LEOPOLD MOZART AS THE FATHER OF VIOLIN PEDAGOGY AND HIS
VIOLINSHULE OR A TREATISE ON THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF VIOLIN
PLAYING

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Master of Music

In Performance

By

Kateryna Kolesnyk

May 2014
The thesis of Kateryna Kolesnyk is approved:

_________________________________________   ________________
Michael Ferril   Date

_________________________________________   ________________
Liviu Marinescu  Date

_________________________________________   ________________
Diane Roscetti, Chair   Date

California State University, Northridge
# Table of Contents

Signature page  

Abstract  

Chapter 1: Introduction  

Chapter 2: The brief biography of Leopold Mozart  

Chapter 3: Leopold Mozart’s *Violinshule* as the first comprehensive violin method book.  

Chapter 4: English translation of the *Violinshule*.  

Conclusion  

Works Cited
Abstract

Leopold Mozart as the Father of Violin Pedagogy and His Violinshule or A Treatise on
the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing

By

Kateryna Kolesnyk

Master of Music in Performance

Leopold Mozart’s Violinshule, a Treatise on Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing, is the
first book written on violin methods. It was published in 1756. Even though the Treatise was
written several centuries ago it is still very useful for the violinists and violin teachers today.
Even though our instruments, violin and bow, have changed since the time book was written,
most of technical and musical aspects of violin playing remain the same up to this day. My work
includes analysis of Leopold Mozart’s Violinshule, reviews of the book and letters written by
Leopold Mozart. One of the challenges was the errors made during the translation, which make it
difficult to understand what Leopold Mozart really wanted to say. It is always a problem with the
translation of such treatises. The Translator should know not only the original language, but also
its eighteen century version, and also be familiar with violin technique and its specifics during
eighteenth century. Leopold Mozart’s Violinshule gives us a better understanding of how violin
was played during the eighteen century, which would be helpful for the historical performance.
At the same time, it is the valuable source of information for every practical musician, violin
teacher or even young student to understand better aspects of violin technique and aesthetic of
musical performance in general.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Leopold Mozart could be considered as the Father of Violin Pedagogy, because his *Violinschule* was the beginning of Violin Pedagogy as a discipline. There were some treatises written on violin playing before him, such as Geminiani’s *L’Art du Violon* (1751), but he was the first that included all the aspects of violin playing in one book. Leopold Mozart probably didn’t know about his forerunners. As Leopold Mozart wrote: “I often wondered greatly that nothing had been published as a guide to so popular and so indispensable an instrument as the violin, in view of the fact that a sound foundation, and in particular some rules for special bowings, coupled with good taste, have long been needed.”¹ *Violinschule* turned out to be one of the best instruction books ever written. As Alfred Mann mentioned in his review, “it will remain in use as long as violin remains the violin.”² Leopold Mozart’s treatise is a good example to show that we are not supposed to discard the old books, theories and findings, because they could be very useful for us today. New not always means better. A lot of new theories on violin pedagogy are obsessed with the idea of how to teach violin skills quickly; but quick is not the same as deep, when the skill and notion becomes the second nature of the player. What is the point to try to invent a bicycle again, if it had been already invented? It is better to use the old model and to improve it. Knowledge of Leopold Mozart’s *Violinschule* will not only help to understand what kind of person and musician Leopold Mozart was, but also will be very useful for every professional and amateur violin player.


It is not strange that Leopold Mozart wrote his treatise around the same time that Johann Joachim Quantz published his *Treatise on Playing the Transverse Flute* (1752), and Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (the second son of the great Johann Sebastian) published his *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spilen* (1753). Probably, the idea was in the air at that time. Both of these treatises went far beyond just simple “tutors” on how to play the instruments, but also included the information about the musical style of their times. Leopold Mozart did not permit himself to be influenced by Quantz and Ph. Em. Bach. It is evident from the chapter on Ornamentation. Mozart followed the practice the Italian school of Tartini rather than that of North German Musicians.

Leopold Mozart’s *Grundliche Violinschule* was published in 1756. It is interesting that both of Leopold Mozart’s best creations, his son and his *Violinschule*, appeared in the same year. Wolfgang’s birth was announced on February 9th, 1756. Even without his immortal son Leopold Mozart would always be the author of the *Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing*, which he finished six months after the birth of Wolfgang Amadeus. “The success of the book was great, much greater that of the works of Quantz or Bach.” 3 This is one of the reasons Leopold Mozart’s *Violinschule* should be studied closer today. Leopold Mozart was considered to be the best teacher in Salzburg. This book is not only an instruction book of the mechanics of the violin playing, but a guide to ‘good performance in general’, a treatise on violin playing as an art.

Chapter 2: The brief biography of Leopold Mozart

The biography of Leopold Mozart will help to understand the time and era in which he lived and when his *Violinschule* was written. Leopold Mozart was the man of Enlightenment, who on one hand educated his son in strikingly new ways, based on novel for his time theoretical concepts, and who, on the other hand, established for both the European and worldwide public the new and historically important concept of genius or “divine prodigy.”

Leopold Mozart, or in full Johann Georg Leopold Mozart, was born on November 14th, 1719 in Augsburg. He was the oldest of the six sons of the book-binder, Johann Georg Mozart. His ancestors on the father’s side could be traced back to the sixteenth century. His mother, Anna Maria Sulzer, was the second wife of his father. His father, Johann Georg Mozart, died in 1736. Every child received 300 Gulden of their heritage. Young Leopold didn’t become an artisan as his brothers. After the death of his father, Leopold was sent to Salzburg under patronage to study Theology. But Leopold was even in that early age already a diplomatist: he fooled the clerics with his pretense of becoming the priest and studied at Salzburg University, but Logic and Jurisprudence instead of Theology.

In 1740 he chose music as his profession. It is unknown who were his teachers in organ-playing and composition. He published his Opus 1, The Trio Sonatas for two violins and bass, and accepted a post as a musician with Count Thurn at Salzburg. The Archbishop of Salzburg became aware of the gifted child, whose new works were performed regularly. In 1743 he was

---


engaged as forth violinist of Salzburg Count Chapel. So, it seems like his career started successfully. In 1757 he received the title of “court composer”, and in 1763 he became a vice-conductor. Unfortunately after that, his career stands still, so he died still being a Vice-Kapellmeister, and never managed to become a Kapellmeister. I think one of the problems would be not that he was not talented enough to get a better career, but that he was born unfortunately kind of in between of two great eras in music: Baroque and Classical.

His studies of Logic left a deep and lasting impression on his life, both good and disastrous. He understood Latin moderately. His mental superiority, which he augmented later with his experience and knowledge, made him critical of those in authority over him. All that made him isolated and unpopular.

Karl Geiringer thinks that from the external point of view alone Wolfgang’s existence was the reason for the frustration of Leopold’s career. Since the father recognized the genius in his own son, it was practically impossible for him the serve the Archbishop with the same devotion. From that day on, only Wolfgang’s career was important for him. Leopold Mozart died May 28, 1787 in Salzburg.

---


Chapter 3: Leopold Mozart’s *Violinshule* as the first comprehensive violin method book.

Leopold Mozart’s *Violinschule* was the first comprehensive violin method book. As I mentioned earlier, *Violinschule* was written in six months after the birth of Wolfgang Amadeus in 1756. *Violinschule* was written for practical musicians, music teachers and young students of music. It treats all the questions of violin technique of its time. The treatise was based on Leopold Mozart’s experience as a violinist and violin teacher. One of the reasons that made him write this treatise is that he was often sad when he found pupils badly taught, so he as a teacher had to send them back to the very beginning to start again with fundamentals. Leopold Mozart said that “great pains had to be taken to eradicate the faults which had been taught”.² He was also complaining that some badly taught adult musicians were distorting the meaning of the composer by the use of the wrong bowing. He was amazed that even with the help of oral explanation and practical demonstration they were often unable to grasp truth and purity.

Leopold Mozart understood that he could work more on his book and make it even twice as long, but he desired to avoid it. “Not much is gained by a book being a little more costly to the buyer, for indeed who has greater necessity to acquire such guidance that the needy who are not in a position to put themselves under a teacher for a long period of time? Are not the best and

---
most gifted people often in the great poverty?”⁹ So, he omitted everything that would enlarge his book.

Leopold Mozart confessed that he wrote his book not only for the use of pupils and the benefit of teachers, but also because he wanted to convert those who with their bad teaching were making failures of their pupils. It is a very honest position. The good teacher is responsible for his/her students. Bad instruction could ruin one’s musical life and career. *Violinschule* contains not only violin instruction, but also aspects of education and aesthetic theories of musicians in the middle of the eighteenth century.

The Introduction of the Treatise contains history of violin development and classification of the violin family of stringed instruments. He gives us the description of what he calls the “fiddle” family of the instruments which includes instruments “of different sizes and shapes, furnished with gut strings varying proportionally in thickness, and played with a wooden bow strung with horse hair”.¹⁰ He enumerates 12 most common kinds of his time:

1. **Little Pocket-Fiddle or Kit** – has 4 strings, or sometimes even 3. It was commonly used by dancing masters. It was very convenient because of its size, so it could fit into the pocket.
2. **Simple or Board Fiddle** – 4 strings strung over the arched board or piece of wood. Not very practical.
3. **Quarter or Half-Fiddle** – smaller than the ordinary violin. Used for little children to play. (Italians call it *Violino Piccolo*). During baroque era, sometimes was tuned to a much higher pitch than ordinary violin. Later, was not very needed because everything could be played on regular violin in upper registers. Nowadays, used for students, little kids to play (regular tuning).
4. **Treble-Fiddle** – Ordinary violin. Same as today.

---


¹⁰Leopold Mozart, 10.
7. Bass-Viol – Italians call it Violoncello. Held between legs. Formerly had five strings, but now only four.
8. The Great-Bass or the Violon – from Italian *Violone*. Varies in sizes. Much bigger than violoncello, and tuned octave lower. Usually have 4 strings, sometimes even 3. But bigger instruments have sometimes 5 strings (Double Basses).
9. Gamba – held between legs. Italians call it *Viola da Gamba*, or Leg-Fiddle. Leopold Mozart says that even though during his time violoncello also was held between legs and could called leg-fiddle, but viola da gamba is very different, “has a more pleasant tone, and serves mostly for playing an upper part”. Has 6-7 strings, and tuned differently from cello.
10. Bordon – Italian *Viola di Bordone* (French: *Bourdon*). Had 6-7 strings, and a very wide neck, the back side of which hollow and open. Into neck 9 or 10 brass or steel strings are inserted, which were touched or plucked by a thumb. While the principal part was played with the bow on gut strings, the bass part simultaneously was played by the thumb on the strings under the neck. Compositions specifically were written for this instrument.
11. Viola d’Amore – Italian *Viola d’Amore*, and French *Viole d’Amour*. “Distinctive kind of fiddle which sounds especially charming in the stillness of the evening” (Mozart, 12). Six gut strings above. Under the fingerboard, stretched 6 steel strings, which neither touched nor bowed but just duplicate and prologue the sound of upper strings (sympathetic strings).
12. English Violet – distinguishable from viola d’amore. Seven strings above and fourteen below. Owing to bigger number of sympathetic strings tone is stronger.

This is very valuable information for those who study the history of string bowed instruments. Many of these instruments we never saw and they have not survived to this day. Most viols d’Amore, Viola di Bordone and English Violet we can see only in museums now.

Besides that, Leopold Mozart includes the whole paragraph on how to choose the violin. He noted that one should pay attention to the sound qualities of the violin, and not its outside appearance. He didn’t want the violin to be “the victim of external show”. “He who values a bird

---

12 Leopold Mozart, 10-12.
for its feathers and a horse for its blanket, will also judge the violin by its polish and the color of its varnish… The beautifully ‘curled’ lion’s head can improve the tone of the violin as little as fancifully curled wig can improve the intelligence of its living wig stand.”¹³ This little passage illustrates well not only the language that Leopold Mozart used in his writing, which is kind of a mixture of scholastic and bourgeois style, but also his personality. He was not afraid to tell the truth and to fight stupidity and unprofessionalism in the field of violin playing.

Later in the Introduction Leopold Mozart explains how violin should be constructed. He noted that all four strings should be of the right thickness in relation to the other. This notion was very important of that time, because only gut strings were used, so a player should know how to choose the right ones. He suggested testing strings according to mathematical principles. The one suppose to take two strings to which the same weight should be attached. After that, if both strings were being struck they should give the interval of the perfect fifth. If it didn’t happen and one of the strings sounds too sharp, this is the sign that it is too weak and a thicker string should be selected.¹⁴ He also noted that violin construction had a lot of variety at his time. Some violins had low ribs and belly highly arched; others to the contrary had high ribs and belly less arched. The wood of the back should be stronger than the wood of the belly of the violin. Differences in construction of violins in the eighteenth century resulted in differences in sound qualities.

Leopold Mozart had a hope that the Society of Musical Science, established in Germany in 1738, would resolve these problems and the violin of the best qualities would emerge.¹⁵ It seems like he really believed in power of mathematics. At the end of the introduction Leopold Mozart says that a violinist can improve the tone of the violin by changing strings, the bridge and the soundpost.

¹³ Leopold Mozart, 13.
¹⁴ Leopold Mozart, 14.
¹⁵ Leopold Mozart, 15.
The second section of the introduction is dedicated to the Origin of Music and Musical Instruments. While reading this, one can’t get rid of the feeling of reading the Old Testament. Nowadays, nobody would believe that mythical character Mercury was the inventor of the first instrument, which happened to be the lyre. Leopold Mozart has a lot of footnotes in this chapter quoting other people, such as Zarlino, Zachaias Tevo, Pythagoras, Bible, and so on. This chapter could be interesting only if one wants to learn what people thought about origin of music in the eighteenth century.

Chapter I of the book is an excellent source of information for any musician today, not necessarily a violinist, about old and new letters, notes and clefs. It mentions Pope Gregory who chose the following seven letters (A, B, C, D, E, F, and G) and set them on seven lines. Each line had its own letter. Five hundred years later, Guido of Arezzo, a music theorist of the Medieval era, made a lot of changes to the system of musical notation. He noticed that it is difficult to pronounce the letters and changed them to six syllables which he took from the first verse of the Song of Praise (ut, re, mi, fa, sol and la). He also put notes not only on the lines, but also in the spaces between the lines. Later Leopold Mozart carefully explains old and new systems of rhythmic notation, which includes Maxima, Longa, Brevis, Semibrevis, Minima, Semiminima (crotchet or a quarter note), and Fusa (quaver or eight note). I should admit that Leopold Mozart’s explanation of these matters was perfectly short, clear, and understandable. Later in the same chapter, he explains clefs with same excellence, which includes C clefs such as Discant, Alto, and Tenor, Bass or F clef and Violin or G clef. The G clef written three tones lower was called French clef.

Chapter I also includes information that would necessary for the beginning student to know, such as Time and Musical (Even and Uneven) Time-measure, and Allabreve. Leopold Mozart
strongly believed that a young student should be taught to beat the rhythm carefully, keeping quarter notes in his mind, before he will take a violin in his hands.\textsuperscript{16} He also makes suggestions for the violin teacher on how to teach a student to keep rhythm with equality of beats. Some people have a habit of hurrying, so he suggests to give them slower pieces to play, and the others have a habit of slowing down, so “sleepy player can be enlivened by cheerful pieces.”\textsuperscript{17} These suggestions definitely come from his experience as a teacher. Later in the chapter, he also explains Musical Signs and Technical Words. He explains sharps and flats, slurs, fermata (or \textit{La Corona} as Italians called it), trill sign, repeat sign, little note or mordent, and Italian musical terms. Particularly interesting is his footnote that says: “Those who will not use sign ‘natural’ in their composition are in error. If they do not believe this, let them ask me concerning it.”\textsuperscript{18}

There are also some theoretical information in Chapter III explaining the minor and major scale structure and intervals. I found it interesting that the author calls an augmented forth a triton, but diminished fifth he calls “the false or imperfect”.\textsuperscript{19} He also mentioned the difference in intonation on the keyboard and the violin, saying that “all the notes lowered by flat a comma higher than those raised by sharp.”\textsuperscript{20} For example, Db is higher than C#. He even suggests introducing the student to a Monochord, an ancient instrument that has only one string, so the student could understand the ratios.

\textit{Violinschule} includes three chapters on ornamentation. All three of these chapters would be very useful for people who are concerned with historical performance, because they contain information on all the embellishments that were in common use during eighteenth century.

\textsuperscript{16} Leopold Mozart, 34.
\textsuperscript{17} Leopold Mozart, 35.
\textsuperscript{18} Leopold Mozart, 43.
\textsuperscript{19} Leopold Mozart, 69.
\textsuperscript{20} Leopold Mozart, 70.
Leopold Mozart mostly follows the practice of the Italian school of Tartini when it comes to embellishments, rather than Saxon or North German musicians.\(^\text{21}\)

Chapter IX is focused on Appoggiatura and some other embellishments, such as Ueberwurf, Ruckfall or Abfall, Doppelschlag, Half-triller, and Nachschlag. It was interesting to learn that Appoggiatura and Vorschlag is the same thing, and Vorschlag is the German name for Appoggiatura meaning “fore-beat” or suspended note. In most of the cases the stress should be on appoggiatura itself. The author also gives the explanation in which cases the Vorschlag should be played short and the stress is supposed to fall on the main note. Mostly it is in the case of faster tempo. The Ueberwurf is always made upward. The Ruckfall or Abfall falls to the note next to the one following it or to appoggiatura following it. The Doppelschlag is an embellishment of rapid little notes (or Gruppetto). The Nachschlag is a couple of rapid little notes that that conclude the note or the trill.

Chapter X is focused on the trill itself. Mozart calls short trill triletto, and the long trill trillo. He also says that a trill is not supposed to be played too rapidly; otherwise it becomes a “Goat-trill”.\(^\text{22}\) A trill also should not to be broken by the change of the bow, because the trilled note should be sustained. Leopold Mozart also gives examples to practice (especially for the weakest forth finger which is pinkie). He also gives exercises for the double stop trills or double-trill that simultaneously played on two strings, which even nowadays is considered the extended type of technique.


Chapter XI is focused on Tremolo, Mordent and other improvised embellishments. It was a surprise to see the Tremolo in the same company with embellishments. The biggest surprise was to learn that, according to Leopold Mozart, Tremolo means the left hand vibrato and also was considered an embellishment in the eighteenth century. Musicians at that time thought that it would be an error to vibrate every note and that “performers who tremble consistently on each note (looked) as if they had the palsy.” Later in the chapter, the author discusses Mordent, which is two, three or four little notes, which are played quite quickly and quietly grasp at the principal note. It could start on the principal note, on the higher or lower note.

Probably the most interesting chapter of the book would be the last chapter of the book or Chapter XII, which called “Of Reading Music correctly, and in particular, of Good Execution.” This is the chapter where Leopold Mozart discuses not only violin instruction itself, but also other aspects of education, and his own esthetic theories, which a part of esthetic theory of the eighteenth century. In this chapter he states his opinion against empty virtuosity and plea for a good musicianship. Leopold Mozart values an excellent orchestra player more than a solo player. He noted that few solo players could read music well, because they a lot of times are accustomed to their own fantasy. “Therefore one must not play solo before one can accompany right well.” He even touches the matters that seem obvious, but not necessarily happen in real life, such as that the instrument must be well in tune. He also mentions that some people during his time tuned by the D string, not A as it always done nowadays.

Later he suggests that, before playing the piece of music, one should analyze the piece well. The character and tempo should be well considered. One should also consider the effect which

---

23 Leopold Mozart, 203.

24 Leopold Mozart, 217.
the composer wished to have brought out.\textsuperscript{25} Dynamics also should be observed exactly. The notes raised by \# should always be played stronger. The strong beats of the bar should be played stronger (Italian Nota Buona). The quarter notes should be played kind of in \textit{fp} dynamic or basically the player should relax the tone by the end of the quarter notes when they mixed with sixteenth. In the accompaniment Leopold Mozart suggests not to sustain the tone, but play notes quickly, just to show the beginning of the notes. While playing in ensemble, players should observe each other carefully, and especially the leader.

Leopold Mozart strongly believed that each lesson should be perfected before the next step is taken. He warns the teacher against letting the pupil play before he knows the rules of playing.\textsuperscript{26} Many parents want to hear something sophisticated on the very first stages of their child’s playing, thinking that “miracles have happened, and how well the money for the lessons has been spent.”\textsuperscript{27} The most important is to do everything right on the beginning stages of violin playing, so then there will not be a necessity to get rid of bad habits in playing, such as stiffness of hands, bad intonation or poor sound. Teachers are not supposed to rely on pupil’s good ear, but Leopold Mozart strongly believed that the person who lacks good ear is “useless for music”.

\textit{Violinschule} includes several chapters on right hand, or bow hand, technique. The author discusses the bow hold in Chapter II. In the eighteenth century the bow was different from the contemporary bow, so the bow hold was also different. An instrument in every stage of its evolution dictates to the player the most comfortable position for playing. The stroke must not be

\textsuperscript{25} Leopold Mozart, 218.


guided with the whole arm. The shoulder should be moved a little, the elbow more, and the wrist even more.\textsuperscript{28} The very important idea here is that bow should be “guided”, because violinist should not “hold” the bow tightly, but guide it on the string.

Chapter V of the \textit{Violinschule} is all about control of the bow, and ideas on how to produce better sound and improve manner of playing. Even though the eighteenth century violin bow was different, the exercises that Leopold Mozart included in this chapter are very useful even for today’s performer for improving bow control. He suggests dividing the bow mentally into several sections and producing sound by pulling the bow on the string changing the sound from soft to strong increasingly and back. It must be practiced slowly.

Example 1: Exercises to improve bow control and tone quality.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{exercises.png}
\caption{Exercises to improve bow control and tone quality.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{28} Leopold Mozart, 60.
A soft tone should be produced farther from the bridge, and stronger tone closer to the bridge. Practicing these exercises would make one very dexterous in the control of the bow, which makes it easier to achieve purity and evenness of tone.

At the very end of the book, Leopold Mozart published the table of bowings. Varieties of bowing discussed in Chapters IV and VII, and the table of bowing at the end of the book would help to improve bowing choices. Leopold Mozart spends the whole Chapter VI on a triplet and gives suggestions on the varieties of bowing choices that could be used for performing triplets.

*Violinschule* includes chapters focused on left hand, or violin hand, technique. Leopold Mozart starts to explain the violin hold position in Chapter II. The chapter also has pictures illustrating the right way of holding a violin and a bow and the wrong way of holding instrument. Paul Gelrud in his review of the book says that unfortunately Mozart has chosen “ill-designed engravings,” which I do not agree with. The difference in violin holding is that the violin was placed in front of the shoulder and the side on which the E (thinnest) string lies under the chin. Nowadays the side where the G (thickest) string lies goes under the chin.

Even though violins still had shorter necks, the way author explains the violin hold position is basically the same as today. Leopold Mozart says that the teacher should pay attention to the thumb which “must not project too far over the fingerboard.” The lower part of the hand and the arm should remain free, and the violin must not lie on it. The opposite would restrict the playing.

---

29 Leopold Mozart, 97-99.


31 Leopold Mozart, 57.

32 Leopold Mozart, 57.
All that remains the same today, and it is a really hard concept for young students to understand that we as violinists are not “holding” the instrument with the left hand (we holding the violin with the chin), but just supporting it there, allowing fingers to move freely. The author also stresses on the idea that violin should be held not too high and not too low.

Chapter VIII is focused on violin positions including also Compound or Mixed positions. It was a little bit confusing on the beginning, but then the logic of organizing of violin positions in two groups, such as Whole position and Half position, becomes clear. Nobody does call it this way today, because positions called nowadays by numbers (1\textsuperscript{st}, 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 3\textsuperscript{rd} and so on). According to Leopold Mozart’s classification, the Whole position (or common position) is when the first and the third fingers are used all the times on the notes which occur on the line, and the second and the fourth fingers in contrary fall on the notes that are written on spaces between the lines. In this case the 1\textsuperscript{st}, 3\textsuperscript{rd}, 5\textsuperscript{th}, and 7\textsuperscript{th} positions all should be considered the Whole position.

In the Half position, the first and the third fingers will fall on the notes that are written on spaces between the lines. The second and the fourth fingers play notes that are written on the lines. So, 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 4\textsuperscript{th}, 6\textsuperscript{th} and 8\textsuperscript{th} violin positions should be considered the Half position. The logic of such theory is obvious for every violinist, because it is much easier and comfortable to play in positions that Leopold Mozart classified as the Whole or common position, than in those that fall into the Half position group.

The Compound or Mixed positions combine the use of whole and half positions and are used depending on circumstances for playing long passages of notes or higher in positions where notes are closer to each other and it is possible just to extend the fingers. Some of the examples on mixed positions look very technically demanding, so it is surprising that such stuff was played
during eighteenth century. It looks like an excerpt from a Romantic violin concerto, especially those that use the extended fourth finger. 33

Example 2- Extended fingering in broken chords.

The excellent part of Chapter VIII on double stopping concludes with useful observation of which particular harmonic supposed to be heard as the third note, when particular double stops are played. I never saw this information in any other violin method book. One of my violin teachers told me that the third tone occurs while playing the double stops (especially thirds and sixth) on the violin. It happens only if the interval is in tune, so the third tone, which sounds as a harmonic lower than the interval itself, starts to be heard. If no such thing happens, it means that the violinist plays the interval out of tune. Leopold Mozart’s *Violinschule* is the only treatise

33 Leopold Mozart, 152-62.
where I found the chart of exactly which note should be heard with every particular third, fourth or sixth on the violin. It is a very rare and useful piece of information. Not every violinist, violin teacher, or violin student is aware of this phenomenon, which should be used practically.

Example 3- If a few double-stoppings be played directly after each other, the interchange of these droning tones strikes the ear more sharply.

\[ \text{Example 3} \]

\[ \text{Leopold Mozart, 164-5.} \]
Chapter 4: English translation of the *Violinshule*.

*A Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing* translated by Editha Knocker was the first translation of Mozart’s *Violinschule* published in English. The book has a fine appearance, clear print, and “carefully reproduced illustrations”\(^\text{35}\). It is interesting to know that the first French translation appeared in the eighteenth century, between first and second edition, about which Leopold Mozart knew nothing for a long time.\(^\text{36}\)

Editha Knocker first saw the book called *Violin Method* by Leopold Mozart back in 1914-18. One of her old friends brought her the old book in original brown leather binding dated 1787, which was the third edition. Ms. Knocker was charmed by Leopold Mozart’s “dry humor, his wit, his imagery, and his child-like and literal acceptance of history as told in Old Testament.”\(^\text{37}\)

Editha Knocker’s translation had to be published in 1940, but due to the World War II, it didn’t happen. Later it was postponed due to the shortage of paper, and finally the first edition was published in 1948. There is not much information about Editha Knocker, but the fact that the other two of her published works, besides Mozart’s Treatise, was *An Analysis of the Art of Practising - Being a Complement of The Making of a Violinist*, and *Violinist's Vade Mecum: An Invitation To All Students, Teachers And Performers* leads to a conclusion that she was probably a professional violinist.


It is a very hard and challenging task to translate such a work as Leopold Mozart’s *Violinschule*. First of all, a translator should know both English and German languages perfectly and to have a sense of style; but unfortunately, it will not be enough to translate such book as *Violinschule*. The translator should be a musician, or even more precisely a violinist, who knows how to deal with all the musical terms and—more important—all the terms that are used in violin playing and pedagogy. Any mistakes in translation of violin bowing styles or left hand technique could lead to misunderstandings that would make the English translation of the book useless for all English speaking violinists and violin teachers. Plus, it is important for a translator to be familiar with the eighteenth century style of writing and eighteenth century style of musical performance. The same terms could mean completely different things in the eighteenth century and nowadays. It is also important to be familiar with corresponding terms that were used in the English language by musicians during the eighteenth century.

Editha Knocker’s translation is successful in many ways. Her translation makes this Treatise a pleasant reading. Alfred Mann in his review of the book noted that “the translator has shown particular skill in finding idiomatic equivalents of Leopold Mozart’s characteristic expressions” and that “complex problems involved in the handling of eighteenth century German are solved.”

---

One of the strengths of this edition is integration of 1756 and 1787 editions. Editha Knocker decided to combine first and third editions because “the differences between the third edition and the second and fourth editions of 1769-70 and 1800 are so slight as to be negligible.”

The preface written by Dr. Alfred Einstein is an excellent source of information about Leopold Mozart’s life and career. Doctor Alfred Einstein was a German-American musicologist and music editor. He is best known for being the editor of the first major revision of the Kochel catalog which was published in 1936.

Weaknesses of this edition include errors in translation. Some confusion occurs when it comes to notes spelled as B and H. On page 44 Editha Knocker in her footnote mentioned that there is still a custom of calling B natural by the letter H in Germany. Of course in his original, Leopold Mozart called B flat as B, and B natural as H. Probably in her desire to adapt the book to the English speaking musicians, Editha Knocker translated H as B. But on page 44 it is not the case. Considering all that, it is confusing for me which note she means by writing B (B natural or B flat) in the other parts of the book. It was also hard for the translator to translate the word “Affect” that was used by eighteenth century writers on music. The corresponding English term of the period would be “the passions”, but it doesn’t mean the same for present day reader what it did to English poets and aestheticians of the eighteenth century. The footnotes of the book are also a little confusing, because translators footnotes and footnotes of both first and third editions of Mozart himself are mixed. Even though the translator’s footnotes are in brackets, they

---


are sometimes hard to distinguish. Some of the mistakes that occurred in the first edition of the translation were eliminated later in the second edition, such as confusion about different kinds of embellishments (Vorschlag, Nachschlag and Doppelschlag that were translated simply as ‘turn’).

As long as we don’t have a better translation, the translation of Editha Knocker is very valuable for us as musicians.
Conclusion

It is hard to overestimate the importance of Leopold Mozart’s *Violinschule* and its role in Violin Pedagogy. It set an example of what violin treatise or violin method should be like, and what aspects of violin playing it should cover. Leopold Mozart’s footsteps were followed by later violin methods by Baillot, Beriot, Spohr, Leonard, Joachim and legendary Carl Fesch’s *The Art of Violin Playing*. Mozart’s *Violinschule* is probably one of the books that should be taught in every violin pedagogy class, and also should be observed by musicologists who concerned with studying Mozart’s family and their legacy. Even though the translation of Editha Knocker had some little imperfections, but we have to thank her for making *Violinschule* available for us in English. Hopefully other musicologists and violin pedagogues will become interested in translating *Violinschule*, so some of the grey areas will be cleared.

Basically all information that Leopold Mozart’s *Violinschule* contains could be divided into three main types:

- History (which could be very useful now) and history mixed with myth.
- Technical and musical information about violin playing that remains the same even today.
- Technical and musical information that changed during following centuries, but remains interesting for those who concerned with historical performance and eighteenth century style of violin playing in particular.

Leopold Mozart’s *Violinschule* is one of the most valuable books written about violin playing for professional violinists, violin students and teachers, and musicologists. Leopold Mozart’s *Violinschule* will not only help to understand the kind of person and musician Leopold Mozart was, but also will be very useful for every professional and amateur violin player. It is not only the historical source of information, but a book that could be used practically in a lot of
ways. *Violinschule* will help any practical musician, violin teacher or even young student to understand better aspects of violin technique and aesthetic of musical performance in general. Future implications could include better understanding of how violin was played during late Baroque period, which would improve historical performance of the pieces written at that time.
Works Cited


