

# Instructive Editions of J. S. Bach's Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin: History and Significance

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In 1843, the concertmaster of the Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig and teacher at the local conservatory, Ferdinand David, published the first annotated edition of J. S. Bach's *Sei Solo* for Violin (BWV 1001–1006). Following the first print of the complete work by Simrock in Bonn in 1802, David's was the first of many instructive or performance editions by famous violinists, containing added and altered bowings and articulation markings, fingerings, dynamics, expression and tempo markings, as well as changed note values and notes. Comparing the additions and alterations in these editions with Bach's autograph and with other handwritten copies available to editors at the time, as well as comparing the editions themselves, can give important clues to the performance traditions of this work in an era prior to recordings, when printed editions were the main means both of conveying musical ideas and preferences and of bequeathing them to future generations.

Instructive editions have often formed the basis of performance analysis.<sup>1</sup> My research aims to provide a detailed comparison and examination of numerous editions of *Sei Solo* from the first print until the first third of the twentieth century (see Table 1), and consequently an overview of constant or changing performance practices. I also examine prints of single sonatas or even movements and mention any noteworthy additions or changes.

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Clive Brown, 'Joachim's performance style as reflected in his editions and other writings', in Michele Calella and Christian Glanz (eds.), *Anklaenge 2008. Joseph Joachim (1831–1907): Europäischer Bürger, Komponist, Virtuose* (Vienna: Mille Tre, 2008), pp. 205–24; Elizabeth I. Field, 'Performing Solo Bach: An Examination of the Evolution of Performance Traditions of Bach's Unaccompanied Violin Sonatas from 1802 to the Present', DMA dissertation, Cornell University (1999); Robin Stowell, 'Bach's Violin Sonatas and Partitas: Building a Music Library: 5', *The Musical Times*, 128/1731 (May 1987), 250–6.

<b>Editor</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Publisher</b>
[unknown]	1802	Bonn	Simrock
Ferdinand David	1843	Leipzig	Kistner
Joseph Hellmesberger	c.1865	Leipzig	Peters
Hubert Léonard	c.1872	Paris	Richault
Alfred Dörffel [BGA]	1879	Leipzig	Breitkopf & Härtel
Ettore Pinelli	c.1886	Milan	Ricordi
Hans Sitt (Ferdinand David)	1889	Leipzig	Kistner
Friedrich Hermann	1892	Leipzig	Breitkopf & Härtel
Jules Garcin	c.1895	Paris	Ulysse T. du Wast
Eduard Herrmann	1900	New York	Schirmer
Arnold Rosé	1901	Vienna	Universal-Edition
Emil Kross	c.1905	Mainz	Schott
Oscar Biehr	1906	Leipzig	Steingräber
August Schulz	c.1907	Braunschweig	Litolff
Joseph Joachim/ Andreas Moser	1908	Berlin	Bote & Bock
Edouard Nadaud (Hubert Léonard)	c.1908	Paris	Costallat
Vasily Bezekirsky	1913	Kiev-Warsaw	Idzikowski-Edition
Paul Lemaître	1915	Paris	Durand & Fils
Lucien Capet	1915	Paris	Sénart
Armand Parent	1917	Paris	Roudanez
Leopold Auer	1917	New York	Fischer
Adolf Busch	1919	Bonn	Simrock
Marco Anzoletti	1921	Milan	Ricordi
Ernst Kurth	1921	Munich	Drei Masken
Jenö Hubay	c.1921	Budapest+Vienna	Harmonia+Universal-Edition
Henri Marteau	1922	Leipzig	Steingräber
Lucien Niverd	c.1922	Paris	E. Gallet
Hans Wessely	1923	London	Joseph Williams, Limited
Tivadar Nachèz	1924	London	Augener Ltd.
Bram Eldering	c.1925	Mainz	Schott
Carl Flesch	1930	Leipzig	Peters
Jan Hambourg	1934	London	Oxford University Press
Enrico Polo	1934	Milan	Ricordi
Gustav Havemann	1940	Berlin	Bote & Bock

Table 1: Complete editions of Bach's *Sei Solo* in the period 1802–1940<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Partial editions of single sonatas, such as the early French edition of the three sonatas – not containing the three partitas – published by Decombe in Paris probably from the year 1814, are not included here.

The above-mentioned editions, apart from the first print, the *BGA* by Dörffel and Ernst Kurth's edition, are instructive and edited by famous violinists and violin teachers of the time. Table 1 shows the plethora of such editions and their distribution in terms of both place and year. Editions printed in the German-speaking area form the majority, followed by French editions. The numbers peak in the first third of the twentieth century, whereas in the period from 1935–50 a 'significant interruption' occurred 'probably due to the upheavals in Europe'.<sup>3</sup>

Most of these editors did not look at the sources but relied on an earlier edition. As a result, many variant readings (notes, bowings, note values) which originated in sources other than the autograph were preserved and remained unchanged for a long period. At the same time, copying various interpretative additions following the prevalent traditions, left limited space for alteration and innovation.

The first print seems to follow a source which appears to be close to the copy of Am.B.70a and 70b.<sup>4</sup> David used both the first print and the copy Mus. ms. Bach P 267 as his source, which as stated on the title page<sup>5</sup> was regarded at that time as an autograph.<sup>6</sup> However, Bach's real autograph (D-B, Mus. ms. Bach P 967) was not used until the edition of Joachim/Moser. In this edition, many mistakes found in earlier editions were corrected in the lower stave,<sup>7</sup> although, interestingly, some movements of the third Partita show the adoption of most of Dörffel's readings with very few to almost no corrections. However, in many cases these amendments were 'corrected' or changed back to older readings in the upper stave, demonstrating adherence to a particular usage or personal experience. The original bowings and articulation are altered more subtly in some later editions. Joachim/Moser, Busch, and later on Marteau, Eldering and Hambourg, respected the autograph's slurs and differentiated between real slurs and notes taken under the same bow, unlike David and those who followed his edition.

In addition to the differences in the use of audible position changes between two notes (portamento<sup>8</sup>) which developed over the years, such as Flesch's use of

<sup>3</sup> Joel Lester, *Bach's Works for Solo Violin. Style, Structure, Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 22.

<sup>4</sup> For the connection between these sources see also Tanja Kovačević, 'Trailing the Sources: In Pursuit of a European Picture of Bach Reception in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', PhD dissertation, Queen's University Belfast (2013), p. 25.

<sup>5</sup> 'For those who want to annotate this work themselves, the original text, which is most carefully revised after the composer's original manuscript located in the Königl. Bibliothek zu Berlin, is attached with small notes.' Ferdinand David, *Sechs Sonaten für die Violine allein* (Leipzig: Kistner, 1843).

<sup>6</sup> In his *BGA* 27/1 edition (Leipzig, 1879) on p. xiv, Alfred Dörffel also regards it as Bach's autograph, but with the proviso that if proved otherwise, it should be attributed to Bach's second wife, Anna Magdalena.

<sup>7</sup> Joachim/Moser follow David's example (as do Marteau, Flesch and Havemann), where the 'original' text appears in the lower stave and the edited text in the upper one.

<sup>8</sup> Portamento is used here according to C. Brown, 'Bowling Styles, Vibrato and Portamento in Nineteenth-Century Violin Playing', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 113/1 (1988), 121: 'The term portamento, which was used to mean a number of different things during the

different fingers for the semitones to avoid the slide caused by the older fingering using one finger,<sup>9</sup> regional variations can be seen in the fingerings. The French editions of Capet, Nadaud and Garcin include many more portamenti (370, 325, 278 respectively for all sonatas and partitas) than others, such as the German ones; David's edition contains 'only' 151 portamenti and is at the lower end of the scale in comparison with all the other editions.

The value of these sources is clear and ranges from elementary issues such as the execution of trills and their *Nachschlägen* (terminations) to the differences in the conception of various movements, as reflected in the metronome markings. An example is the Siciliana of the first sonata. Pinelli regards it as a dance, as his marking of ♩ = 124 shows.<sup>10</sup> It then evolves into a dance 'aria' through the slower tempos of Nadaud and Hambourg (both ♩ = 72) and Auer's additional tempo indication of *Andante cantabile*, in antithesis to Fr. Hermann's *Andante con moto*. These editions also demonstrate the tempo relationship between a movement and its double in the first partita, or the 'necessary' tempo fluctuations in the Ciaccona as mentioned by Nadaud;<sup>11</sup> Capet even adds vibrato markings for different types of vibrato. Moreover, they are a source of analysis—showing differences in voice leading, or pointing out the latent polyphony through (*detaché*) lines, or displaying the differences between the editions in dividing the variations in the Ciaccona. They can ultimately reveal the power of different traditions and the power of deliberately going against those traditions.

nineteenth century, is being used here to mean only the audible slide between two notes of different pitches.'

<sup>9</sup> Carl Flesch, *Die Hohe Schule des Fingersatzes* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1995), pp. 73, 146–7.

<sup>10</sup> Ettore Pinelli, *Sei Sonate per Violino Solo* (Milan: Riccordi, 1887), p. 5, where he explains in the footnote the meaning of Siciliana as a '[d]anza campestre'.

<sup>11</sup> Edouard Nadaud, *Six Sonates pour Violon* (Paris: Costallat, 1908), p. 26, note 1.