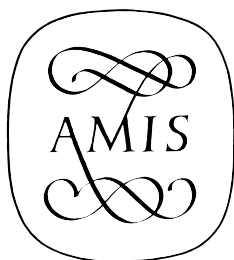


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this a valuable study. For the general reader it offers the basics of guitar history in an easy-to-understand manner; for the guitar enthusiast, it offers a wealth of unusual instruments and well-researched information.

To many guitarists in the world, the guitar symbolizes freedom and creativity. For years it has been the instrument of the common people, and it has often been scorned for attracting non-professional and dilettante players. For some, the guitar is a loud, screeching extension of a yell or cry; for others, it is an instrument of grace and beauty. Whether played by Jimi Hendrix or Andres Segovia, the guitar will always be a powerful tool of human expression. Kuronen's book effectively documents this expression.

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Rudolf Hopfner. *Streichbogen: Katalog; Sammlung alter Musikinstrumente und Sammlungen der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Wien [im Kunsthistorischen Museum Wien]*. Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1998. 257 pp.: 134 black-and-white illustrations, 58 charts. 21 full-size drawings in separate portfolio. ISBN: 0-8108-3448-0. €126.80 (cloth).

John Huber. *The Development of the Modern Violin, 1775–1825: The Rise of the French School*. Stockholms universitet: Studier i musikvetenskap / Studies in Musicology 6. Frankfurt am Main: Erwin Bochinsky, 1998. vi, 315 pp.: 57 charts. ISBN: 3-923639-21-X. €39.00 (paper).

Josef Focht. *Der Wiener Kontrabass: Spieltechnik und Aufführungspraxis, Musik und Instrumente*. Tübinger Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft 20. Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1999. 338 pp.: 67 music exx. ISBN: 3-7952-0990-0. €67.50 (cloth).

Considering the importance of the violin family in Western music, it is surprising how few and far between are scholarly treatments of topics relating to the history of bowed strings. A variety of factors have contributed to this. In contrast to other instrument families, violins and their relatives have been much more susceptible to periodic "modernization," which not only limits the number of first-rate examples that survive in or near their original condition, but also can make it difficult to discern what is original. Because of their mutability, most extant old violins are still in use, dispersed around the world, in private hands, which

makes them difficult to access. Historically, those who have the best access to large numbers of old violins—and who are thus able to develop real expertise—have been associated with large violin shops, where it is not always in their financial best interest to be forthcoming with their findings. For centuries the violin trade has been cloaked in a veil of secrecy, so that even with publications from this quarter it can be difficult for the uninitiated to untangle fact from myth. The three books reviewed here, written by researchers with no commercial interest in their topic, therefore make a most welcome contribution to the literature.

Rudolf Hopfner, who is a violinist and the director of the instrument collections of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, is to be commended for his excellent catalog of the museum's bows. In his *Streichbogen: Katalog* Hopfner has intelligently classified the bows into four levels of importance: as objects of outstanding significance, objects of moderate significance, objects of little significance, or objects of the lowest quality. He provides documentation accordingly: bows at the highest level receive detailed descriptions and measurements, including charts and tables giving the stick's diameter, measured both horizontally and vertically, at two-centimeter intervals; black-and-white photographs of the head and frog, with separate pictures of the screw and x-rays of the frog where these merit it; and a full-sized plan of the bow in the supplemental portfolio that accompanies the book. Included in the measurements is the balance point, as well as the numeric rating of the stick's elasticity made using an ultrasonic "Elasticity Tester" designed by Giovanni Lucchi of Cremona. The criteria used in the catalog, along with the special terminology employed, are clearly explained early on (pp. 15–22), so that readers without previous experience in looking closely at bows can make sense of all the numbers. The photographs are well lit and cleanly reproduced, maximizing the information that can be gleaned from them, though it must be added that views of the heads taken from different angles could have been helpful. I am also mildly disappointed that Hopfner, in unquestioningly repeating the date of ca. 1785 for François Tourte's introduction of the "modern" bow, perpetuates the debatable idea that from this date forward Tourte ceased making other bow types and that other bow makers across Europe rapidly followed his lead. The catalog is valuable for the detailed analysis of the bows, the quality of the presentation, and the rarity of many of the bows.

The collections he discusses contain bows from the sixteenth through the twentieth centuries, but are particularly notable for the number and quality of early bows, including eleven dating from the sixteenth century.¹ Hopfner has wisely chosen not to try to indicate the specific instruments for which these earliest bows were intended. The materials used for the bow sticks range from palm wood (on bows where the hair is simply tied to the stick at the tip) through European hardwoods to extra-European (presumably tropical) hardwoods. All these earliest bows have clip-in frogs, though in several cases the frogs currently with the bows are later replacements of undetermined date. Double bass bows and eighteenth-century English bows are well represented in the collections. A particular highlight is a highly ornamented violin bow made by Wenzel Kowansky in Vienna before 1749 (SAM 638). This bow, which has a stick decorated in ivory and tortoise shell (according to the catalog, completely unaltered from its original condition), has a head carved in the form of a fabulous animal's head and an intricately carved ivory frog with an original eyelet and tightening screw.

Hopfner's book, with its extensive measurements, detailed descriptions, and full-sized drawings, should prove an invaluable resource for bow makers and for players interested in historical bows. The information in this catalog has already been used to produce at least one musically successful reproduction, a copy of one of the bows originally from the Este collection (SAM 82), made by Richard Riggall of Philadelphia. Additionally, this catalog could serve as a useful model for other important collections (such as the Janos Scholz collection in the Smithsonian Institution), most of which have yet to issue a catalog.

John Huber's book on *The Development of the Modern Violin* is a published version of his doctoral dissertation *The Modern Violin* (University of Stockholm). The dissertation, however, could have benefitted from more careful revision, both to improve some of the arguments it makes and to correct numerous infelicitous typographical errors and other flaws in the presentation.

1. These bows were originally in the Este collection, previously housed in the Catajo Castle near Padua where the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand I lived with his retinue, or in the Kunstkammer of Archduke Ferdinand II, previously housed in Ambras Castle, Tyrol. Both collections joined the museum in Vienna in 1916.

The basic premise of Huber's work is sound, if perhaps not thoroughly groundbreaking. He uses various criteria to define what constitutes a "modern" violin. The most important factors are the neck angle, whether or not the neck is mortised into the top block, and the degree of arching in the top and back plates. He rightly posits that French makers were in the forefront of modernizing older instruments and in building original instruments to more modern specification in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. He makes a good case for the spearheading role of the French by showing, through extant instruments, just how conservative the Italians and Germans could still be in the early part of the nineteenth century. None of the above points, however, represents particularly new thinking; rather, they seem to be ideas that have been circulating over the past two decades among violin restorers and players interested in historical set-ups—people for whom practical application in usable instruments, rather than publication, is often of primary importance. Neither the date that the dissertation was submitted nor any information about the period of time during which it was researched and written is included in this book, so one rather suspects that Huber, who has by now produced several other books about the violin and the guitar (e.g., *Geigen, Bestimmung der Preise: Geigen und Bogen, was bestimmt ihren Wert?*/Violin, Price Determination: Violins and Bows, What Determines Their Value? [Frankfurt/M: Bochinsky, 1988] and *The Development of the Modern Guitar* [Westport, CT: Bold Strummer, 1991]), is not here putting forth his most recent effort. The concentration of items in the bibliography from the 1970s and early 1980s and the paucity of more recent items also suggest that the majority of research for this book may have been carried out more than fifteen years before its publication.

Huber does have something original to say about changing tastes in violin arching in the nineteenth century. By measuring the height of the arching at regular intervals on the tops and backs of many violins, he is able to statistically document the shift away from higher arched models to flatter ones, as well as the French school's early move in this direction. Unfortunately, the presentation of his findings—through over fifty bar graphs, each outlining the arching profile of a different violin—is flawed, first because of his failure to adequately articulate why he chose these particular violins, and more seriously by his not sticking to a single scale so that the graphs could be meaningfully compared to each other.

Additionally, Huber fails to document some of his assertions, for example, that the general lengthening of “the fingerboard of (especially French) violins” occurred ca. 1800 (p. 55); and he repeats often-stated but inadequately documented ideas, for example, that Giovanni Battista Viotti (1755–1824) used a “modern” bow² and “that he obviously did not in any way sound baroque” (p. 119).

Huber is at his most interesting when speaking about specific French violin makers, especially Jean Gabriel Koliker (pp. 197–98), whom he credits with being the real innovator with regard to neck modernization. However, it seems difficult to determine to just what extent Koliker would have been modifying necks, since extremely few of his instruments survive.³

Josef Focht’s book, *Der Wiener Kontrabass*, originally submitted as a doctoral dissertation (University of Tübingen, 1994) is an up-to-date, thorough treatment of its subject, the five-stringed double bass. The instrument is typically tuned FF-AA-D-F#-a, but as Focht makes clear, it is the tuning of the upper four strings that is characteristic of the Viennese instrument, while the tuning of lowest string is variable: FF, EE, or DD. Like Alfred Planyavsky (*The Baroque Double Bass Violone* [Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1998]), Focht sifts through copious source material, but does so dispassionately, while Planyavsky seems determined to read every source as evidence of his pet theories.⁴ Focht has effectively put together a high-quality *vademecum* for the Viennese double bass. While he draws on the solid work of Adolf Meier—perhaps best known in this field for *Konzertante Musik für Kontrabaß in der Wiener Klassik*, *Schriften zur Musik* 4 (Giebing, 1969, 2nd ed. 1979) and “Der Wiener Kontrabaß und seine Spieltechnik in der Zeit der Wiener Klassik,” in *Kontrabaß und Baßfunktion*, *Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft* 12, ed. Walter Salmen (Innsbruck, 1986), 97–108—he has clearly reevaluated the sources and has brought additional sources into consideration, benefit-

2. For evidence against this theory, see the portrait included at Viotti’s entry in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, second edition (New York: Macmillan, 2001), 26:767.

3. According to Huber, even the Parisian expert Étienne Vatelot remembers having seen only one instrument by Koliker. With so few extant instruments it is hard to see how we can be sure of the way he might have set up instruments.

4. See reviews of Planyavsky’s book by Shanon P. Zusman in this *Journal* 26 (2000): 238–242, and by Gregory Barnett in the *Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America* 36 (1999): 69–74.

ting, no doubt, from the guidance of his *Doktorvater* Manfred Hermann Schmid, author of “Der Violone in der italienischen Instrumentalmusik des 17. Jahrhunderts,” in *Studia organologica* (Festschrift John Henry van der Meer), ed. Friedemann Hellwig (Tutzing: Schneider, 1987), 407–436.

In addition to providing a single place where one can learn just about everything that is to be known about the Viennese double bass, Focht’s study is valuable particularly for his annotated catalog of music for the instrument (pp. 87–150) and his encyclopedic coverage of players and construction of the instrument (pp. 165–221 and 224–247). Here are found a wide range of obscure composers such as Josef Axmann, Antonio Capuzzi, Johann Georg Hindle (who was also a double bassist and a violin maker), Joseph Mannl, and Leopold Pfeiffer—though it must be said that when it comes to some of the more mainstream repertoire Focht’s coverage is not always as impressive. For example his arguments as to why the first edition of Schubert’s “Trout” Quintet contains notated low Cs in the “violone” part are not fully convincing (pp. 131–32), if in fact Schubert had the Viennese double bass in mind for this part.

Occasionally Focht seems too eager to prove his point, sometimes drawing conclusions that are not adequately supported by the evidence he presents. For example, he argues that Vienna was unique in losing the G violone by 1700, citing Johann Jacob Prinner’s *Musicalischer Schlissl* (1677) as the latest regional source to mention the use of this instrument (pp. 26–28), but he neglects to cite a wealth of later sources from other areas that do mention it, nor does he specify any later sources from around Vienna that could have, but conspicuously do not, mention it. Sometimes he fails to cite a source, for example where he shows typical bowings for minuets and marches (p. 71), or where he shows a bowing in modern down- and up-bow signs over an example from a cassation by Mannl (p. 71) without specifying the particular source for this bowing. I have not previously seen original modern down- and up-bow signs in music this old, so I would like to know exactly how the bowing was indicated in the source and what the source is. On the whole, however, this book can be recommended as a reliable resource on the Viennese double bass, an instrument that deserves more attention in modern-day, period-instrument performances of Viennese music.

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