

Masterworks for Violin

THE ART OF BOWING

for Violin and Piano
GIUSEPPE TARTINI

Edited by Endre Granat

Violin



LETTER FROM TARTINI TO SIGNORA MADDALENA LOMBARDINI

Published as an Important Lesson to Performers on the Violin
Padua, Italy, March 5, 1760. Translated by Charles Burney, 1779 (revised)

DEAR MADDALENA,

Your principal practice and study should, at present, be confined to the use and power of the bow, in order to make yourself entirely mistress in the execution and expression of whatever can be played or sung, within the compass and ability of your instrument. Your first study, therefore, should be the true manner of holding, balancing and pressing the bow lightly, but steadily, upon the strings; in such a manner as that it shall seem to breathe the first tone it gives, which must proceed from the friction of the string, and not from percussion, as by a blow given with a hammer upon it. This depends on laying the bow lightly upon the strings, at the first contact, and on gently pressing it afterwards, which, if done gradually, can scarce have too much force given to it, because, if the tone is begun with delicacy, there is little danger of rendering it afterwards either coarse or harsh.

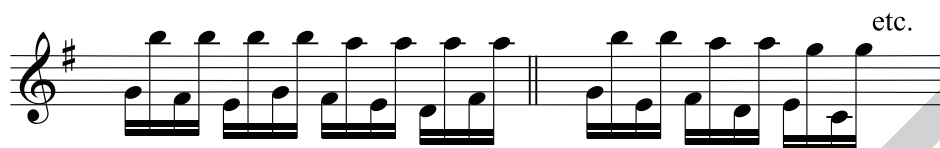
Of this first contact, and delicate manner of beginning a tone, you should make yourself a perfect mistress in every situation and part of the bow, as well in the middle as at the extremities; and in moving it up as well as in drawing it down. To unite all these laborious particulars into one lesson, my advice is that you first exercise yourself in a swell upon an open string, for example, upon the A string that you begin *pianissimo*, and increase the tone by slow degrees to its *fortissimo*; and this study should be equally made, with up and down bow, in which exercise you should spend at least an hour every day, though at different times, a little in the morning, and a little in the evening; having constantly in mind, that this practice is, of all others, the most difficult, and the most essential to playing well on the violin. When you are a perfect mistress of this part of a good performer, a crescendo will be very easy to you; beginning with the most minute softness, increasing the tone to its loudest degree and diminishing it to the same point of softness with which you began, and all this in the same stroke of the bow. Every degree of pressure upon the string, which the expression of a note or passage shall require, will by this means be easy and certain; and you will be able to execute with your bow whatever you please. After this, in order to acquire that light pulsation and play of the wrist, from whence velocity in bowing arises, it will be best for you to practise every day, one of the *allegros*, of which there are three in Corelli's solos, which entirely move in 16th notes. The first is in D, in playing which you should accelerate the motion a little each time until you arrive at the greatest degree of swiftness possible: but two precautions are necessary in this exercise. The first is, that you play the notes *staccato*, that is, separate and detached, with a little space between every two: for though they are written thus:



they should be played as if there was a rest after every note, in this manner:



The second precaution is, that you first play with the point of the bow; and when that becomes easy to you that you use that part of it which is between the point and the middle; and when you are likewise mistress of this part of the bow, that you practise in the same manner with the middle of the bow; and above all, you must remember in these studies to begin the *allegros* sometimes with an up-bow, and sometimes with a down-bow, carefully avoiding the habit of constantly practising one way. In order to acquire a greater facility of executing swift passages in a light and neat manner, it will be of great use if you accustom yourself to skip over a string between two quick notes in divisions, like these :



The Art of Bowing

L'Arte del Arco

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GIUSEPPE TARTINI

THEME Andante

VAR. 1

VAR. 2

Violin

Violin musical score for the first section, measures 1-8. The music is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It features a series of eighth-note patterns with trills (tr) and fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4). The piece concludes with a *p* (piano) dynamic marking.

VAR. 3

Violin musical score for Variation 3, measures 1-8. This variation is characterized by frequent trills (tr) and accents (*sfz*). It includes dynamic markings such as *f* (forte), *p dolce* (piano dolce), *cresc.* (crescendo), and *f* (forte). Fingerings and rests are indicated throughout the piece.

VAR. 4

Violin musical score for Variation 4, measures 1-8. This variation features a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with many trills (tr) and accents (*sfz*). It begins with a *p* (piano) dynamic marking and includes various fingerings and rests.