento forte ha ogni volta avanti e dietro di sè una debolezza però delicata, sia tirando che spingendo....I coloriti che si danno ai differenti suoni producono il più bell’effetto nella musica. Per la melodia il colorito corrisponde al chiaro-scuro ed al giuoco della pittura...

Footnote 467, page 179

Alcuni artisti studiansi di produr lo stesso effetto con un moto di polso che si chiama *ondulato*, e s’indica con questo segno...
Per modificare l’inegualità che si sente da un passaggio all’altro, e per correggere la differenza che naturalmente si ritrova tra la corda vuota e la coperta che deriva dalla diversa grossezza delle corde, si fa uso dell’unisono, che è il principio delle consonanze.
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The Bel Canto Cello

Clare Tunney  cello
Suzanne Wijsman cello
Martina Liegat-Wilson piano

Luigi Boccherini  Sonata in A Major G.13
(1743 – 1805)  Allegro moderato – Largo - Allegro

Gaetano Braga  Quattro Meditazioni Lugubri
(1829 – 1907)  Andante sostenuto – Andante con moto – Andante con moto – Andante agitato

Alfredo Piatti  from 12 Capricci Op. 25 for Violoncello Solo
(1822 – 1901)  No. 11 – No. 9

Gaetano Braga  Pergolesi
(1829 – 1907)  

INTERVAL (5 minutes)

Gaetano Braga  La Romanesca
(1829 – 1907)

Giuseppe Martucci  Due Romanze Op. 72
(1856 – 1909)  Andantino con moto - Moderato

Ferdinando Forino  Etude de Concert
(1837 – 1905)

Gaetano Braga  La Violette des Alpes
(1829 – 1907)
The Cello in 19th-century Italy

Italians have always been famous for singing. Perhaps it has something to do with the perennial blue skies, or the delectable wines...whatever it is, they have been blessed in generous measure with a propensity for expression in beautiful melody. Who else could have invented opera?

Our familiarity with the 19th-century Italian vocal tradition is due in large part to the enduring presence of works by Rossini, Donizetti and Bellini on the operatic stage, and to the popularity of singers who have specialized in this repertoire, such as Caruso, Schipa, Callas, and more recently, Bartoli. Less familiar, however, is the tradition of 19th-century Italian cello playing. With the exception of Alfredo Piatti, 19th-century Italian cellists, and the works they composed, are virtually unknown today. So, who were these cellists, what did they compose, and how did they play? As was to be expected, they took lead from the Italian violin school in matters of technique. However, for style, bel canto was their guiding light.

The cello is often likened to the human voice and this was also the case in 19th-century Italy. Rossini famously said to cellist Gaetano Braga: “never stop singing on your violoncello: you have a richness which few possess and with it you will always have admiration and fortune”. Verdi praised the playing of Serato: “I wish that all the great lyrical artists knew how to sing like the cello of Francesco Serato”. This conception of the instrument in vocal terms is reflected in the compositions of cellist-composers, even in the 18th-century. Luigi Boccherini (1743 – 1805) was not only one of the most brilliant composers of instrumental music of his generation, but also a highly celebrated cellist in his day. He composed more than 20 sonatas for cello, and these epitomize the charm, lightness and optimism of his very personal style. Alfredo Piatti treasured these works and made his own edition of them, composing full piano accompaniments from the original bass lines. Perhaps the enduring popularity of the A major G.4 sonata has led to the G.13 being so seldom heard. What a pity! The central Largo movement of this latter work is breathtakingly poignant. Maybe Jean Baptiste Cartier had such music in mind when he wrote of Boccherini: “If God wanted to speak to man through music, he would do so through Haydn’s works; if, however, He wished to listen to music Himself, He would choose works of Boccherini”.

Born in 1829 at Giulianova, Gaetano Braga studied at the Conservatorio of Naples where his teachers included Mercadante for composition and Ciaidelli (the only person to whom Paganini allegedly divulged his ‘secret’) for cello. Braga enjoyed fame in Italy and abroad both as a cellist and as a composer of opera. He moved to Paris in 1855 and befriended Rossini, becoming the latter’s cellist of preference at his private soirées. Here Braga mixed and played with the foremost literary and musical figures of the time. He was a highly respected voice teacher and his students included Bosio, Borghi-Mamo and Frezzolini. That this link with singing informed his cello playing is beyond doubt, for he wrote in his Metodo di Violoncello: “Singing is recommended throughout this method. The student must always sing, whatever his voice be like”, and elsewhere: “There is much similarity between the violoncello and the human voice, not only in the great teaching of the bel canto, but also in the means by which they draw sound. These can, in many regards, be disciplined by the same laws, and regulated using the same principles; the bow is to the violoncello what the lung is to the voice, that is, not only a source of emission, but an effective mechanism whose function it is to mould the voice.”
The 4 Meditazioni Lugubri (‘gloomy meditations’) were composed in 1872. It has been suggested that they express Braga’s disappointment at his dwindling success as an opera composer. These pieces showcase the tone qualities of the different registers of the cello and the colours of each of the four strings, with passages occasionally specified to be played in the higher positions of the G- and C-strings. Braga’s fingering indications also suggest the use of portamenti (audible gliding between notes) in some instances.

Alfredo Piatti is undoubtedly the best-known 19th-century Italian cellist. Originally from Bergamo (also home to Donizetti) and educated in Milan, Piatti later moved to London where he enjoyed an active playing and teaching career. His chamber music partners included Joseph Joachim, Clara Wieck-Schumann and Louis Ries. Universally admired for his musical sensitivity and ease of execution, Italian cellists (including Braga) upheld his playing as the perfect model of Italian style.

The 12 Capricci op.25 still form an important part of the modern-day cellist’s repertoire. Menuhin wrote of them: “these perennial companions to the cellist, together with the Six Suites of J.S. Bach, form the foundation of the cellist’s manual, both Old and New Testament.” Completed in 1865, they were dedicated to German cellist Bernard Cossmann and are consummate examples of the virtuoso capriccio tradition. They bear the hallmark of Paganini’s influence and showcase an assortment of advanced bowing techniques.

Pergolesi is inspired by the Neapolitan composer of the same name and uses the melody from his Tre giorni son che Nina, as well as that of the Quae moerebat et dolebat from his much celebrated Stabat Mater. Braga was particularly fond of this latter work, and is reported to have expressed a preference for it over friend Rossini’s setting.

La Romanesca is a setting of a 16th century dance. Romanescas were popular in Italy and Spain in the 16th and 17th centuries and traditionally consisted of a simple, repeated bass pattern, over which discant melodies were improvised. The melodic material used in this piece can also be found in settings for guitar by Fernando Sor and for piano by Franz Liszt.

Giuseppe Martucci (1856 – 1909), the only non-cellist composer on this program, is best known as a pioneer of the Italian instrumental renaissance of the 1870’s. Liszt and Rubinstein admired his formidable pianistic talents and he enjoyed fame throughout Europe as a conductor and composer of instrumental works. This was unusual at a time when most Italian composers had surrendered to the vogue of opera. However, he was by no means indifferent to vocal music. The simple lyricism of the Due Romanze Op. 72 (1890) provide glimpses of a truly Italian sentimentality.

Ferdinando Forino was born in Naples in 1837 and studied cello there under Ciandelli. He later became professor at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome and wrote a method for cello. Some of his compositions call for advanced left-hand techniques and suggest the influence of Paganini. The exact date of composition of the Etude de Concert is not certain, but it is likely to have been written in the latter half of the 19th century. The work consists of a number of short sections which explore a range of virtuoso techniques including multiple-stopping, natural and artificial harmonics and staccato bowings.

La Violette des Alpes is a caprice for cello with piano accompaniment. A bold opening evoking a military march soon gives way to sections of lilting melody, which become progressively more virtuosic and end in a brilliant display of bravura.
My instrument

This recital is performed on a recent copy of a the 1707 Stradivari cello nicknamed “The Countess of Stanlein” or “Paganini Strad”, made by Marten Cornelissen in Northampton, USA. The original is currently in the possession of Bernard Greenhouse, founding cellist of the Beaux Arts trio. Both Gaetano Braga and Alfredo Piatti played Stradivari instruments. This cello differs from the usual ‘modern’ variety in three main respects –the absence of an end-pin (the cello is held in place by the legs and has no contact with the floor), the shorter fingerboard, and the use of gut strings. The end-pin did not become a permanent fixture until the 20th century. Whilst it offers obvious advantages in terms of comfort to the player and stability of the instrument, playing without an endpin can give a greater sense of physical connection with the cello, allowing it to become almost an extension of the body. Gut strings offer a broader spectrum of colour to the sound - something which 19th-century Italian cellists obviously exploited. As a result these cellists developed a more nuanced approach to bowing and relied less on vibrato for expression.
DMA Recital
Thursday 24 March 2011
6.00pm Callaway Music Auditorium

Clare Tunney (cello)
Shaun Lee-Chen (violin)
Martina Liegat-Wilson (piano)

Duetto III
I. Allegro moderato
II. Andante mosso
III. Rondo. Allegretto mosso

Alessandro Rolla
(1757-1841)

Intermezzo (from Sonata in F# minor Op. 52)
Giuseppe Martucci
(1856-1909)

Capriccio Op. 22
Alfredo Piatti
(1822-1901)

For violoncello solo on the aria, cavatina, “I tuoi frequenti palpiti”, from Niobe by Giovanni Pacini

Interval (10 minutes)

Souvenir du Rhin (Caprice)
Gaetano Braga
(1829-1907)

Adagio con variazioni
Ottorino Respighi
(1879-1936)

Il Corricolo Napolitano
Gaetano Braga
(1829-1907)
DMA Lecture Recital
13th June 2012
Eileen Joyce Studio
Clare Tunney (cello), Martina Liegat-Wilson (piano)

♫ Extract A: from Servais' La Romanesca

♫ Extract B: from Braga’s La Romanesca

♫ Extract C: from Servais’ La Romanesca
♪ Extract D: from Braga’s La Romanesca

♪ Extract E: from Leipzig version of Tre giorni son che Nina
♩ Extract F: from Braga's Pergolesi

♩ Extract G: from Leipzig version of Tre giorni son che Nina
HDR: Extract H: from Braga’s Pergolesi

HDR: Extract I: from Leipzig version of Tre giorni son che Nina

HDR: Extract J: from Braga’s Pergolesi
♩ Extract K: da capo section from Braga’s *Pergolesi*
♪ Extract L: extract from Braga’s *Prima Meditazione*

![Sheet music of Braga’s *Prima Meditazione*]

♫ Extracts M and N: first 3 bars of Braga’s *Prima Meditazione*

![Sheet music of Braga’s *Prima Meditazione*]
♩ Extract O: Braga’s *Prima Meditazione* (entire piece)