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Pedagogy and performance practice of David Popper (1843-1913): An analysis of influence and legacy of Popper’s compositions in studio teaching

Minah Choe

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

Sydney Conservatorium of Music
University of Sydney
2014
I declare that the research presented here is my own original work and has not been submitted to any other institution for the award of a degree.

Signed:

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Date:

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Abstract
David Popper was one of the most influential cellists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. He had a successful career as an orchestral and chamber musician and gained fame as a virtuoso solo cellist undertaking extensive concert tours all over Europe for over 20 years. Then, in the final phase of his life he devoted himself to teaching at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest. This study aims to examine the influence of Popper, his compositions and their aesthetic impact on cello playing and on today’s performers. It further and more particularly investigates Popper’s performance practice of shifting and rubato. The final part of the study includes interviews with current teachers at a number of institutions to understand the relevance of Popper’s aesthetic paradigm, how Popper is taught today and how his pedagogical principles may continue to promote a tradition of expressive and virtuosic cello playing to date.
Preface

Chapter three is based on the interviews with teachers. The study was approved by the Executive Committee of the HREC, at its meeting of 6 August 2010, considered this information and approved the protocol entitled “David Popper as a pedagogue, romantic performance practice and pedagogical methods”.
Details of the approval are as follows:

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Miss Minah Choe

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Interview Questions
Advertisement, Version 1, May 2010

The HREC is a fully constituted Ethics Committee in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans. March 2007 under Section 5.1.29.
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Music, Associate artists: Phillip Shovk, Piano, Shan Yew, Violin)
INTRODUCTION

David Popper is one of the most recognized cellists of the nineteenth century. Janos Starker said:

Until today, no one has better captured the essential elements in cello playing than he. It has often been said that one cannot truly master the cello without having learned Popper’s ‘High School of Cello playing, Op. 73’. True, no doubt, if one cares about what the cello and cellists can and should do.¹

Popper’s legacy is available to us through his compositions, which are widely played and taught universally to developing cellists. There seem to be different responses by students to the works by Popper at different stages of learning – awe about the sheer virtuosity, excitement derived from musical enjoyment, and enlightenment from the realisation that there is an efficiency in an organized method. There will be diverse accounts of everyone’s story about learning or performing Popper.

Popper’s compositions are essential in the cello repertoire as recitals regularly include Popper in their programs and auditions or examinations would require a cellist to play a study by Popper. This importance makes it necessary to come up with an account of teaching Popper.

This study will investigate Popper’s legacy and influence in current teaching practices. The study includes three chapters: the first chapter looks at Popper as a performer and teacher and discusses his legacy. The second chapter investigates the performance practice of the romantic style of cello playing. The final, third chapter summarizes empirical research on how practical and effective Popper’s works are in a

studio teaching practice today. Chapter one involves textual analysis, chapter two textual and sound analysis of performance practice and chapter three reflects on the involvement of interview participants.

In the first chapter, an in-depth study will investigate Popper’s legacy as a virtuoso cellist and as a devoted teacher. This will provide a background and understanding of his compositions and his teaching materials. His concert reviews are invaluable resources of how Popper performed, as there is no sound recording of his playing available. Eduardo Carpinteyro of the University of Cincinnati used this format of analyzing different aspects of left and right hand techniques and compared the Forty Studies, Op. 73, with Popper’s four concertos in a thesis entitled ‘Pedagogical Aspects in David Poppers four Cello Concertos’. His analysis provides comprehensive guidelines to fully understand and realise the technical skills articulated in the concertos. Carpinteyro gives practice strategies associated with Op. 73 and provides a comprehensive framework to understand Popper’s pedagogical intentions. In addition, Il-Hee Hwang has synthesized major cello study methods in ‘A Synthesis of the Advanced Etudes by Dotzauer, Gruetzmacher, and Popper.’ She organizes the studies in a sequence where technical consistency and flow can be learned. These two theses comprise some critical texts that will provide a methodological framework for my own analysis.

In the second part, aspects of performance will be taken into consideration. Before becoming a pedagogue, Popper had a huge international career as a celebrated soloist who knew how to make the cello sound appealing to the public and to music critics. The charm of his works lies in the wonderful idiomatic writing, within their musical expression, conveyance of mood and romanticism. They capture the unique

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2 Eduardo Carpinteyro, Pedagogical Aspects in David Popper’s Four Cello Concertos (D.M.A., University of Cincinnati, 2007)
characteristics of national temperament as suggested in the titles such as, *Hungarian Rhapsody*, Op. 68, *Fantasy on Little Russian Song*, Op. 43, *Scottish Fantasy*, Op. 71, and *Spanish Dances*, Op. 54. His musical writing features broad musical understanding and distinctive characters, together with the best first-hand knowledge of the instrument he was writing for.

I am intrigued to research the performance practice aspects of shifting, rubato, and phrasing by analyzing recordings of cellists ranging from the early twentieth century to recent times to hear how they convey his writing. The practice of *rubato* is almost like an assumed knowledge of what has been passed down until this day and age. I would also look into available methods by different cellists who explain how the practices of shifting and *rubato* are executed in their own words including Alexanian, Bunting, Gendron, Starker and Pereira.

Expanding on Blum’s remark, “technique, wonderful sound, all of this is sometimes astonishing – but it is not enough,” 4 I would like to argue that one needs to look at Popper’s works not only in a technical sense, but also in a musical context. I believe that students can learn how to express themselves musically through the study of character pieces. These pieces in romantic settings help students feel the music and expressiveness and they are beautifully written for the instrument. Therefore, while mastering the technical challenges, one can also learn to phrase musically due to the extrovert nature of the music. This turns mere technical display into more musical expressions achieving a transformation of a craft into an art of performance. I believe this transformation is the essence of the works by Popper, because he composed for himself to perform and reach the audiences as a soloist in demand and later extended this art into a pedagogical point of view.

In the final chapter of the thesis, I undertake an empirical study on

how Popper’s works and implied pedagogical practices influence present studio teaching. I investigate how effective and practical Popper’s works are for teachers in students’ development. This will involve interviews with teachers from different backgrounds, who are teaching various age groups such as primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. This data collected will give a report of how cellists are learning nowadays and what sort of influence Popper’s works are having on modern day cello playing. I would like to find out what sort of environment and setting teachers think work best, and what other approaches are suggested to best utilize the available pedagogical resources by Popper.

This study will be the first investigation that links the textual material of various performers and teachers of the past and current centuries, and the implied pedagogical approach of Popper’s studies and performance repertoire, with teachers’ professional studio practices. It is hoped that the study will in turn enhance cello pedagogy and the use of works by Popper for a more effective study of the cello.

**Justification of the study**

Every cellist will come across Popper in his or her learning and a review of how his pedagogical works are taught is only natural. In addition, this study will take a look at performance practice in Popper’s time, the late nineteenth century to justify interpretative choices. There are several studies of the *Forty Studies of the High School of Cello Playing*, Op. 73 and his four study concertos, which endeavour to examine technical aspects. All these sources view Popper’s works largely from a technical angle. However, their musical value is often overlooked beneath a surface of technical display. As loved by audiences and performers of the time, these works definitely display musical charm and this should be integrated into pedagogical approaches. As far as it can be determined, no research has been done to assess how Popper’s compositions are performed and taught. An extensive search by the author showed no results in scholarly research engines such as RILM, IIMP and PQDT.

In order to investigate the pedagogy of Popper this study will start with reviews of David Popper as a performer and as a pedagogue. The study will investigate the performance practice of shifting and *rubato* and their pedagogy in the second chapter. It will also include an analysis of *Mazurka*, Op. 11, No. 3 by Popper.
and compare seven different sound recordings. In the third chapter, six cello teachers with varying educational backgrounds will be interviewed. These interviews form a background for my discussion on how Popper is taught effectively in the teaching studios.

**Purpose of the study**
The purpose of the study is to investigate how the works by Popper can contribute to learning and progress and how they can be isolated and improved with the analyses in both technical and musical terms.

**Research Questions**
Throughout the study the following questions were addressed in an endeavour to expand the initial scholarly enquiry:

1. How is Popper taught in studios? What are the main attributes of the works by Popper in terms of cello technique and instrumental development?
2. Performer: What sort of influences did Popper have on performers? How did he perform and what can we say about style, performance practice, sound, and repertoire?
3. Composer: What are traits of his compositions?
   a. Studies
   b. Concert pieces
4. Teacher: what are Popper’s pedagogical aspects? How did Popper teach? What is the Hungarian school of cello playing?
5. By studying performance practice, can there be more to teach to maximize learning from the works by Popper? What musical ideas can be learnt from the works and how can it be elaborated in other repertoires?

**Limitations**
The author has investigated studio teaching in Sydney, Australia and the US selected by availabilities of interviewees. Therefore, the outcome is only representative of the places where a particular interviewee teaches. Despite the efforts to retrieve as many compositions of Popper, the list of works remains incomplete as scores are out of print and cannot be relocated to the city where the author resides. The sound analysis
reflects the limitations of the available software and its application.

**Literature Review**

The evidence of the use of David Popper’s works in cello pedagogy is apparent in the number of theses written in the past two decades. Some are directly about Popper’s studies and concertos whilst others review the works in the context of cello methods and literature. I have chosen five theses in this review according to their relevance and research objectives. Whenever I introduce Popper in a recital program, the audience shows general interest and curiosity in who Popper was in his role as a cellist and pedagogue. Every thesis provides useful information about Popper and his works and reflects an understanding of him in the history of cello literature and cello playing. My evaluation is based on the influence and effectiveness of Popper to the performance practice and pedagogy of cello playing. The majority of theses deal with pedagogical aspects rather than performance practice. A number of theses talk about Popper as a performer and his influence on his generations. For example Rosen claims that Popper’s musical traits emulate Vieuxtemps’ style and accordingly categorizes him as a part of the Belgian School.\(^5\) Hence, the performance practice part of my research retains much scope for new ideas. In this review, research plans and methodologies were also investigated in my search for an appropriate presentation of my ideas and research outcomes. It was found that these vary including compilations of biographical information and repertoire a synthesis of studies, interviews with major teachers and the pedagogical analysis of studies and concertos.

\(^5\) David S. Rosen, Vieuxtemps, Servais and Popper: Their Music and Influence on the Belgian School of Violoncello (D.M.A., University of Miami, 1988)
I reviewed five theses dating from 1989 to 2007. I have grouped them into three different categories. Firstly, the thesis by Raychev provides a historical background of David Popper, his origins and how he fits into the category of a cellist-composer. The aim of this thesis is to compile a list of brief biographies of virtuoso cellist composers and to discuss the cello repertoire by these composers relative to their pedagogical relevance. Raychev includes lists of compositions by each composer, as his intention is to bring awareness of the existent repertoires to students and teachers. The methodology used here is both quantitative and qualitative data collection. This paper provides some useful background information on composers and the repertoires starting from Boccherini and ending with Popper.

The second group of sources focuses on cello pedagogy and the use of Popper’s works in studio teaching. Hwang’s thesis evaluates current studies of cello technique and proposes her own synthesis of studies to be suitable for secondary and early tertiary level. Her model includes 170 Foundation Studies for Cello, Volume, III by Alwin Schroeder, which uses advanced studies by twelve different cellists including Buchler, Coczzman, Dotzauer, Duport, Franchomme, Grützmacher, Kummer, Lee, Merk, Piaatti, Schroeder and Servais. However, Schroeder’s studies are not widely used due to their extensive volume. Hwang therefore concentrates on what she values as the main studies by the three most popular cello studies, Dotzauer, Grützmacher and Popper. This seems to make these studies more accessible and

practical for both students and teachers who can consistently work with the same philosophies and approaches using these materials. Hwang analyses levels of difficulties and technical challenges of each study and re-organizes them according to technical topics with eleven topics for left hand technique and twelve topics for right hand technique.

Carpinteyro’s thesis also falls into the second category. He focuses his research on the four cello concertos by Popper. He outlines their musical and pedagogical values and includes an analysis and discussion of technical characteristics for each concerto. He also provides practice guides incorporating the *High School of Cello Playing, Forty Studies*, Op. 73 by Popper. This is very useful in understanding of Popper’s cello technique and his performance indications as it provides solutions for performance interpretations of tempi, articulations and expressive techniques. His study is organized into four chapters. The first chapter provides background information on the concerti and Popper’s teaching career. In the second and the third chapters he explores pedagogical aspects subdivided into right and left hand techniques. The concluding chapter contains his own analysis and results.

The final category includes theses by Gagnon7 and Rosen8. They focus on origins and influences of national schools of cello playing or string playing in their respective regions. Although her research is not directly about Popper, Gagnon’s paper is useful in terms of displaying views of current teachers in North America who have trained in the tradition of the French school of cello playing. Her aim is to investigate the influence of the French School of cello playing in North America. The origins of this school are found in methods by Cupis and Duport who have formed the national school of cello playing from the eighteenth century. Both Cupis and Duport were pupils of Martin Berteau (c.1709-71), who is considered to be ‘undisputed’

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7 Gagnon (2005)  
8 Rosen (1989)
founder of the French school. Gagnon interviews five teachers from major schools in North America who have studied with French masters and first and second generations of cellists who have experienced both French and American school of cello playing. They are Andre Navarra, Maurice Gendron, Pierre Fournier Charles Renaud, and the French Canadian cellists Huguette and Pierre Morin. The interviews were done in person and Gagnon provides scripts in the appendix. This is very useful in terms of forming my own interview questions for the later part of my research, which investigates how Popper’s works are used in teaching studios and what sort of results they have achieved.

In his early paper Rosen examines similarly the growth of the Belgian school of cello playing through the lives and works of its most influential composers, Vieuxtemps, Servais, and Popper. It is an interesting fact that Popper is known to be the founder of the Hungarian School of cello playing, but had a significant influence on the Belgian school as well. This proves Popper’s abilities and appeal as a performer and how he inspired many musicians in his time. Rosen’s objective is to evaluate the evolution of the cello as a solo instrument and how the techniques have been developed by the virtuoso cellist composer. He also looks at how these composers influenced one another to form a national school of cello playing. Rosen’s methodology includes qualitative research about historical backgrounds. He analyses the works by the composers and their important influences on later generations.

**Conclusion**
The five reviewed theses are useful for various reasons. Some provide good foundational background information to initiate the research and others contain a specific focus on Popper and his works enabling me to research more deeply the pedagogical aspects of Popper. The authors defended their ideas through various methodologies. The comparison of the *Forty Studies*, Op. 73 with the concertos seems

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very effective, as it gives a broader view of Popper’s cello technique and performance practice. The synthesis of studies seems also very convincing. This could be a model for organizing my ideas for concert pieces by Popper and for providing a practical guide for the use of Popper’s works in teaching studios. Gagnon’s interview questions are interesting in respect to the relationship of responses to various questions. This proved a helpful observation in directing my own interview questions. Nevertheless, there remains room for interpretative and performance practice research which will require aural assessment and analysis of past and current performances.
CHAPTER ONE: David Popper, Performer and Pedagogue

David Popper was born in 1843 in Prague, and died in 1913 in Baden, Austria. He was one of the most influential cellists of the late nineteenth and twentieth century. He was a celebrated virtuoso of his time, a famous composer and a highly respected teacher. Surprisingly, the literature on Popper is quite scarce. There is a biography by his pupil, Steven De’ak and otherwise only a handful of articles are available. Campbell’s compilation of who’s who of cellists, *The Great Cellists* (1988), is a great source. An article by Midstroem carries a rhetorical title, ‘A Cellist’s Party Popper’.  

Although somewhat unknown to the public, it just shows the respect cellists all over the world have for Popper. Popper was a complete performer. Praised for his flawless technique and expressivity, he was not only a celebrated solo virtuoso, but also an experienced orchestral musician who held solo cello positions in two major orchestras, the Löwenberg Court orchestra and the prestigious Vienna Imperial Opera and Philharmonic Orchestra. He was sought after as a chamber musician and was most active with the Hellmesberger Quartet and Hubay-Popper Quartet (sometimes known as the ‘Budapest’ Quartet). De’ak has compiled rare concert reviews of the times. As a student of Popper’s himself he also reports about Popper as a teacher. Popper’s contributions include four cello concertos, over sixty charming, virtuosic salon pieces in the cello repertoire, and three books of studies that establish the cello as a virtuoso solo instrument, as we know it today. This chapter aims to present Popper as a performer and pedagogue and to discuss his legacy to present day cellists.

**Performer**

As De’ak wrote David Popper was “one of the greatest masters of his instrument”. He gained fame as a virtuoso soloist touring all over the Europe for over twelve years from the age of twenty. He was also a coveted chamber musician playing with distinguished musicians of the time such as Brahms, Lizst, and Hubay. Campbell quotes from a Viennese publication, the *Musik-Instrumenten-Zeitung*:

11 De’ak, p.13
Full credit is due to Popper that the cello is today a virtuoso instrument and will remain so in the future. He expanded the former limits of technical possibilities and enriched the cello literature with interesting, effective compositions, which, almost without exception, are used in the repertoire of cellists all over the world.\textsuperscript{12}

This virtuoso had an interesting start in learning the cello. Popper started his musical training with his father who was the Cantor at two local synagogues in the Prague ghetto. At the age of twelve, he successfully auditioned for the Conservatory of Prague on the violin and piano, but was admitted under a condition that he would take up the cello. The director of the Conservatory at the time had a vision of an orchestral curriculum and had to fill up shortages to achieve a balanced instrumentation.\textsuperscript{13}

Although, Popper is considered the founder of the Hungarian school of cello playing as he taught at the Lizst Academy in Budapest for 27 years, his roots were in the German school being admitted to the class of Georg Goltermann (1824-1898). Goltermann had been the pupil of Kummer (1797-1879) in Dresden and of Menter (1808-1856) in Munich. There is an interesting link here: Menter’s daughter, Sophie who was a favourite student of Franz Lizst, later married Popper.

Popper’s progress was phenomenal. At the age of fifteen, he was asked to substitute for his teacher who was the solo cellist at the Opera and played the famous solo of the Rossini’s William Tell to a frenzied reception. Ever since this instance, Popper started to appear on concert stages. Some musicians allege to have recognized a resemblance between Popper and Paganini. Popper wrote:

\begin{quote}
When I began my public career, everywhere people discovered in my
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{12} Campbell, p.104
\textsuperscript{13} De’ak, p.35
physical appearance a coincidental resemblance to Paganini: this was due mostly to my thinness, bordering on transparency, as well as to my raven, long black hair… It earned me a little halo, which I did not really deserve, during my first independent concert efforts… Many famous musicians who had known Paganini and associated with him were astonished by the similarity of appearance between the young Bohemian knee fiddler and the Italian magician of the violin. The more intense the desire of the people to recapture what had been lost, the more keen the search for a present substitute. They transferred the physical resemblance to my playing, and imagined that they heard the demonic sound of the great Italian… These were certainly very promising beginnings, but the resemblance would not last. The more I removed myself from Paganini’s image, the more I decidedly became Popper.¹⁴

Prague at the time was a musical and cultural city where most touring artists came and performed including Liszt, Wagner, Berlioz, Bülow, Joachim, Reményi, Wieniawski and Vieuxtemps. Popper is often associated with Vieuxtemps for having a similar style, a noble, graceful, elegant and controlled passion and for their similarly smooth playing. It is interesting that Rosen’s paper claims that Popper is one of the founding cellists of the Belgian school of cello playing due to this association. He quotes Ginsburg:

We can see that he [Popper] was close to the style of the Franco-Belgian violin and cello school in his very cultured tone and in his elegant phrasing and technique. From the Czech school he gained the expressiveness and melodiousness of his tone.¹⁵

The Belgian school of violin playing was founded by Charles de Bériot (1802-1870). He established the style with his compositions, playing and teaching. Viotti

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¹⁴ Ibid., p.40. From a letter of January 1890 to the editor of the newspaper Neues Pester Journal.
(1755-1824) praised young de Bériot: “You have a good style, try to perfect it, listen to all men of talent and imitate none.” The Belgian school of violin playing was characterized by flourishing ideals of the French school and principles beginning in the 1830’s and concluding at the turn of the century. De Bériot’s playing manifested grace, elegance and stylistic nobility, which formed the stylistic feature of virtuosity, elegance and lyricism of the Belgian school. This style was very well transmitted to one of his best-known pupils, Henry Vieuxtemps. Vieuxtemps’s playing and compositions mark the height of the Belgian School and corresponding cellists, the Belgian Servais and the Bohemian Popper most likely looked towards Vieuxtemps as a role model. The Belgian school of cello playing also shows traits of the French School in terms of bow hold and sound quality. The bow was held away from the frog producing light, sweet tone and showing off such strokes as spiccato and staccato. This contrasts with the German and Russian school where the bow was held nearer to the frog promoting maximum sound production.

In summary, the Belgian school was inspired by the virtuosic superstars of the Romantic period such as Liszt and Paganini. Then it was established by de Bériot with his playing, compositions and teaching, passed down to Vieuxtemps who reached the height of this brilliance, virtuosic facility, and elegance in phrasing and technique in both his playing and compositions subsequently influencing the rising stars among solo cellists such as Servais and Popper. Rosen also adds the use of folk tunes and melodies as common in the Belgian school and in Popper’s writings. Notably, Popper’s chamber music partner, Hubay, was a pupil of Vieuxtemps. One can speculate about the bond between the two musicians in their similar ideals of performance styles.

More evidence can be seen in Popper’s compositional forms. According to Rosen, the works of the Belgian school “were romantic forms that best suited the

\[\text{\cite{Ibid., p.12, p.11}}\]
improvisatory and virtuosic nature of the music” also “influenced by the increasing popularity of opera in the nineteenth century”. Rosen categorizes the operatic elements into three groups: fantasies, concertos and salon music. As seen in the appendix, Popper’s output frequently employs these compositional forms and his concertos are very operatic in his treatment of themes and recitative-like slow passages and dramatic changes in moods.

Popper embarked on his solo career with the performance of Volkman’s cello concerto with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under von Bülow, which led him to the position of a solo cellist in the Löwenberg Court Orchestra in 1862. The orchestra was conducted by Max Seifritz from 1857 and was fortunate to have had generous support from the patron, the Prince Hohenzollern-Hechingen since 1826. As the solo cellist in the orchestra, he had opportunities to perform concertos and try out his own compositions. He also played chamber music with the Seifritz brothers and Hübschmann on viola. The prince gave Popper the title of “Kammer Virtuoso” as an appreciation and in return, Popper dedicated his Scenes From a Masked Ball for cello and piano, Op. 3 to the Prince. This is a set of six character pieces including the popular Arlequin and Papillon. Below is a review from the Neue Zeitschrift für Musik (NZfM) in 1862:

We heard Herr Popper, recently from Prague, and found him an extraordinary violoncellist. He played on an evening meeting at the Conservatory, and we also heard him privately, performing the Goltermann and Schumann concertos. Popper draws a large full tone, and his performance shows an unusual combination of deep sentiment and mastery of the instrument; in the best sense he can be characterized as a modern artist.

His concert reviews praise his technical finesse and warmth and the expressive

18 Ibid., p. 6
19 De’ak, p.57
qualities of his sound and music making. Vibrato at the time was sparingly used and was in a transition as an increasing number of cellists adopted the technique. Popper was known to have played with continuous use of vibrato:

His tone is excellent, and one could not discover any trace of the intolerable ‘vibrating’ of some virtuosos; the manner of presentation which he applied and which is necessary for the required warmth of the tone was only the shaking (or oscillating) vibrato movement as it is legitimately taught.20

While working in Löwenberg, Popper met Wagner. Popper had a deep respect for Wagner’s music and some of his compositions reflect traces of Wagnerian harmony and progressions. The study No.19 of his High School of Cello playing, Op. 73 is based on a cello passage from Act III of Wagner’s opera ‘Lohengrin’, and the fifth study uses the rhythmic pattern of ‘Valkyrie’, Act III, Scene I. He arranged Wagner’s piano solo, Albumblatt, WWV 64 as Romance and wrote an original composition Improvisation über Die Meistersinger for cello and piano (see Appendix I). As an orchestral musician, Popper was known to be active in introducing new works frequently including works by Wagner.21 Wagner also respected Popper and wanted him to play the solo parts in the forthcoming first performances of his operas in Stuttgart, Köln, and Dresden. He was found to have said, “My Popper must play the solo” in one of the letters he sent to Popper.22 Wagner recognized that Popper had a unique capacity as a solo cellist and shared a deep fascination for Wagner’s music.23

20 Ibid., p.61. NZfM (Leipzig), March 1863
21 Ibid., p.121
22 Ibid., p.122
23 Ibid., p.122
Ex.1, Op. 73, No.19 ‘Lohengrin’

No. 19

‘(‘Lohengrin’ Study)

Ex.2, Lohengrin Act III Scene III

Popper was perhaps best known for his performance of Volkmann’s *Concerto in A minor*, Op. 33. Other popular concertos at the time were by Molique, Goltermann (George) and Servais. Boccherini and Haydn concertos appeared rarely and Schumann’s concerto was only on the rise. The modern trend at the time was defined by Liszt, Berlioz and Wagner and their influence shapes the Volkmann’s concerto.
described by De’ak as “romantic and dramatic lyricism clothed in splendid symphonic richness and presented in a classical manner”. On Liszt’s invitation, Volkmann joined the faculty of the Royal Academy of Music in Budapest in 1875 and taught there until his death in 1883.

In 1863 Popper started his career as touring artist and left the Löwenberg orchestra receiving exceptional reviews:

We have often spoken of Kammer-Virtuoso Popper in this paper. His appearance in Breslau last fall, in Leipzig, and later in Berlin on one of the Bülow concerts, gave wide recognition to his accomplishments; after these he played in his native city of Prague, and later in London receiving more than the usual recognition. I myself heard him privately a few years ago (in Leipzig) and am astonished at his rapid climb to a high artistic development. He already belongs among our outstanding cellists, and his further progress should guarantee that he will soon reach a pinnacle where only a few rivals can stand near him…

In 1864, Popper appeared in the festival in Karlsruhe and performed Volkmann’s Concerto and Piano Trio in B flat in honor of the composer. He met the violinist Reményi then. After the festival Popper gained a reputation as a young virtuoso and received Brendel’s praise as a “modern artist, who was neither the robust and somewhat pedantic German manner of playing, nor the delicately light approach to bowing of the French school.” Apparently, critics emphasized three characteristics, which set Popper apart from his colleagues: elegant bowing, noble, refined style, and an extraordinarily sensuous tone – sometimes intriguingly intimate in quality. De’ak adds how Popper’s playing promoted the acceptance of the

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25 De’ak, p.78
26 Ibid., p.79. NZfM (Leipzig), Karl Franz Brendel
27 Ibid., p.83
28 Ibid., p.83
Volkmann Concerto, as critics were not so keen about the work. The same applies to Rubinstein’s Concerto: it was criticized as being ‘too oppressive without the charm of inventiveness’ and needed to reconsider the cello as a solo instrument as ‘its low register struggles hopelessly, like a bass voice trying to compete with a coloratura soprano.’ However, according to Hollander, “Popper’s warm tone and technical perfection saved the composition from arousing public antagonism about the concerto, especially as Popper gave a praiseworthy and excellently reliable performance.”

De’ak adds:

Although sometimes coping with musical works, which had dubious acceptance by the public, Popper as a virtuoso never suffered from the accusation that his recitals were dull. The qualities of his extraordinary playing often overcame the limitations of a work he was to perform, and the projection of his individuality could enhance even an unimportant composition.

This comment can help us to appreciate Popper’s compositions. In the late nineteenth century, concerts included several artists as audiences enjoyed great variety. While the cello as a solo instrument was struggling to make it to the concert stage, Popper’s virtuosity and charming compositions were in demand both in public appearances and private salon concerts. According to De’ak “Popper was able to discriminate effectively in producing music which satisfied the demand for appealing music, and elevated the standard of cello salon literature, while incorporating a special touch of originality and new technical effects.”

29 Ibid., p.83
30 Ibid., p.83
31 Ibid., p.83, NZIM (Leipzig), Alexis Hollander
32 Ibid., p.85
33 Ibid., p.88
The concert literature of the violoncello, as is correctly understood, is sparse, and no virtuoso could be blamed when he fills this gap with his own compositions. Popper has composed a number of very effective bravura pieces… His pieces found acclaim everywhere, and are also played by other virtuosos, and sell well. This all proves their practical value. They are cleverly made little things, which betray more coquettishness than creative strength…

One should bear in mind that Hanslick had very conservative view on music, as he believed music history began with Mozart and only claimed true musicianship of music by Beethoven, Schumann, and Brahms. It is interesting how Hanslick was anti-Wagnerian and derides Popper’s compositions. As we know, Popper looked up to Wagner and was fascinated by his music. Popper’s creative pieces contribute immensely to the history of cello playing as a solo instrument and it is the whole purpose of the study to investigate their musical and pedagogical benefits.

Popper’s ‘effective’ pieces were not only loved by cellists, but also by violinists. Cellists often had to borrow their repertoire from the violin, but in Popper’s case violinists such as Auer, Sauret, Hermann, Neruda and others made personal transcriptions of the *Spinning Song*, Op. 55.

The rise of salon music culture consequently attracted more students and amateurs and resulted in performance editions with interpretative indications such as vibrato and portamento. With this positive rise, Popper’s first two concertos were received with some success.

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34 Ibid., p.89-90
35 Campbell, p.106
36 De’ak, p.91
In 1868 Popper was appointed as the solo cellist of the Vienna Imperial Opera and Philharmonic Orchestra and also took up the position in the Hellmesberger Quartet, which was led by Joseph Hellmesberger, one of the concertmasters of the orchestra.  He was 25 years of age and was the youngest cellist to take up the position in the much-acclaimed orchestra. This was yet another advancement in his career in the cultural-city of Vienna.

In 1872, Popper married a talented concert pianist, Sophie Menter, a daughter of Joseph Menter, who was a prominent cellists and teacher. Sophie was a star student of Liszt and was building up a successful career as a concert pianist. Liszt remarked that their marriage was ‘Un marriage concertant’. The talented couple first performed together in a piano trio with Reményi in Löwenberg 1868. After Popper’s contract ended with the Vienna Opera and Philharmonic in 1873, they were actively performing in joint concerts. This union of two celebrated artists was loved by the public and added to their fame. However, there was an odd rivalry between the two. They seemed sensitive as to who received more applause at the end of the night. An episode relating to the Hungarian Rhapsody, Op. 68 by Liszt illustrates this: Menter was given the newly composed ‘Hungarian Rhapsody’ by Liszt and secretly learned it. However, in a joint recital Popper stole the momentum and played an improvisation on the same theme by Liszt in as virtuosic and entertaining manner as he could. The professional jealousy and tension harmed their marriage, which ended after 14 years.

In 1886, Popper moved to Budapest to take up the teaching position. Here a notable friendship occurred. Brahms was a frequent visitor to Hungary. After Hubay and Popper formed a string quartet (sometimes known as the “Budapest” quartet), he

37 The quartet premiered Brahms’ piano quartet in G minor, Op.25 in 1862.
38 De’ak., p.133
39 Ibid., p.133
often appeared in their concerts as composer and pianist.\textsuperscript{40} The group premiered Brahms’s chamber works. This is notable, as Popper had premiered Brahms’s piano quartet with Hellmesberger Quartet in 1862 in Vienna. Brahms and Popper remained as life-long friends.

Popper remained in Budapest until his death and as Hubay’s eulogy for Popper illustrates this was significant for Hungarian art:

\begin{quote}
I realized that the low level of the musical culture demanded a boost – a serious task that could be successful only if the world-famous artists could be persuaded to settle in Budapest. Popper accepted the invitation, and from the very beginning, he supported with loving care every effort, which served the flowering of the Hungarian art…\textsuperscript{41}
\end{quote}

**Pedagogue**

The next phase in Popper’s career starts in Budapest from 1886. He was invited by Franz Liszt to be the head of cello and the chamber music faculty at the National Hungarian Royal Academy of Music, which now is known as the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest. Patriotic in nature local Hungarians were hostile to a non-Hungarian professor at a Hungarian national academy in the capital, Budapest, but Popper attracted a lot of students and contributed hugely to the musicianship of them all by making the school competitive among the other European music institutions. This was his first and the only formal teaching post. Ginsburg claims that Popper had an experience in teaching early in his career - while still in Prague he taught Goltermann’s class for several months while Goltermann was on tour in 1861.\textsuperscript{42}

Moreover, there are some records of Popper’s teaching experience during his

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., p.176-77
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., p.179
\textsuperscript{42} Ginsburg, p.91
\end{flushright}
year in Vienna. According to Van der Straeten there are three notable students of Popper who developed professional careers: Siegmund Burger, a solo cellist at Baden-Baden studied with Popper sometime before 1873;\textsuperscript{43} Hugo Jager, principal cellist of the Löwenberg Court Orchestra studied with him in Vienna at some point between 1868 and 1874;\textsuperscript{44} and Joseph Sulzer who was already a professional when he sought Popper’s advice in order to recover from his injuries and became a solo cellist of the Imperial Opera in Vienna in 1880.\textsuperscript{45}

Below is the opening of an article from a Viennese publication, \textit{Musikinstrumenten-Zeitung}:

Personality is the magic, which has lifted David Popper, as virtuoso and composer, above all of his colleagues. When we see and hear him perform his compositions, our soul is harmoniously filled with charm and joy. Whenever the name David Popper is mentioned, from deep in our memories (we recall) his nobly featured head leaning over his instrument, the controlled elegance of his bow-arm, the clear sweet tone welling from his cello, and the graceful, harmonious winding melodies blending with the colorful fireworks of virtuosity. Full credit is due to Popper that the cello is a virtuoso instrument today and will remain so in the future. He expanded the former limits of technical possibilities and which, almost without exception, are used in the repertoire of cellists all over the world… David Popper is not only the first cello virtuoso of our time, but will be the most important of all time… To have achieved the highest pinnacle of the precarious limits of Art is sufficient glory. Now after often repeated triumphant tours in all of Europe have left him weary, or even blasé, a new field of activity has opened up for David Popper as a Professor of the Royal Academy of Music (in Budapest) where he functions with the same zeal, ability, and success as he did as composer and unparalleled artist. His fame flows from distant lands to

\textsuperscript{43} A.E. Van der Straeten, \textit{History of the Violoncello, the Viol Da Gamba, Their Precursors and Collateral Instruments} (London: Reeves, 1914) p.468
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., p.452
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., p.452
Budapest and students are attracted there to seek inspiration and stimulation from their teacher, to take back to their own countries. He will teach them all they can learn in Art; but alas, it will not be possible for him to produce a second David!⁴⁶

Popper, now as a teacher devoted himself to pass on his technical and musical skills to the students. De’ak, his pupil and biographer, testifies that Popper had about seven to eight students in his class but they met twice a week for three-hour lessons. De’ak describes the classroom atmosphere:

As soon as he entered, Popper’s gentle humour and personality [lit] up the classroom. All students felt that their perception was sharpened with each lesson, whether from his criticism or from his personal demonstration. It was always a harmonious atmosphere since he hardly showed a negative display of temperamental impatience.⁴⁷

De’ak also remarks that “Popper had three concerns in his teaching: musical interpretation, articulate technique and the conscious effort to produce tonal beauty.”⁴⁸ He describes his master to have a sum of attainments that put him above his contemporaries – a strong artistic individuality, flawless technique, immaculate intonation, an intimate communication with the audience through a charismatic personality and poetic projection in short pieces which penetrated to the hearts of his listeners.⁴⁹ He also explains that Popper was convinced that one develops individuality through self-critical practice and did not believe in imposing uniformed discipline in teaching.⁵⁰

According to Carpinteyro the cello was not a popular instrument at the time.⁵¹

⁴⁶ De’ak, p.170
⁴⁸ De’ak, p.255
⁴⁹ Ibid., p.254
⁵⁰ Ibid., p.254
⁵¹ Carpinteyro, p.7
Music libraries had only a handful of scores available. Popper had only one student in his first academic year (1886-87) and had to teach a preparatory class during the academic year of 1889-90.\textsuperscript{52} Cello studies at the academy started as a three-year course then extended to four years for the academic year of 1892-93. The final year was a school of virtuosity when students were to develop and consolidate what they had learned in the previous years to very high artistic standard playing concertos by Haydn, Sitt, Svendsen and Popper.\textsuperscript{53}

The preparatory class also consisted of three years of study. Popper’s syllabus had specific technical and musical goals. In the first year the basic foundation of instrument set-up and posture and the first four hand positions were learned using exercises from Kummer’s Cello Method.\textsuperscript{54} In the second year all diatonic and chromatic scales and the use of thumb position were taught using materials by Kummer and Romberg.\textsuperscript{55} Finally, in the third year all the major and minor scales in the full range, three or four octaves were expected as well as the studies by Bochmül (Op. 47), Kummer (Op. 44), and Merk. Also concertos by Romberg and Goltermann were part of the course.\textsuperscript{56}

Naturally, this was set out in preparation for advanced classes. Like the third year of the preparatory class, the first year of the advanced class expected all diatonic major and minor scales and the same studies. In the second year, all diatonic and chromatic scales were played in fluent bowing styles. From the second class onwards,

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., p.164
\textsuperscript{54} Violoncelloschule für den ersten Unterricht (Violoncello School for Preliminary Instruction), Op. 60
\textsuperscript{55} Violoncell-Schule [music]: in zwei Abtheilungen / von Bernhard Romberg. Romberg is notable for several innovations in cello design and performance. He lengthened the cello's fingerboard and flattened the side under the C string, thus giving it more freedom to vibrate. He suggested that half-size and 3/4 size cellos should be designed to make it easier for young children to play the instrument. Romberg is responsible for simplifying cello notation to only three clefs, the bass clef, the tenor clef and the treble clef. His study concertos and sonatas are popularly taught.
\textsuperscript{56} Dalos, p.165
\end{footnotesize}
concertos were studied. In 1886, Popper’s second concerto Op. 24 in E minor was set for the second and third classes while his first concerto, Op. 8 in D minor was set for the third class. His third and fourth concertos were eventually included in the syllabus. While Popper was appointed as a professor in cello and chamber music, Popper and Hubay were in charge of the student orchestra as well.

De’ak claims that Popper was an accomplished pianist from anecdotes of him playing orchestral tutti parts on the piano from memory for colleagues at his home. Popper would also play the piano in lessons. De’ak recalls that Popper’s piano playing was “clear, with strong rhythmic emphasis on inner voice leading in the accompaniment.” He would even improvise an accompaniment part for his studies.

Popper was keen on chamber music coaching as well. His coaching usually went for three hours. He expected students to know the full score and each other’s parts. He would play missing parts on the piano until the student who got lost would find his place again. Here he showed off his phenomenal memory as well as being able to play any part on the piano. He stressed classical purity and strong rhythmic articulations.

Eugene Ormandy and Joseph Szigeti were students of Popper’s quartet classes in their formative years at the academy.

As De’ak wrote Popper’s “technical principles, innovations, and practical applications of the ‘modern’ cello techniques (of the nineteenth century)” are explored in his Forty Studies, Op. 73. These are already present in his popular pieces, and Popper expanded them in the form of studies. Initially the studies were published in four volumes of ten studies between 1901 and 1905. As agreed by many pedagogues and cellists of the past and present, the studies provide a balance of music

57 De’ak, p.256
58 Ibid., p.258
59 Ibid., p.258
60 Ibid., p.259-60
61 Ibid., p.260-61
and technical innovations. Many of the studies explore the technical problems, which Popper had met in the music of his contemporaries such as Wagner, Liszt, Berlioz, Schumann, and Saint-Saëns.\textsuperscript{62} He endeavoured to cover these aspects in his compositions and in the studies educating the next generation of cellists. De’ak records that many of Popper’s fingerings were designed to cope with technical difficulties, but always in the service of an artistic purpose.

Popper’s Op. 73 is the most advanced collection of studies and many are in keys of four, five, or six sharps or flats exploring the fingerboard of the entire range of the cello. Ten studies (numbers 9, 13, 15, 17, 20, 23, 24, 29, 34 and 39) are in double stops. No. 37 is devoted to mordents. Arpeggios in thumb position, involving rapid position changes, natural and artificial harmonics, chromatic octaves and thirds in scale passages are the very characteristics of the studies.\textsuperscript{63} De’ak shares a first hand account by Popper how No.36 (Ex.5) was inspired by a long train trip, hence rapid ascending and descending diatonic scales were written to depict the train ride. No. 28 (Ex.6) is innovative in its approach to left hand dexterity – a motive is executed on the ‘D’ string while rapid delicate accompanying figures are on the ‘A’ string. The left hand leaps back and forth over two-octaves.\textsuperscript{64} Numbers 14 and 32 explore up-bow and down- bow staccatos. The study aims to explore the modern idiom of cello playing at the time.\textsuperscript{65} There is no doubt that he expanded the technical capacity of the cello as a solo instrument.

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., p.261
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., p.262
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., p.262
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., p.263
Ex.5, No. 36

No. 36

Allegro vivace.
Popper’s pupils include Arnold Földesy, Jenö Kerpely, Ludwig Lebell, Mici Lukacs and Adolf Schiffer—the teacher of Janos Starker. This relationship is notable as Starker later became one of the greatest exponents of the Hungarian school of cello playing. Popper’s biographer Steven De’ak studied with Popper from 1911 to 1913.
CHAPTER TWO: Performance Practice

There are two parts to this chapter, 1) Shifting and 2) Rubato. These are chosen as the most relevant aspects of the performance practice for the purpose of the study. Popper was highly regarded as a soloist in his time and was greatly acclaimed by conductors and colleagues. His compositions were to showcase his talent on the cello in a period when performers had utmost freedom in the music. The High School of Cello Playing, Op. 73 provides evidence of the kinds of technical and musical facility favoured by Popper. Shifting and rubato co-exist – rubato often is a result of shifting, as instrumentally idiomatic timing occurs on how one gets from one note to the next note. It is somewhat similar to how pianists time their phrases or play their chords on the keyboard. Shifting could be analysed merely as a technical phenomenon, but the affect it gives to the perception of sound is a craft a performer attains in mastering instrumental playing. The term ‘shift’ refers to a connection from a position to another without an intended glissando. Distinguished from this, portamento, like the vocal term, “is the connection of two notes by passing audibly through the intervening pitches”, i.e. glissando. The range of interpretative possibilities in this area is vast. For example, one can choose to play with very clean connections without much glissando for a certain style of the classical and baroque repertoire. Also, one can vary it and play with audible connections from a note to a note to display a suitable affect of the music where it is called for in a more romantic style.

In this chapter, the art of shifting is discussed as a performance practice. Pedagogical instructions on how shifts are executed from a number of methods are also discussed. The authors of the chosen methods are not necessarily all connected to Popper, but these popular treatises are representatives of current cello playing. It is necessary to know how the physical movement is carried out to create different musical sounds and also to know how these actions are acquired or suggested to be practiced by different cellists and pedagogues. Then, in the second part the practice of

rubato is investigated. The shifting part is to provide a basis of rubato discussion in terms of timing and aesthetics. This chapter includes an analysis of several recordings of Mazurka, Op. 11, No. 3 by Popper. The recordings date from 1915 to 2011 to investigate different performance styles.

SHIFTING: Technique and Pedagogy

“The difficulty of playing the cello is to know how to get from one note to the next. - Pablo Casals”.67

Shifting positions on the cello is a significant part of music making. It is not only a technique and movement that one must master in order to facilitate required notes, but the resulting sound contributes to the tasteful music making of any given piece. There are many teaching methods, written and spoken instructions by performers and teachers such as Alexanian, Potter, Starker, Klotman, Gendron, Bunting, Rolland, Zweig, and Pereira. In this section these methods will be analysed and compared: the first group consists of methods by performers (Alexanian, Starker, Gendron, Bunting, Pereira) and the second is by teachers (Potter, Klotman, Rolland, Zweig). These are chosen to investigate perspectives of both the performer and the teacher on shifting and how the aesthetics are practiced. It is hoped that the study will contribute to stylistic and interpretative decisions when performing or teaching works by Popper.

Methods by performers

Diran Alexanian is a contemporary of Casals who lived from 1881 to 1954. He was a successful teacher in the twentieth century as he was on faculty of leading schools including École Normale de Musique (Paris), Manhattan School of Music and

67 Christopher Bunting, Cello Technique from on Note to the Next’, a Distillation for Students of Christopher Bunting’s Eassay on the Craft of Cello Playing (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p.i
Peabody Conservatory. His treatise, *Traité théorique et pratique du violoncelle (Complete Cello Technique, the classic treatise on cello theory and practice)* was published in 1922. He taught in Paris from 1901 and took over Casals’ class from 1921 to 1937. He attracted many students, professionals and musicians including Antonio Janigro, Paul Tortelier, Pierre Founier, and Emmanuel Feuermann. Casals believed that Alexanian had revolutionary fingerings, which were close to his own ideas and extended general technique and interpretation. He also had a great influence in the USA and pupils there included Bernard Greenhouse, David Soyer, and Raya Garbousova.

His treatise on cello playing was considered to be innovative being the first treatise of the twentieth century with detailed instructions for cellists. The teachers at the time were using techniques of the nineteenth century, when slides were constantly and perhaps carelessly played and no study was undertaken to look into physical movements to handle instrumental challenges. His students state that he would always avoid unmusical and unnecessary slides. He would only encourage slides for musical reasons and only for the purpose of expression and he first theorized ways of shifting on semi-tones and changing the bow if necessary to achieve smoother and more seamless phrases.

Alexanian’s view is that playing fingers should be supple, strong and move easily. All fingers are to retain a position of chromatic (semi-tone) distances to each other. He points out that distances of the semi-tones get smaller as one goes up the fingerboard, i.e. the positions are proportional to the length of the string measuring from the nut to the bridge. He also states that the fourth position should coincide with

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69 Campbell, p. 175

70 Ibid., p. 177

71 Alexanian, p. 50
the encounter of the lower side of the hand with the side of the cello \textsuperscript{72}, that is the end of the neck and this serves as a reliable reference point for the pitch. In the figure below, Fig.1, A marks the location of the lower side of the hand.

Fig.1 p.6

Moreover, he advises to take care of the ‘unoccupied’ fingers. Apart from being placed in their chromatic dispositions, those fingers with higher numbered finger to the travelling finger – for instance when the first finger (index finger) is making the slide, the fingers 2, 3, 4 are higher numbered fingers – should be as close as possible to the string maintaining the curved hand shape. To acquire this movement he instructs to practice shifting with the finger sliding rapidly and being interrupted by stops. The finger should never reduce its pressure, while the thumb will only slightly touch the back of the fingerboard, as any cramping of the thumb is fatal to the suppleness of the movement.\textsuperscript{73}

Alexanian believed that the \textit{portamento} was to be made by the ‘old’ finger, and not by the ‘new’ finger that is to play the arrival note. When the shift is from a

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., p.51
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., p.51
lower numbered finger to the higher numbered finger, for example, as shown in Ex.7, 1 to 4 or the reverse, 4 to 1, one should prepare the movement by extending the finger without touching the string before sliding into the new position. The new finger should strike the arrival note unless it is a same finger slide. This shift is labelled as an ‘anticipated’ shift by Starker or ‘B-portamento’ by Flesch later in the chapter.
When the shift is from a higher numbered finger to a lower numbered finger, for example, 4 to 3, the percussion (striking the new note by lifting and dropping the new finger into the arrival note) should be obtained, not by the striking of the new finger, but by the withdrawal of the old finger (Ex.8 - The arrows represent withdrawal). Also in this instance, the third finger pushes the fourth finger on the way to the arrival note, and the fourth finger at the time of the replacement should have a ‘plucking’ movement as it is substituted (Ex.9). He also suggests cramming outside fingers in preparation for substitution as the three-finger group gives greater strength and facilitates the impetus of the arriving finger. For example, when descending from first finger to fourth finger, one should crowd fourth, third and second fingers together towards the first finger then replace in the due duration.

Ex.8, p.52

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74 Ibid., p.52
When shifting over different strings the same finger can only be played in one bow in ascending intervals higher than fifths. The *portamento* in this case can only be heard on the new string, but not on the initial string. If there is a bow change, the *portamento* should be made on the initial string and stroke, but not on the arriving string.

Ex.10a is showing a bad example of the coordination of the shift, and Ex.10b shows the ideal timing for the shift.

There should not be an audible beginning of the shift; in this case, the note C (notated as a grace note) is not to be struck with a definite beginning.
When the shift is done over two strings with different fingers, the *portamento* is played on the initial string. This *portamento* is always prepared by extension of the arriving finger before sliding and is replaced by striking the arrival note. The first finger when ascending (as shown in the Ex.11) prepares the shift by extending towards the arrival note with the thumb bringing the fingers as close to the new position as possible. Then the hand moves in a swift jump into the new position without *portamento*.

Alexanian endeavoured to include every possible technical challenge of cello playing from the beginning stage to the professional stage. His work is a comprehensive reference for both performers and teachers. It makes sense why all the

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75 Abbreviations: sl.=slur, ext.= extension, ! = striking of the finger
76 Alexanian, p.215
renowned cellists at the time went to have lessons or attend his classes from near and far. He standardised the technique and subsequently theorised and organised possible outcomes. In this way it is comparable to Carl Flesch’s *Art of Violin Playing* (c 1930), which is widely quoted resource providing comprehensive discussion on technique, performance aspects and also teaching. Flesch, too, explains shifts with the use of an ‘intermediary note’, which determines choice of fingerings and how the shifts are executed. However, Flesch’s approach seems more artistic. Flesch uses codifications of *glissando* and *portamento* when he talks about shifts according to musical contexts: *glissando* refers to more technical and compulsory movement from position to position and *portamento* refers to intentional and emotional gliding between notes.

He writes:

> The intimate vocal connection between two notes should be the result of a heightened urge for individual expression…we encounter a profound influencing of the means of expression through technical ability. It is already evident that without a perfected mechanism our means of expression never can attain of the full development of their inner treasure. The thorough control of change of position, therefore, together with purity of intonation and sound, is an indispensable prerequisite of higher artistry.

Alexanian’s treatise is not easily understood, but after a few readings and applications on the instrument, the understanding is rational for instrumental instruction. His instructions control *portamenti* and some aspects of the *rubato* as finger-striking actions suggested have a direct bearing on timing. Moreover, he does not talk about physiology and body movement as Mantel, Starker and Bunting do, who are discussed later. Though very detailed and comprehensive, his instructions are

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78 Ibid., p.28
79 Ibid., p.30-31
Janos Starker was a pupil of Adolf Schiffer, who was in turn a pupil of David Popper. He is the closest we can come to the Popper tradition not only because he learned from one of Popper’s pupils, but also because of his performing and teaching experience. Evidently, Starker was one of the greatest exponents of the Hungarian School of cello playing and has promoted the kind of virtuosity that Popper may have showed in his prime. Similar to Popper, he started his career as an orchestral musician and later developed an extensive solo career. Starker’s teaching experience is exceptional. He received recognition not only as a great virtuoso cellist, but also as a master teacher. He has been on the faculty at the Indiana University School of Music since 1958 until his passing in 2013, taught at the Banff Centre in Alberta, Canada for 17 years, the Hochschule für Musik in Essen, Germany for five years and has given numerous classes and master-classes internationally. Like Popper, he is an extremely devoted teacher and states in his mémoire:

If you believe in the principles that as I see it, represent the truth in the masterpieces, then you try to preserve those principles. They can be preserved only through teaching, through individuality of all those who, one hopes, are helped by it…I personally cannot perform without teaching, and I cannot teach without performing. When you have to explain what you are doing, you discover what you are really doing. You can’t just say to the student, ‘Do it a little nicer,’ Someone who plays a beautiful phrase may not know how it happened, what goes into the skill and the artistry. You have to guide the student so that he or she can do it consistently.80

Starker published a method, An Organized Method of String Playing, Violoncello Exercise for the left hand in 1961. He states that the intention of his exercise is to make it available for everyone who seeks help and to compile

80 Emilio Colon, Janos Starker Tribute at 75 (Bloomington, IN: Eva Janzer Memorial Cello Center Foundation, Indiana University, School of Music, 1999), p.43
permutative variations of fingerings, i.e. mathematical possibilities of finger combinations on a four-string instrument. These are to be practiced so that the samples and patterns will establish a geography of the fingerboard and one can stop ‘time-wasting’ mechanical repetitions of passages of a written score.
Starker articulates the fundamentals of cello playing and identifies ‘rules’ in his teachings. On shifting, he distinguishes two kinds of shifts, ‘anticipated’ and ‘delayed’. According to him, there are five elements to the shifting movement:
Table.1 Anticipated and delayed shifts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Anticipated</th>
<th>Delayed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Finger: which finger</td>
<td>First finger</td>
<td>‘New’ finger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>travels/makes the shift</td>
<td>Fingering: lower numbered finger to higher</td>
<td>Fingering: Same finger or higher numbered finger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>numbered finger.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bow: which bow has the</td>
<td>Old bow</td>
<td>New bow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shift? (Only applicable to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shifts with bow changes)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Action: how many</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>actions?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Connection: what kind</td>
<td>Light, less glissando</td>
<td>Intense, glissando into the new note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of sound connection?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. impulse: how many</td>
<td>2 (due to 2 actions of the shift)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>impulses?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These terms can be compared to Flesch’s classification. Flesch refers to anticipated shifts as B –portamenti (Beginning note connection) and to delayed shift as L-portamenti (Last finger connection).  

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81 Flesch, p.30
To achieve the most accurate and most secure shifts, one needs to consider the five elements above. There are exceptions, but this approach will result in secure shifts before artistic and musical decisions suggest otherwise.

‘Anticipated’ shifts denote cleaner connections with less *glissandi* between the notes. As the term suggests the movement is anticipated and prepared in the arm with the first finger travelling initially. Therefore, the ‘old’ bow, i.e. initial bow gets the shift at the end of the note if there is a change of bow into the next note. Hence, the ‘old’ bow will contain the shift and the ‘new’ bow will play the next note. The first finger travels into the position of the new note. This means the first finger will get to an intermediary note before the arrival of the next note. Accordingly, one needs to work out the intermediary note of the position then replace it with the playing finger of the new note at the time of the arrival. Hence, there are two actions, first finger preparation into the intermediary note in the new position and replacement of the new finger of the arrival note. Consequently, this action gives two impulses in the shifting movement.

On the other hand, ‘delayed’ shifts establish an intense connection into the new note. One could purposely choose to play with *glissandi* between the notes to enhance the phrase. As the term implies the movement is delayed for this kind of shift. The previous note is played to its full duration then the ‘new’ finger arrives straight on the note. If there is a bow change the new bow i.e the bow for the arrival
note makes the shift audible. Therefore, the shift is executed with one action and consequently one impulse in the left hand.

Starker taught in his studio and masterclasses that in essence, shifting is a connection between two notes. The shifting finger should remain in contact with the string and never jump into the new position. When shifting, the travel between the notes should feel like a smooth and seamless movement of the whole left hand unit, i.e. upper arm, forearm, hand and fingers making an arch shape and never a straight line. This is due to the design of the human body – there are no straight lines and every joint is curved. When keeping the connection between fingers and the string(s), one should travel lightly without pressing down on the string, hence the term ‘slide’ in a physical sense.

It is efficient to develop a sense of geography of the fingerboard according to positions. Position is one of the first terms to be introduced in string pedagogy and it assists in organizing the fingerboard conceptually.\(^{82}\) A position is based on chromatic distances between the fingers. Once the distances are learnt, a player can pitch different intervals and make connections to different positions. If a player only aims note by note, it takes too long and too much effort to learn a new piece. Within a position the player can have an octave scale and intervals thereof, hence enabling the player to read the music quite fluently rather than frequently stopping to work out individual notes.

In the endeavour of gaining control of shifting movements, one needs to keep in mind that too much pressure of the fingers would blemish the intonation even if the placement were correct. Therefore, one should develop pure intonation by familiarising oneself with the natural resonance of the strings when struck in the

centre of a note. This release of tension is significant both technically and musically.

The choice of shifts depends on individual aesthetics. Certain shifts will work better in certain musical contexts of a given dynamic and articulation. However, one should experiment with both types to figure out what gives a better result and feel free to adjust fingers to enhance the movement. When performing a delayed shift, the initial note should have a higher numbered finger going into the lower numbered finger, for example, shifting from 3rd finger to 1st finger. This is due to forearm rotation in the shifting movement. The left arm will rotate inward to reach any destination and have coverage for all fingers within the position over the fingerboard. This is supported by Mantel (1995) as well. He analyses that the arm must lead the hand and the fingers into the new position and the movement of the arm/elbow is a curve.® He also depicts the rotation: “imagine an axis running from the shoulder to the middle of the forearm. The upper arm and the part of the forearm rotate on one side of this line, the rest of the forearm and the hand on the other side.”® The delayed shift can also be played with the same finger between the two notes, keeping in mind the rotation in the forearm to enhance the feeling of arrival.

Starker reminds us that downward shifts are always anticipated. This is in agreement with Alexanian’s idea and both cellists perceive a downward portamento as less musical. The anticipated motion helps to achieve a light arrival and increases accuracy.

Maurice Gendron (1920-1990) (a French Cellist and pedagogue, who taught at the Paris *Conservatoire*, Yehudi Menuhin School, *Mozarteum* in Salzburg and *Academie Maurice Ravel*) suggests in his method, *The art of cello playing* (2001) the following:

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® Ibid., p.54
® Ibid., p.55
The best way to execute these leaps is through precise coordination and alternation of gentle and firm finger pressure. This is the only way of avoiding an undesirable glissando effect when changing position. An evenly maintained vibrato will help to ensure a continuous legato effect. Care must be taken that the speed of the bow remains unaffected by rapid position changes.85

Christopher Bunting (1924-2005), a pupil of Casals envisioned a particular approach to technique. He said in an interview: “In my mind cello technique must be based upon an understanding of the mechanics of the human body and of the total dynamic system involved. With an instrument as difficult as the cello it is vital to bring everything to the simplest, in order that nothing may impede the expression of emotion.”86 In his treatise ‘Essay on the Craft of Cello Playing’ (1982), he talks about kinetic touch and finger independence before expanding on detailed discussions about left hand technique. His view is that one of the challenges with playing the cello is clarity of enunciation due to the nature of the instrument – lengths and thickness of the strings, and the size of the instrument’s body, large mass of wood in which the air takes certain time to set into vibration.87 His description of the ideal finger-action is:

The finger must be raised as if tensioning a spring so that there is a progressively restoring force proportionate to the distance away from the string. At a certain point, that of maximum tension, a decision is taken suddenly to release the muscles that are opposing this restoration of the finger to its point of the rest on the string. …When the tension is released the finger flies down towards the string unimpededly, and because of the rapidity of this action, will carry the string with it on the short distance from its point of rest to contact with the fingerboard. The clarity of articulation is related to the acceleration of the finger from the ‘let-go’ point to the point where it hits the

85 Maurice Gendron, The Art of Playing Cello (Mainz: Schott, 2001) p.18
86 Campbell, p.265
87 Bunting, p.1
string.
This movement of the fingers is similar to the follow-through motion in tennis or golf, since interestingly this idea of the movement gives confidence to the initial release of the fingers. If one worries about intonation, the likely outcome is self-consciousness and a free fall of the finger making the intonation even more obscure. He believes it is vital to develop the ability to tighten one finger independently, whilst allowing the other fingers to remain relaxed. This is an important physical and mental ability of cello technique that provides the basis of shifting, tension and relaxation.88

Bunting uses the term “kinetic touch” to identify this quality of action – falling on to the note, a release from a spring, or the energy of momentum of the body in rapid motion. He uses an analogy of a spring – one raises the finger as if a spring is being coiled and drops the finger as if the spring is released. This is in agreement with Alexanian’s idea of extending before a shift, and Starker’s ‘lift and drop’ actions of the fingers as well as instructions to ‘intensify’ the finger before arrival. The key part of it is that a student should not be pressing the note down with tension all the way. The tension occurs before the initial attack of the note and actual striking of the note is a release action. This is the “kinetic touch” one should be familiar with to execute any left hand technique including shifts, trills, and vibrato. Bunting stresses that only the finger has tension and nowhere else in the body should tense up in this motion.

88 Ibid., p.1
Below is an excerpt of exercises by Bunting to practice this action in the left hand (Ex.14). He advises to practice slowly and in a calm way to gain the correct movement. The ‘!’ denotes the percussive strike, and the number in brackets indicates the finger with which to pluck the open string. This left-hand pizzicato marks the beginning of the upward, tensing movement.

Ex.14, p.7

![Ex.14](image)

Then Bunting progresses to the discussion of shifting action. He agrees that shifting is important in both a technical and musical sense. One needs to learn how to
control intonation, larger and smaller *portamenti*. He suggests learning the action until one can predict the outcome of a technical execution. He provides a few pages of preliminary exercises entitled ‘snake’ exercises (Ex.15) where the sliding motion is practiced with one finger at a time in this left hand alone exercise. The notes are begun with percussive striking like the kinetic touch practice. While keeping the finger contact with the string the whole time, move the finger as if you are spreading something sticky so that the sound is present until the last note of the pattern. In doing so the forearm should rotate in the direction of the fingers.

Ex.15, Snake exercise, p.12

Bunting categorizes shifts into two types: (i) functional and (ii) expressive. The former refers to a ‘clean’ shift in a way in which a pianist would move on the keyboard. He suggests practicing this way to add security to the technique so it can be replicated at any given time. The latter refers to *portamenti* between the notes, which he believes are one of the biggest advantages of playing a string instrument in comparison to piano in addition to the ability to crescendo and decrescendo on one note. Firstly, he suggests practising finger substitution on a single note as shown in the Ex.16. It should be a real substitution not smearing.

89 Ibid., p.75
Then he introduces an experimental scale called (‘ergonomic scale’). This is a scale tailored to hand and arm convenience rather than to musical considerations. It is a set of notes in the natural tendencies of tones and semi tones.\(^{90}\) He defines the difference between shift and position change: “...we are considering shifting and positions together because they are so closely related. One could say that shifting relates to longitudinal aspect and positions to the lateral.”\(^{91}\)

Ex.17, Bunting Ergonomic scale, p.105

As seen in Ex.17, the scale is on one string (A string) and contains notes that

\(^{90}\) Ibid., p.86  
\(^{91}\) Ibid., p. 105
fall under the natural tendencies of a given fingering, for example, the first bar
contains all semitones in the first position with fingers a semi tone apart. The next
bars follow the general pattern of the fingers in the given positions.

Interestingly Bunting and Starker are in agreement on two points, (i) putting
the thumb under the fingerboard in high positions in certain passages to secure the
position and (ii) avoiding the use of the fourth finger or preference of finger pattern of
1-2-3 instead 1-2-4 at the neck position in ascending passages since it blocks the hand
position resulting in a clumsy shifting action. After sufficient practice one can evolve
into the expressive shift, which comes from varying speed, vibrato and crescendo or
diminuendo.

Furthermore, both Starker and Bunting discourage downward expressive shifts
since the results can be disturbing musically. They accordingly ask for a more
functional shift in the downward direction. In Fig. 4 Bunting presents common
mistakes in the downward shifts. His general advice is that one should avoid intense
glissandi by focusing on the downward movement of the pitch mentally, while
moving upward. 92 In practice, one should make an effort against gravity and the body
weight should be supported by the chair and not the cello. The arm and hand weight
should only be used to make a stop, i.e. to make sound with just enough weight to
press the stops on the string. 93 The fingers should anticipate the downward movement
by pointing in the direction already as represented with arrows in the Fig.4. The E-flat
should not sound in the process as shown in the ex.173. Instead, the fingers should
anticipate the shift and strike B when the position change is complete. The third
finger, the playing finger of the arrival note should not slide on the string, but replace
as it gets to the destination. Bunting describes the arrival akin to a helicopter, but not
like an aeroplane landing with a slide. 94 This also is in agreement with Starker’s
guide to shifting.

92 Ibid., p.108
93 Ibid., p.108
94 Ibid., p.108
The final part of shifting in the Bunting essay deals with upward shifts, which can be practiced in both a functional and artistic manner. Bunting categorises them twofold.

The first category is a shift where the first or second finger make the shift arriving with the second (only in the case of first finger shift), third or fourth finger. Bunting labels these as the ‘K shift’ shown in Ex.18. This is comparable to the B-portamento and anticipated shift from Flesch and Starker. There is a pivot finger involved in the process as shown in the notes in the parenthesis. One can decide on how much of the pivot note should sound. When chosen to sound before the arrival note, one should consider its harmonic function in accordance with the ‘right’ key. This is shown in Ex.19.

Fig.4, Bunting, p.108
The second category is the shift where the arrival finger makes the shift regardless of the fingering. This is labelled as the ‘H shift’ as shown in Ex.14. This is also known as L-portamento and delayed shift by Flesch and Starker. According to Bunting the H shift is more fashionable nowadays while the K shift suits the nature of the cello with its noble and relaxed sound. Nonetheless, he suggests that a performer should be able to vary different shifts to give variety in accordance with

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95 Ibid., p.114
musical taste and historical, stylistic requirements.\footnote{Ibid., p.114}

Ex.20, Bunting, p.115

Below is Bunting’s list of factors one should consider in deciding the degree of \textit{portamento}:ootnote{Ibid., p.116}

\textbf{Musical}
\begin{enumerate}
  \item Disparity or parity in the loudness levels of the two notes.
  \item Variation of loudness during the \textit{portamento}, whether between notes of equal or disparate loudness.
  \item Variations in the vibrato, both in amplitude and in frequency.
  \item Rate of pitch-change.
\end{enumerate}

\textbf{Technical}
\begin{enumerate}
  \item Bow speed
  \item Bow pressure
  \item Point-of contact
  \item Vibrato
  \item Rate of finger-movement
\end{enumerate}

Bunting finishes the chapter with an open-ended question of how subjective
these choices can be. There are many factors that cannot be generalised. Originality comes from the variety of shifts executed with determination, i.e. accuracy and different dynamic setting and coordination of bowings will only add to the uniqueness.

Lastly, Pereira’s method is included in this discussion of a performer-oriented pedagogy. David Pereira is one of most accomplished Australian cellists who has taught at the Australian National University School of Music, Canberra since 1990. His training background includes studies with John Painter at the Sydney Conservatorium and Fritz Magg at the Indiana University, USA. Pereira summarises his experience as a teacher and performer in an informed and humorous manner in his book. He describes how shifts create mental concerns and therefore can result in complex failures in movement and tone production, such as poor bow changes, faulty vibrato, poor intonation and uncomfortable finger use. 98 According to Pereira the correct movement includes the movement of the whole arm so that fingers can accurately reach different places (notes) on the fingerboard. 99 He points out that shifting involves not just the hand, or even the arm, but is a whole body movement. Therefore, it is not enough to just ‘hit’ the right note, but to shift with quality. This quality of movement results in the best accuracy of pitch and sound quality. What movement is he talking about? Rather than “just keep practising it until it’s right!” he suggests:

1. Try raising/ dropping/ arcing/ pulling/ pushing/ leading with/ following with the wrist/ finger/ elbow/ upper arm/ shoulder.
2. Try rotating the forearm.
3. Try moving/ turning the body. 100

98 David Pereira, Violoncello!: One with Your Sound: A Practising Cellist’s Companion ([S.I.]: D.Pereira, 2001) p.216
99 Ibid., p.216
100 Ibid., p.216
This is in agreement with Starker’s view on how the left hand unit (upper arm, lower arm, elbow, hand, finger) has to coordinate a shift. Starker encourages using bigger units first then smaller units naturally ensue, because they move in result of the bigger unit actions. For example, a long distance shift is not only a matter for a finger finding its next note, but a complete motion of the left hand unit, led by a forearm rotation. In my private lessons and classes Starker stressed that the finger should always travel on the string and by lifting the elbow one can let go of any pressure so that one can avoid unwanted *portamenti* by making the travel lighter as the raised elbow suspends the weight of the arm. This also helps with a lighter arrival as one can control the speed of the shift better than travelling in a straight plane ‘shooting’ for the notes. This ultimately means better accuracy and controlled *portamenti* giving more control over what one wants to do in the music.

He also advises to reduce bow pressure and stopping (finger) pressure during the shifts and to be aware which finger is initiating and completing the shift. He also lists common ills of poor shifting: 101

1. Shifting that is jerked.
2. Shifting that is bowed too loudly.
3. Shifting that gets stuck due to stopping pressure being too great.
4. Shifting that admits whistles, harmonics and squeaks due to inadequate stopping pressure during the shifting movement.
5. Shifting that accidentally adds another note to the composition (though occasionally this is aesthetically justified).
6. Shifting that is confused about what can happen with fingers and bow. The player hasn’t looked closely enough at what is possible and just hopes for the best.
7. Shifting that tightens bowings.
8. Shifting that accidentally bends intonation of departure notes.

101 Ibid., p.221
9. Shifting that leaves/moves/ arrives tight.
10. Shifting that pulls the forearm and/or hand ‘against’ the upper arm. I mean any shift that is not promoted by an upper arm action but by lower lever action; shifting that is not led by the upper arm; shifting that has the upper arm moved by the hand or forearm. Pereira adds that a careful choice of fingering influences results and individuals differ in mastery of certain parts of the arm and fingers depending on their finger length, strength, thickness, and ability to vibrate. Over time and with increased experience in teaching, he also adds that ‘bad’ fingerings sometimes become interesting options for special moments and “good” fingerings turn out to be predictable or unimaginative. This remark leads to a sophistication of fingering effects, i.e. portamento, which determine a player’s artistry, musical taste and ability to shape the music in individual way.

**Summary**
The common message in the first group of methods by performers is to consider portamenti carefully. This is mentioned in all of the methods despite their differing technical solutions and musical suggestions. It is frequently mentioned in Alexanian, who wrote in 1922. He frequently uses the term ‘portamento’ and asks for it at certain places. So one can speculate that at the turn of the century it was more assumed practice and was perhaps more frequently used. Also it seems to me that older approaches (Alexanian and Bunting) are more concerned with finger movement while others include discussion on the movement of the entire arm. It is notable here that although Starker’s method is older than Bunting’s he does include directions for the entire arm. However, the details given in the older methods are striking. It is evident that the old masters have thought about every possible fingering and regulations to organise them into rules. Somewhat tedious, but comprehensive exercises given in the

Ibid., p.223
methods would cure common errors in modern cello playing. Pereira’s practice guide is interesting, too as he lists aural and physical symptoms of ‘bad’ shifts. These indicative signs should be more carefully monitored rather than blindly practising many hours without knowing what really is the problem.

**Methods by teachers**

Now the insights by four string pedagogues will be compared. This is done to find out whether instructions of the pedagogues reflect aesthetic aspects of the shifts and whether there is any gap between performers and teachers points of view. The oldest one by Potter dates from 1957 and the most recent one being Zweig’s DVDs released in 2005.

Although there are several different opinions on how to shift, they all seem to agree that it is a movement free of tension that needs to be led by the upper arm. Potter outlines the following:

> In any shift of position the thumb, hand and fingers all move together, as a unit, in a single, coordinated movement. The string remains pressed down to the fingerboard during the shift (although not with an unnecessarily great amount of pressure), and all the fingers which stopped the last tone are kept down during the shift (at least for initial schooling purposes) to assure clarity and smoothness in the shift and promote solidity of tone.\(^\text{103}\)

Below are his principles of shifting:

1. Keep the string pressed down during the shift without any tension or stiffness.

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2. The posture of the arm and shape of the hand must not change. The fingers should remain in proper spacing. This requires the thumb to lightly move along the neck of the cello in a single, coordinated movement, as a unit, with the arm and hand.

3. Shift slowly with relaxed muscles and with confidence. Take time to make smooth shift and never move rapidly or rush into the new note regardless of the tempo.

4. Prepare psychologically – have a feeling before arriving to a new position so that the muscles develop memory.  

He categorises the shifts into two kinds. First is the shift with the finger that played the preceding note (‘old’ finger or same finger) then replacing it with the ‘new’ finger. It is referred in the book as Portamento No.1(Ex.21a). This is referred as B - portamento, anticipated shift and K shift by previous authors. The other kind, Portamento No.2 (Ex.21b) consists of sliding to the position with the new finger (finger that is to play the arrival note). This is referred as L- portamento, delayed shift and H shift previously. This categorization is due to emotional and aesthetic effect. The Portamento No.1 is more of an articulated shift since the intermediate note (pivot note) is almost audible giving greater sense of directness, which is more suitable for baroque or classical style. In the Portamento No.2 the intermediate note should be inaudible giving smooth and uninterrupted connection of tones highlighting glissando therefore being suited to more for romantic style. 

When the shift is executed from a higher numbered finger to a lower numbered finger, one should feel the higher numbered finger pushing off the lower numbered finger as it slides to the new position. In this process the fingers will briefly cluster together in order to prepare the note.

Ex.21a, Portamento No.1, p.114

104 Ibid., p.99
105 Ibid., p.115
In the choice of the two different shifts, Potter emphasises the importance of musical content and quotes Carl Flesch:

> The intimate vocal connection between two tones should be the result of a heightened urge for individual expression; and hence our best (string players) cling to unconditional freedom with regard to the kind of portamento they use. Freedom, however, is not synonymous with license: that is, the portamento should not be employed indifferently, but rather must have the closest interconnection with the musical content of the work which is to be performed.\(^{106}\)

Potter suggests considering vibrato, its intensity and amplitude, bow change, where to coincide, semi-tones, shifting at a semi-tone distance is more discreet and coordination with the rhythm, align with the beat to give rhythmic impulse.\(^{107}\) The gesture should be like skiing, gliding without tension of stiffness. In high positions, the thumb may move a little more the left, outer side of the neck to facilitate the long distance. In thumb positions, one must move thumb and hand together as a unit. The thumb is placed a whole-tone behind the first finger to support the position as it did in the neck positions, therefore the shape of the hand does not change from its original position. Potter suggests to keep the thumb and first finger on the string in order to help keep the string down for less pressure of the other playing fingers, for intonation and security and to avoid unnecessary finger movements.

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\(^{106}\) Ibid., p.115  
\(^{107}\) Ibid., p.115
Paul Rolland is renowned for his analysis of movement in string playing. Although primarily focused on violin and viola, there are matters of principle that can be shared. He suggests introducing shifting at early levels of development to dissolve excessive tension by being in the first position too much, to build up the foundation of an important technique and to present the concept of using the entire fingerboard in string playing, so the posture does not suffer and is prepared for any challenges to come.¹⁰⁸ This gesture is practiced in what he calls “shuttle” exercise. It encourages ‘excursions’ to higher positions by playing pizzicato or harmonics. Then there are ‘long silent shifts’ exercises where students shift from the low end of the fingerboard to the high end of the fingerboard only with the left hand without playing it with the bow. This should be done in a smooth and unhurried manner initiating the movement from the upper arm. Now he evolves it into ‘the ghosts’ exercises playing the silent shift as natural harmonics. Once these basic gestures are learned Rolland introduces ‘stepwise shifts’, which are practiced within a fragment of a familiar melody in the first position. This melody gets transposed up a tone, to be played in the next position. This continues to successive positions as shown in the Ex.22:

Ex.22

One can invent and transpose as many of these fragments as needed. He adds to release finger pressure as you slide and a thumb tapping exercise to release tension and also to pull with the upper arm toward the new position. In a downward shift, the thumb needs to be allowed to move a split second before the playing finger.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p.134
accuracy can be practiced in the following exercise (Ex.23):

Ex.23

A student is to play a fragment in the first position, then play natural harmonics on the lower strings moving the hand into the fifth position. This will lead the fingers in the next string down where the notes are the same. One can further practice by playing one finger scale and octave shifts so there is aural guidance. He stresses that the finger pressure should be released during the shift and the angle of the fingers should be always slanted towards the nut of the cello and never forward or to the bridge.

Klotman’s handbook is for a string class and highlights the following common mistakes and creative solutions:

1. In the case of a tense thumb, we think it as ‘elevator’ that carries the hand when moving from a lower to a high position or vice versa.
2. The shifting finger should remain in contact with the string until the arrival to the new position.
3. *Portamento* is a means of expressive playing, but this needs to be balanced.
4. Distances get smaller as we move up the fingerboard.

Both Rolland’s and Klotman’s instructions are simple, but precise and sufficient for any level to practice shifts. They function as great checklists to review any shifts that are not working properly.

In her work *String Pedagogy*, Mimi Zweig also categorizes shifts in two
groups (i) anticipated, and (ii) delayed. She uses the same terminology as Starker. An anticipated shift is a silent shift where one shifts on the old beat to arrive on the new note on the new beat. If there is a bow change, one shifts on the old bow and arrives on the new note on the new bow. It also means the shift is always on the old finger. If the shift is in one bow, then one has to time the shift so that one arrives on the new note on the new beat within a slur. On the other hand, she claims that a delayed shift is an expressive shift. So there are varieties of the expressive shifts according to the degree of audibility of the slide. Basically the delayed shift is a shift where a part of the new note is on the new beat. You shift on the new bow with the new finger if there is a bow change. Within a slur, one has to time it so a part of the shift is on the new beat with the new finger. Zweig advises to practice shifts very slowly with light fingers and make sure the bow stays at a constant speed. Also she advises students to leave the finger on the string and hear the harmonics on the way up between the two notes. The early stage of the shifts can be practiced on ‘one finger’ scale returning to the tonic after each note, for example, in B major one plays B-C#, B-D#, B-E, B- F# and so on until the complete octave. While the shift is taking place, one should hear the harmonics and therefore the finger should be on the strings. This can be practiced with finger combinations of 1-1,2-2,3-3, and 4-4 on different strings. As mentioned before the bow must travel at a slow and constant speed and the finger should remain light in the travels.

Summary
The sources studied here are written from both a performer’s and a teacher’s point of view. Starker, Bunting, Gendron and Pereira have more performer-oriented instructions for developed performers, as they are established performers themselves and share their expertises on teaching these skills. Alexanian and Potter have come up with theorized instructions on physical movement and finger coordination for diverse possible combinations. Klotman, Rolland and Zweig are expert teachers who have come up with instructions for earlier stages of learning. It is highly valuable in analysing a student’s background and their method of learning or review of pedagogy of the early stages for teachers. This provides a starting point for solving habitual or recurring problems. It is agreed by these methods that the art of shifting depends on the musical context. Only music justifies the various categories of shifts analysed by
these experts. Shifting serves a significant role in determining styles and performance practice of different styles and periods. Knowing how one performs and teaches can translate into a professional, musical, tasteful and unique performance of any given piece.

It is interesting in this regard how Starker organises and names the two kinds of shifts. Zweig’s use of the same terms adds to this point. It is very effective as students associate the effect with the intended use of an either anticipated or delayed shift. In the context of Popper, there is a choice. Alexanian clearly suggests that more portamento could be employed. However, this should not be out of technical difficulties or carelessness as suggested by Bunting also. All authors stress the importance of musical context. If there are musically fitting places, one could experiment with fingerings to produce the most suitable portamento. It is notable that Alexanian indicates to the performer which finger is to make the portamenti. This is evidently an important factor in determining the type of portamenti. One must always consider how shifts are executed in terms of physical actions. This will be an invaluable guide to the sound as the right impulses and actions will not only determine colour and speed of the portamento, but also simply improve the accuracy of the shifts. As discussed in the previous chapter, Popper was known for his ‘silky’ tone and expressiveness in his playing. An appropriate understanding of the diverse modes of shifting and portamenti will be fundamental to any interpretation or recreation of an authentic style of playing Popper’s works.

**RUBATO**

In its investigation of rubato this chapter provides some historical background to this expressive technique that is associated with performers from the romantic period. As mentioned in the previous section, Popper was an international touring artist. He composed cello pieces of musicality and inspiration for an instrument, which was not as popular a solo instrument as the piano or the violin at the time. One can only speculate how he would have played with rubato however; there are strong connections with some of the most influential musicians of the time that were associated with Popper such as Wagner, Liszt and Brahms. Although his instrument is different, a discussion of Chopin is included as his acclaimed style of subtlety and delicacy is similar to that of Popper. Moreover, Chopin influenced many of his
contemporaries including Liszt with his rubato style. As Hudson states at the opening of his book on rubato “the Italian word rubato means robbed or stolen. Tempo rubato is stolen time”. \(^{110}\) According to Hudson there are two types of rubato: The early rubato and the later rubato, both originating from a different period and from a different performance practice.

**Background: Brahms, Wagner, Liszt, and Chopin**

The early rubato refers to a melodic variation in time.\(^{111}\) The codification ‘early’ applies as the practice originates from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Its practice is frequently employed by keyboard players in their use of ornamentations and rhythmic alteration, which anticipates, or delays particular notes of a melody. Arpeggiation is also a part of this type of rubato as the arpeggiation of chords depends on the intensity of expression. This type also includes inegales, the French practice from the mid-seventeenth century, which lengthens the first note of a pair of notes in equal rhythmic values. The practice required the performer to determine ‘good’ notes to lengthen and ‘bad’ notes to de-emphasize and was also done from first notes to any note of both equal and unequal rhythmic values.\(^{112}\) Hudson includes “rhythmic transformation”, which originates from the twelfth century.\(^{113}\) This practice is rhythmic “robbery” within a melody or motive, which could involve changes of metre, accentuation and basic rhythmic design as distinguished from inegales, which does not disturb the overall duration.

On the other hand, the later type first appeared in the vocal music of the Baroque period. The purpose was to communicate texts more effectively in such genres as baroque monody and recitative where clear expression of text is very

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\(^{111}\) Ibid., p.13  
\(^{112}\) Ibid., p.27  
\(^{113}\) Ibid., p.34
important.\textsuperscript{114} The main purpose of this practice was to enhance the mood and expression of texts or to mark the beginning or the end of a composition.\textsuperscript{115} In instrumental music cadences, cadenzas and preludial forms are examples of this type of \textit{rubato}. The practice varied the tempo to mark the beginning or the end of a musical structure; for example, the dominant chord was usually prolonged by a trill or the penultimate chord often had added ornamentations\textsuperscript{116}. Preludes were intended to precede the performance of a main composition and carried such names as \textit{fantasia}, \textit{ricercar}, \textit{toccata}, \textit{capriccio}, or \textit{intonazione} as well as prelude, \textit{praebulum}, or \textit{preludium}.\textsuperscript{117} These forms are through composed without an organized structure and have traits of improvisation within a free sense of rhythm. The performers were expected to take liberties with the tempo and were expected to add embellishments.

**Rubato in the Romantic period**

The Romantic period represents “a high point of freedom for the performer” and her subjectivity.\textsuperscript{118} The elements of rhythmic flexibility were considered a performer’s right and even duty in communicating expression.\textsuperscript{119} There are notable performers who had a great impact on their peers and contemporaries such as Chopin, Liszt, Brahms and Wagner in this respect. They were among the most influential artists of the time and would have influenced Popper directly or indirectly in the performance practice and music writing. They crossed paths at various times of their lives as colleagues, directors, and orchestral musicians as discussed in the earlier chapter. Hudson shows that during the nineteenth century the later type of \textit{rubato} was used. Franz Liszt, the versatile artist, performer, conductor and composer is an interesting example in this area. Liszt knew Chopin as they performed together and was influenced by Chopin’s concept of rubato. He probably was the most influential

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., p.4
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., p.4
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., p.8
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., p.9
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., p.300
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., p.300
\end{flushright}
musician of the late nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{120} Hudson states;

He (Liszt) was involved with rubato as a performer, conductor, and writer, and as an editor, composer, arranger, and teacher. He is a key figure in the history of tempo rubato, for it as his diverse and changing concept of the device, which influenced later performers and composers.\textsuperscript{121}

Hudson also compares Liszt and Chopin, which is summarized in the table below:

Table.2 comparison of Liszt and Chopin\textsuperscript{122}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Liszt</th>
<th>Chopin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational heritage</td>
<td>Czerny- Beethoven</td>
<td>Field-Clementi-Hummel-Mozart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred instrument</td>
<td>Erard</td>
<td>Pleyel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Modern, “double escapement” actions allows notes to be repeated more easily than in single actions</td>
<td>Light, responsive touch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice habit</td>
<td>Repeated exercises for hours</td>
<td>Seldom practiced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>Flamboyant showman</td>
<td>Introspective dreamer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred audience</td>
<td>Large, impersonal</td>
<td>Small, intimate groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite their differences, Liszt was attracted to the rubato of Chopin’s playing

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., p.254  
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., p.254  
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., p.255
and adopted the practice for his own expressive means.\textsuperscript{123}

Liszt was quoted by Madame Auguste Boisser:

I don’t play according to the measure’, he said…Music must not be subject to a uniform balance; it must be kindled, or slowed down with judgement and according to the meaning it carries. This goes for all romantic music of the present time. The old-fashioned classics must be rendered with greater regularity.\textsuperscript{124}

Liszt was known to apply considerable rhythmic flexibility even in the works of Beethoven. Critics complained and in 1837 Liszt published the following statement;

I frequently played the works of Beethoven, Weber, and Hummel,… and I confess to my shame [that] in order to extract bravos from a public ever slow to perceive things of beauty, I had no scruples about changing the tempo and the composer’s intentions. I even arrogantly went so far as to add a lot of brilliant passages ad cadenzas… You will never believe how much I deplore those concessions to bad taste…\textsuperscript{125}

In his conducting Liszt also seemed to have employed vast tempo fluctuations to the point that:

The unanimous opinion was that he [Liszt] was not fit to wield the baton…It is not merely that in general he does not mark the beat… but rather that by his baroque animation he continually, and sometimes dangerously, causes the

\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., p.255


orchestra to vacillate. He does nothing but keep changing the baton from one and to the other – sometimes, indeed, laying it down altogether – giving signals in the air with this or that hand, or on occasion with both, having previously told the orchestra ‘not to keep too strictly to the beat’ (his own words at a rehearsal)…

As Hudson wrote, Liszt felt ‘that a strict beat often ‘clashes with the sense and expression,’ and that conductors should not perform ‘like a sort of windmill’. ‘We are pilots’, he writes, ‘not mechanics.’

At around 1839, Liszt was inspired by the gypsy music as he returned to his home country after sixteen years of being abroad. In response he composed works including the Hungarian Rhapsodies and he wrote the book entitled Des Bohemiens et de leur musique en Hongrie (first published in 1859). In this book, he refers to gypsy music as containing ‘extremely flexible rhythms’, ‘rhythms with their vacillations’, and the ‘liberty and richness’ of rhythm ‘distinguished both by a multiplicity and a flexibility nowhere else to be met with in the same degree’. He admired the rhythmic fire, flexibility and freedom – ‘their rule is to have no rule’.

This national connection to Hungary is interesting particularly in relation to Popper. According to Hudson, the first edition of Grove Dictionary included in the definition of Tempo Rubato, ‘perhaps the most striking instances of the employment of tempo rubato are found in the rendering of Hungarian national melodies by native artists.’ This is backed up by Adolph Christiani who remarked that

Hungarian music, in which the various musical elements ‘are so strangely

126 Hudson, p. 259. From Niederrheinische Musikzeitung (1853), p.139. For further information on this quotation see Hudson, p. 259, fn. 47.
127 Hudson, p.259
129 Hudson, p.260
130 Ibid., p.261
intermingled by surprising changes in tempo, in rhythm, and accentuation, that the chief characteristic in the movements of their music…is an almost constant rubato, an alternate change of extremes in tempo, of retardation and acceleration. 131

Going back to the category of the rubato, Liszt’s style was the early type. His pupil Lachmund states;

Lisztian rubato – that is, the subtle variations of tempo and expression within a free declamation, which are entirely different from Chopin’s rubato of hastening and lingering. The Liszt rubato is more like a sudden, light suspension of the rhythm on this or that significant note, so that by this means the phrasing is clearly and convincingly brought out. In his playing Liszt seemed to pay little attention to a steady beat, and yet neither the aesthetic symmetry nor the rhythm was disturbed.132

In summary, Liszt evolved his use of rubato throughout his life. The performer Liszt, a solo pianist in his early virtuoso period manifested the late type of rubato by subtly varying tempo by delaying the melody. Then he incorporates rhythmic robbery in the transformation of entire melodies using the early type of rubato, i.e structural rubato. In his compositions also, he marks an entire melody rubato in the early period. From his early to middle period, he started to mark rubato more often as a momentary effect on one or a few beats to articulate structural points, e.g. a repetition, change of movement, and emphasis on a significant note. Later he used rubato for more dramatic purpose to highlight intense cadential points.

Like Liszt Brahms conflated gypsy music with Hungarian music. He was inspired by the Hungarian violin virtuoso, Edouard Reményi. Brahms and Reményi

131 Ibid., p.261
132 Ibid., p.263
toured Europe in 1852 and Reményi was a friend of Liszt’s in Weimar. Liszt
remarks Reményi to be “the sole surviving possessor of the esoteric spirit of gypsy
music … his heart is with the Hungarian melodies, which he plays with deep
feeling.” He introduced the young Brahms to gypsy music and is credited with
having inspired him to write his Hungarian Dances. Brahms wrote twenty-one
Hungarian dances for piano four hands and wrote orchestral arrangements for No. 1,
No. 3 and No. 10. These popular works are characterised by bold rhythmic changes
indicated by markings such as ritardando, stringendo, con passione and expressivo.
According to Peres da Costa, Brahms was heard playing his own works with frequent
displacements, which are not notated on the score. He adds that in piano playing
displacement occurred much more frequently in slow expressive music than in fast
music. While there were no set rules, however, he notes that it typically occurred at
the beginning of phrases, beginnings of bars and moments of dissonance or harmonic
importance.

Popper looked up to Brahms as a composer and pianist. They were life-long
friends and performed chamber music together and premiered several works with

Peres da Costa argues that Wagner also attempted to clarify this form of
rubato as a conductor. Wagner wrote in his essay for conductors and producers
describing the proper performance of Tannhäuser. The translation was included in
Hudson’s book:

From the moment when the singer has taken into his fullest knowledge my intentions for the rendering, let him give the freest play to his natural sensibility, nay, even to the physical necessities of his breath in the more agitated phrases; and the more creative he can become, through the fullest freedom of feeling, the more will he pledge me to delighted thanks.\textsuperscript{137}

Wagner advised singers to firstly learn the correct values of notes then take the initiative to be creative. At the time critics were accustomed to the strict rhythm of Mendelssohn’s conducting and complained about Wagner’s flexibility:

He prefaces the entry of an important point, or the return of a theme – especially in a slow movement – by an exaggerated ritardando; and …he reduces the speed of an allegro – say in an overture or the first movement – fully one-third, immediately on the entrance of its cantabile phrases.\textsuperscript{138}

In his book, \textit{On Conducting: A Treatise on Style in the Execution of Classical Music} Wagner argues that each theme has a character and that this needs to reflect in the tempo. He uses the term ‘Tempo modification’ and recommended fast movements to be taken faster and slow movements much slower. This affected the transitions in between as well to be adjusted to chosen faster or slower tempi.\textsuperscript{139} This was intended to articulate the structure of a piece by enhancing the expression of individual parts. However, it also generated much criticism for its unnatural exaggerations.\textsuperscript{140} Hanslick commented on Wagner’s conducting of the Beethoven’s Eroica Symphony:

After a very fast beginning of the first movement, for example, he takes the

\textsuperscript{137} Hudson, p.311
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., p.312
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., p.312
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., p.312-313
second theme (forty-fifth measure) conspicuously slower, thus disturbing the listener’s hardly confirmed establishment in the fundamental mood of the movement and diverting the ‘heroic’ character of the symphony toward the sentimental.\textsuperscript{141}

We can distinguish three levels where \textit{rubato} is applied: affecting an entire movement, a phrase or only a single note. Performers use tempo modifications to indicate formal structures for the listener. They also modify tempo in expressive shaping of phrases where groups of shorter notes are accelerated or retarded thus highlighting the motivic structure.\textsuperscript{142} Finally, melodic expression on the most detailed level involving a single note can become the subject of a \textit{rubato} where a dissonant appoggiatura is lengthened to give an ‘agogic accent’. This may also include a group of short notes played in hurried gesture or the emphasis of dance rhythms through a lengthening of particular beats.\textsuperscript{143} Other performance practices include the use of a pause to accent notes or chords or to separate motivic units.\textsuperscript{144} These different levels of \textit{rubato} practices seem to be complex, but they are understood musically as Finson states (see footnotes) and they were not merely the sentimental result of personal taste, but were done in such manner to draw attention to closer details of phrases and musical structures.

With its increasing subjectivity and its development of form, the music of the nineteenth century directs “the listener’s attention to the beauty of the moment rather than to the formal structure”.\textsuperscript{145} It is natural then that performers at the time would use “singing melodies, elaborate arpeggiation, slow moving chords, conspicuous

\textsuperscript{141} Eduard Hanslick: Vienna’s Golden Years of Music 1850–1900, trans. Henry Pleasants, p.108
\textsuperscript{142} Hudson, p.331. The footnote quotes Jon Finson, in ‘Performing Practice in the Late Nineteenth Century’, MQ 70(1984), p.471-3, ‘rubato was a device applied to the motivic and melodic structure of a piece in order to outline that structure for the audience. It was not merely a sentimental device applied haphazardly.’
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., p.332
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., p.332
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., p.338
dissonances and the increasingly sensuous sounds of their instruments” to attract attention to moments of particular significance in music.  

Chopin and Mazurka
Interestingly Popper composed six Mazurkas (opus 11, 12, 32, 35, 51 and 52) as listed in the appendix. This is a significant number considering that he did not write multiple works of any other genre. Naturally, this might be a reflection of the popularity of the Mazurka in Salon Culture. There is no direct evidence that Popper was influenced by Chopin, however he often played Chopin in his concerts and transcribed Chopin’s Nocturne No.2. Chopin was an avid opera lover and Popper was the principal cellist of the Vienna Imperial Opera and Philharmonic Orchestra. Perhaps both are related through their common affinity for operatic style. In the latter part of this chapter I will look at Popper’s Mazurka, as it is necessary to study Chopin’s rubato style in this context. Chopin (1810-1849) was known for his Mazurkas, which originate from his native Poland. Popper who was born in 1843 was probably too young to listen to Chopin live, but Chopin’s piano playing legacy was too remarkable to be ignored. Chopin’s performing style was said to have been elegant, refined and introspective with subtle expressive nuances. He generally played with softer dynamics, touch and pedaling. His unique style was achieved with a mixture of the early and the late types of rubato. Hudson summarises that Chopin had the tempo flexibility of the late type especially in the dance originated pieces, but also had displacement and melodic shifts of the early type which influenced singers and solo violinists:

Chopin was far from being a partisan to metric rigour and frequently used rubato in his playing, accelerating or slowing down this or that theme. But

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146 Ibid., p.338
147 See Appendix I (p.112). Mazurka seems to be the most popular composition title apart from Nocturne (9 compositions), and Gavotte (4) there is no recurring titles or volume of titles – Op.51 six mazurkas.
148 Hudson, p.236-7
Chopin’s rubato possessed an unshakeable emotional logic. It was always justified itself by a strengthening or weakening of the melodic line, by harmonic details, by the figurative structure. It was fluid, natural; it never degenerated into exaggeration of affectation.\textsuperscript{149}

The Mazurka refers to a group of dances that originated in the area near Warsaw.\textsuperscript{150} It is in triple meter and has a strong accent on the second or third beat to coincide with a tap of the heel.

Fig. 5

Mazurka Rhythm:

It was a popular ballroom dance in Europe during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. There are anecdotes of Chopin and his pupils on their disagreement about the rhythm of the Mazurka. Chopin played with such timing and accentuation, that his pupils heard his Mazurkas in duple metre.\textsuperscript{151}

In Chopin’s Mazurkas the left hand plays a ‘waltz bass’ of three crotchets. Like the Viennese waltz, it is played with a swaying rhythm consisting of an agitated first beat and a hesitating second beat. Charles Hallé, a friend of Chopin remarks:

A remarkable feature of his playing was the entire freedom with which he treated the rhythm, but which appeared so natural that for years it had never struck me. It must have been in 1845 or 1846 that I once ventured to observe to him that most of his mazurkas, when played by himself, appeared to be


\textsuperscript{150} Ibid., p.184

\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., p.185
written, not in 3/4, but in 4/4 time, the result of his dwelling so much longer on the first note in the bar. He denied it strenuously, until I made him play one of them and counted audibly four in the bar, which fitted perfectly. Then he laughed and explained that it was the national character of the dance, which created the oddity. The more remarkable fact was that you received the impression of a 3/4 rhythm whilst listening to common time. Of course this was not the case with every mazurka, but with many. 152

Chopin’s characteristic use of timing and freedom of rhythmic accentuation is not unique. A description of Liszt playing the bass line of a waltz reveals similar personal idiosyncrasies:

Liszt had a habit of frequently dashing the wrist abruptly from the chord at the second beat of the measure, with more or less accent, sometimes almost prematurely, the movement being correspondingly retarded, before playing the chord on the third beat of the measure, with another less conspicuous up stroke. Such treatment certainly lent a piquancy and sparkle to the performance. As it was never twice alike there was no objectionable mannerism therein. 153

This flexibility also includes polymetric rubato on unusual groups of notes. For example, his Nocturne, Op. 15 has unusual groups of notes: thirty notes in the melody against four in the bass, groups of seven or eight notes in a chromatically descending portamento to be freely inserted between two notes, and in the entire middle section, quintuplets in an inner voice against two quavers in the bass. This can only be played with a swaying and groping style. 154

153 Ibid., p.187. Footnote. ‘Student Days in Weimar with Liszt’, The Etude, 26 (1908), 285.Fritz Spiegf describes the ‘Viennese lift’ in Music Through the Looking Glass (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), p.311: the second crochet is played a little early, the third a little late…Thus the rubato is kept within each bar and does not affect the overall pulse of the music.’
154 Ibid., p.190-1
Furthermore, more flexibility is achieved with a strict left hand. Chopin used to say to pupils that “the left hand is the conductor of the orchestra”\(^ {155}\) while in the meantime, the right hand can be free to express the details of melodic variations. In this late type of \textit{rubato} a rhythmic robbery is achieved by borrowing time from one note for another. Liszt described Chopin’s \textit{rubato} to a student, “Do you see those trees? …the wind plays the leaves, stirs up life among them, but the tree remains the same – that is the Chopin \textit{rubato}.”\(^ {156}\)

Georges Mathias, a student of Chopin reports:

There was another aspect: Chopin…often required simultaneously that the left hand, playing the accompaniment, should maintain strict time, while the melodic line should enjoy freedom of expression with fluctuations of speed. This is quite feasible: you can be early, you can be late, the two hands are not in phase; then you make a compensation which re-establishes the ensemble.\(^ {157}\)

Ornamentation is also explored in this style of \textit{rubato}. The small notes increase in number as time travels and are written out replacing the ornamental signs of mordents, trills and turns. These notes have to steal time either from the preceding note or the following note.\(^ {158}\) Hence, the anticipation and delay can be possible on certain notes. This displacement is also achieved through arpeggiation. Composers like Dussek, Hummel, Field and Chopin wrote out the ‘reaching’ to convey longing and yearning and a romantic striving for the unattainable and fleeting. The main note was approached through a leap within an arpeggio, a turn or trill to emphasize the arrival to a higher note.\(^ {159}\)

\(^{155}\) Ibid., p.193
\(^{156}\) Ibid., p.192
\(^{157}\) Ibid., p.194
\(^{158}\) Ibid., p.201
\(^{159}\) Ibid., p.203
Ex.24, Reaching

In summary, Chopin’s performing style was elegant and fluid, but restrained within all elements of the music therefore producing subtle nuances unmatched by his contemporaries or pupils. Hudson points out these unique nuances and this fluidity perhaps resulted from Chopin’s enthusiastic love of opera. The purpose of his rubato were to articulate the repetition of a unit of music, to intensify an expressive moment such as the high point of a melodic line or unusual non-harmonic notes and to establish a particular mood. There are many *rubatos* in the music of Chopin. There is tempo flexibility (late type), prolonged beats of the dance rhythms, polymetric type caused by unusual groups of notes, expressive ornamentation and arpeggiation of small notes, and displacement and melodic anticipation and delay over strict accompaniment (early type). Being an introspective performer, he was aware of the expressive power of small notes and arpeggios as they delayed notes of the melody. It is only natural that singers and instrumentalists took on these *rubato* techniques to emphasise the particular rhetoric of their art. Singers and instrumentalists largely have control over the melodic line, which is shaped in its expression through the subtle alteration of melodic note values. However, pianists had greater freedom over both melody and accompaniment since one single performer performs both roles. They are thus more flexible when handling arpeggiation, polymetric rubato and displacement.

For pianists rubato occurs in the timing across the keyboard. For cellists it is longitudinal timing on the fingerboard and across the string depending on how many strings are to be played at a time. In the case of the former, shifting plays a determining role as performers shape their phrases. The Chopin style rubato, i.e. the

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160 Ibid., p.214
161 Ibid., p.237
162 Ibid., p.215
early type of rubato, can also be executed on the cello through arpeggiation and the displacement of chords across the strings. It is almost impossible to play a shift without taking time due to the physical distance of the instrument. The register of the instrument contributes to such a decision as well. Specific resonance and characteristics of the instrument require particular timing to clearly convey the written text. Popper’s frequently mentioned expressive playing was certainly dependant on the discussed variables. The ‘charm’ of his playing would depend on how many portamenti were audible and how they were shaped. It is vital to know how to execute any shift to control the portamenti. This is the foundation for an informed decision about musical timing. The following case study is an illustration of how we can investigate a real-life performance, analyse how performers achieve aesthetic outcomes, and shape phrases.

**Rubato Case Study**

In this case study, seven performances of Popper’s Mazurka are analyzed using Adobe Audition, a digital audio workstation. This enables us to analyze the use of rubato in different performances by measuring accurately the timing of a performance. The seven recordings include performances by cellists from the 1920s to 2011. In chronological order performers are Casals (ca.1925), Starker (1992), Kliegel (1994), Kosower (2008), Warner (2009), Mezo (2010), and Gerhardt (2011). The Mazurka is analysed to identify the structural and harmonic background and likely places where rubato may be appropriate. The full score with harmonic analysis is included in appendix II on page 117.

**Analysis: Popper Mazurka in G minor, Op. 11, No. 3**

The Mazurka in G minor, Op. 11, No. 3 was composed around 1874 and is the last of three works in his Op. 11, set of pieces for cello and piano. This is one of thirteen Mazurkas Popper wrote – the popularity of the genre is suggested here. The piece is full of the characteristics of the Polish dance in a ternary, A-B-A form. The first section is in g minor with the first subject showing typical mazurka characteristics – energetic, dotted rhythm, and strongly marked tempo in triple meter. The second theme marked ‘dolce grazioso’ creates an immediate contrast. In this section, Popper makes a feature of the use of mordent-like grace notes derived from the acciaccaturas.
in the left hand of the piano of the first section. Initially, the tonality seems to be g minor, however, some quirky leading notes and chords are less conventional. Popper flirts with chromaticism.

Ex.25, Bars 15-16

The introduction in the piano consists of a prolonged dominant chord pausing on a dominant 7th with a flattened 9th. The first theme starts when the cello enters in bar 5. This phrase is built on top of a tonic ostinato, which sounds modal as it omits the 3rd of the chord. Here every fourth bar leads to a cadence in g minor with a dominant 7th resolving to the tonic over a tonic-5th ostinato. Throughout the eight bars the drone is played with an acciaccatura, in which C# obscures the chord and highlights the 5th more than the tonic.

Ex.26, Bars 5-8
The contrasting second theme begins in bar 13 in the relative major key of the g minor (Bb major). Popper elaborates on the chromaticism of the acciaccatura figure from the first subject leading towards the first inversion of half diminished chord (ii) on the second beat of bar 16. In bar 18, he switches between VII and V resulting in a chromatic line of C# to C natural, C# to D to Eb as shown in Ex.27. Then he switches the tonalities back and forth by placing VII-V-VII in B flat Major which is followed by V-ii (half diminished in first inversion)-V in g minor. Moreover, he increases this chromatic tension by replacing ii with Fr+6 for the second time.

Ex.27, Bars 18-23

The first theme returns in bar 29 after an extended prolongation of the dominant over the tonic g minor in the cello part. In bar 36 the first (A) section ends on a perfect cadence in g minor.

The second (B) section is in the relative Major (Bb major). This section itself is in ternary form. The first section consists of an eight bar phrase with a perfect cadence on the tonic, Bb Major, at the end of the phrase. Then the middle section goes to g minor with an alternate disposition of the chords I and V. At bar 57 the cello unravels a chromatic passage. The harmony traces this chromaticism with secondary function chords such as the dominant 7th and diminished 7th, vii07 tonalising chords, subdominant and augmented chord, Fr +6 to embellish the dominant chord of the g
minor. The chromaticism unwinds further with an unaccompanied ritardando returning to the first theme of the second (B) section.

Ex.28, Bars 57-68, Editio Musica Budapest, 1986

At the completion of the B section there is a Coda-like transition to the recapitulation of the A section. Here Popper elaborates on the chromaticism from the B section now placed in the piano part and also features the dotted, rhythmic theme from the A section making the return to the mazurka dance rhythm as shown in fig.5. The harmony retains the quirky chromaticism including flat 6th and augmented 4th
intervals, Neapolitan chord and a sharp VI half diminished chord, finally landing on the vii, diminished 7th chord pause leading to the return of the A part.

Ex.29, Bars 83-102
Performance analysis

Using the Adobe Audition CS6 (version 5.0 build 708) selected recorded performances of the Mazurka are analyzed in respect of their timing. The total timing initially varies as some performers play the repeat between bars 53 and 82 while others omit this. Below is a table indicating basic values.
The oldest recorded performance is by Pablo Casals, which was recorded sometime between 1920 and 1925. In general Casals enhances the character and phrasing by rushing towards the top of phrases, for example, in bars 6 and 10 by compacting the dotted rhythm. He also goes forward in ascending figures to give more emphasis on the arrival of top notes at places like bar 35 where the prolonged dominant leaps to a perfect cadence in g minor before going into the B section in relative major of Bb. In the second (B) section, he takes time on the first beat of the triplet figure; a chromatic melody spinning around D then makes up the lost time by going forward in the following bar. He characterises this four bar phrasing throughout the section always easing and balancing with 9-8 and 4-3 suspensions in every fourth bar. In bar 47, he takes the most time on the arrival of the second beat, which is intensified by the agitated repetition crotchet Gs just before. His phrasing of waltz-like lilt enhances the chromatic melody with an immaculate elegance. In the recapitulation in bar 89, Casals takes a slightly steadier tempo than the beginning, but
continues the same principle of going forward in ascending section. His tempi are the quickest of the seven performers resulting in the shortest total duration even with the repeat.

Starker recorded the selection of Popper as part of an album entitled *Romantic Cello Favorites, A tribute to cellist composer David Popper* with the pianist Shigeo Neriki in 1989. Neriki sets up the mood by gradually speeding up the piano fragments in the introduction. There is a subtle *rubato* support of phrasing by going forward with the dotted rhythm ascending figure in bar 5 which gives a sense of arrival and release on the down beat of bar 6. This is found in every recorded performance of those analysed. The tempo of the *dolce grazioso* in bar 13 remains fairly disciplined, but from bar 23 to 28 Starker goes forward to the return of the main theme and bar 29 is back to *Tempo I*. He ends the A section with the ascending figure in its dotted rhythm going forward to the perfect cadence of bars 35 to 36. In the B section he sustains the phrases longer, aiming for eight bar phrases instead of four and there is a slight amount of time taken between the connections in the shifts to Bb (bars 39, 47 54 and 69) and also to the Eb in bars 43 and 73. This lost time is made up by going forward in the triplet parts and he keeps a steady tempo to the recapitulation in bar 102. The repeated A section is similarly phrased to the first A section with the exception of an increased accelerando between bars 113 and 126 resulting in a more compelling cadence at the closure of the piece.

Kliegel’s recording is the slowest among the analysed examples. She keeps the steady tempo of crotchets at 140 beats per minute and plays without any *rubato* between bars 5 and 12. In bar 14, where the second theme of the A section commences she holds the third beat with a pause then plays the following bars in tempo. Notably she pulls back the tempo at bar 28 before the return of the A theme. The approximate tempo at the B section is crotchet at 107 beats per minute. She plays the four-bar phrases and consistently takes time every four bars. The *tranquillo* of bar 49 is generous and bar 56 is pulled back before the stringendo in the following passage, which falls on the elongated first beat of bar 67. There is tendency of moving forward with crescendo passages in general.

The American cellist Kosower recorded the *Mazurka* in 2008. Similar to
Neriki his partner Oh starts slowly and accelerates the tempo of the piano introduction. Kosower keeps a fairly steady tempo throughout the A section and phrases the dolce grazioso section in four bar phrases. In the B section there is a slight time taken for the shifts to Bb in bars 39, 47, 54, and 69 and to Eb also in bars 43 and 73. The A’ section is almost an exact repetition with a slightly more deliberate reduction in tempo in bars 126 and the penultimate bar for the final cadence.

Another American cellist, Wendy Warner, also recorded the Mazurka in 2008 in a tribute to Popper and Piatigorsky. In the A section her connection to the top note, Bb in bar 7 and the corresponding places have a unique connection with a slight amount of time taken. This results in an organic lilt of the dotted rhythm. The dolce grazioso is played in balanced phrases of two bar plus two bar phrases, the antecedent and consequent in reasonably steady tempo. There is a rush forward in bars 89 to 96. The return of the first (A’) section in bar 105 is similarly phrased with the connection to Bb and emphasis of four bar phrases. The expected acceleration in bars 121 and 126 drives straight towards the end of the piece.

The Hungarian born cellist Laszlo Mezo graduated from the Liszt Ferenc University of Music in Budapest and the Hochschule für Musik und Theater München. His recording dates from 2010. He keeps the A section quite steady without significant variation of tempo or rhythm. In the B section the only notable rubato is taken for the shifts to high notes as in the performances by Starker and Kosower and in the recapitulation (A’), the acceleration of the dotted rhythm in the ascending figure is highlighted. This is probably the most straightforward recording in this study of rubato.

The German cellist Alban Gerhardt released his recording entitled ‘Casals Encores’ in 2011. He also leads the dotted rhythm towards the arrival of Bb in bars 6 and 10. The dolce grazioso is kept in tempo with the least amount of time taken for the third beat of bar 16 out of the seven recordings. Bars 19 to 28 rush to a slightly quicker tempo for the return in bar 29 leading towards the cadence at the end of the section. In the B section the slides to shifts are phrased with more time and he plays four bar phrases similar to other artists in this study. He repeats the middle section of the B section and varies the second time by intensifying the stringendo in bars 57 and
64. At bar 83 he picks up a quick tempo crotchet at 162 bpm to return to the recapitulation of the first section (A’). In this section the acceleration of the ascending dotted rhythm takes the listener straight towards the finish of the piece.

Below are screen shots of the waveform analyses of the recordings of Casals and Kliegel. These show section A, from the beginning to bar 36. The top axes show timing in seconds and the axes on the right hand-side show decibel levels and pitch. Each analysis shows sound waves (decibels) at appropriate timing and one can see spaciousness or tightness of the waves according to the performers’ rubato. Also the pitch analysis underneath indicates different timings of the two performers.

Fig.6, Casals’ recording Section A
Conclusion

This comparison shows how individual artists take time or accelerate musical gestures to make phrasing and structure clearer to the listener. It seems that the more recent performers take fewer risks, however, intentions and meanings still remain evident. A further observation is that shifts across bigger intervals are shaped through a unique combination of slide (portamento) and rubato. The chosen piece is not of great complexity and perhaps the mazurka rhythm was not varied as much as it had been suggested in the discussion of Chopin’s or Liszt’s playing styles. However, the practice of varying melodic timing over a strict accompaniment can be heard in several of these performances. Although Popper did not mark any bar rubato, there are tempo indications (tranchillo, stringendo) asking for rubato playing. Performers go further and beyond such markings to express the inherent ideas, style and performance practices and to enhance the spirit of a piece and its genre. The idiomatic shaping of shifts and melodic figures with the use of timing decision provides evidence of both the early and late types of rubato even in these largely contemporary recordings.
CHAPTER THREE: Pedagogy

Interviews
In this chapter, the pedagogy of Popper is evaluated through interviews with living teachers. The purpose here is to investigate how Popper is taught in today’s teaching studios. The interview questions ask about the use of Popper’s studies and pieces and the teachers’ experiences in using these materials. A general census of teaching experiences, number of students and type of students was also taken. The responses of the participants are vital to this study as they provide evidence of Popper’s pedagogy in modern day teaching. The evaluation will provide some complementary data to the textual and performance analyses of the previous chapters.

Method
The participants included six teachers teaching at musical institutions and privately in Australia and abroad. Their teaching experiences vary from 10 years to 40 years with student ages ranging from five to thirty. Most of the participants have diverse performing backgrounds including orchestral, chamber and solo careers while others are purely involved in teaching with a minimal amount of involvement in performance.

The interview consisted of eight main questions, which sometimes led to sub-questions on particular topics and lasted for about an hour. The contents were recorded digitally and then transferred to the computer as an individual file so transcripts could be made. Only the researcher and each participant were present during the interview, which was done at various times to accommodate individual schedules. There were a couple of teachers from the United States, so the interviews were conducted over the phone and were recorded on the computer and then transcribed as individual files.

The interview questions are shown below:
**Interview questions**

1. Tell me about your teaching experiences. Number of years, number of students, age range, or median of students, levels of students (Tertiary, Secondary, primary).

2. How do you use Popper in your teaching? If you don’t use Popper, why not?

3. What works do you mostly use? And why?

4. What is your aim for student learning when you use these studies?

5. Is there a sequence of studies that you use overall and how does Popper fit into that sequence?

6. How do you use Popper’s short (concert) pieces?

7. Has your use of Popper changed over time?

8. Is there implicit pedagogy in the studies? (What do you think of Popper’s works in terms of pedagogy of cello playing?) What is your view on the value of the works? Do they work in teaching? Are there any limits? Do they give results you intended in the course of students’ learning? When do you choose to use it or choose not to use it?

**Result**
Most teachers had tertiary level students with small numbers of younger students. The tertiary level students included students at performance major and minor levels and other degree students such as Arts degree and Education students. The chart shows the total number of students of the interviewees.
Table 4 students’ age demographic

All the teachers said they use materials by Popper throughout their teaching.

**Students’ age demographic**

- Pre-school: 3%
- Primary: 10%
- Secondary: 27%
- Tertiary: 60%

Most agreed that the works by Popper were essential to their teaching and always have been used. Some mentioned that they only use Popper because they were listed in syllabuses of examinations and auditions. Some teachers said the reason for using Popper was because they themselves were taught using works by Popper. Most teachers also agree that they are selective in using works by Popper since some are better musically and some are more interesting than the others. They make the decisions based on students’ level of playing and their individual needs. The *High School of Cello Playing Op. 73* is used by every teacher and there was also agreement that only select pieces by Popper were taught, the reasons being that students needed to be at a certain level to be able to play the pieces by Popper since they are challenging and also because they believe that there are more fundamental works in the course of cello pedagogy.

A reason why Popper was not taught included the lack of time to incorporate his pieces in the individuals’ learning plan. There were instances where students had
certain kinds of training and had covered many etudes already in their studies. These students responded quickly to corrections and were able to fix problems without extensive time spent on etudes.


Then why do the participants teach Popper? The simplest answer is that Popper is asked as a requirement for auditions, examinations and competitions. Why is it essential to teach Popper? Most participants had their own reasons why, such as the following:

It is because it is a tool; it is a window into what students’ approaches are to the instrument with any music. Usually in just a few notes or few measures, one can see how people are set up and how they understand the physics of the cello and how their body should behave.

It is evident from the answers that Popper made a great contribution to the foundation of cello playing especially in relation to the physicality of cello technique.
Some teachers like using Popper, because it is polyphonic allowing students to practice double stops, which helps intonation significantly regardless of the level. The answers indicate that the participants use Popper for both the left- and right hand techniques. Notable mentions include thumb position, which is explored extensively in comparison to studies by other authors and the coordination between the two hands were other popular technical issues covered from the 15 Easy studies, Op. 76a to the Forty Studies of the High school of Cello Playing, Op. 73. Also the consolidation of various bow techniques, for example, slurring and saving the bow, up-bow and down-bow staccatos, sautille, dotted rhythm, fluency, string crossing, and sustaining the sound were common practice among the participants.

Then there are musical reasons why teachers teach Popper. One teacher testified:

Some students find playing simple melodies difficult. Looks can be deceiving e.g. Feuillet d’album looks sparse on the page, but [it is] difficult to carry a long phrase and melody. [On the other hand] e.g. Vito is easier once you learn the positions even though it looks complicated on the page.

Teachers were in agreement in saying they teach Popper because the music is enjoyed by students. This perhaps translates to the amount of preparation students do when playing Popper pieces as well as from parents’ feedback. They found that even parents without musical background found Popper easy to listen to and enjoyed the experience:

Popper is always fancy. It sounds great. It’s not so long and it’s pleasant to listen to and exciting for people with no musical background (they relate well). I think it’s not as hard as it sounds. To show off, so for students who like to show off it is perfect.

One teacher testified that he has a ‘soft spot’ for the Tarantella because he played it for his high school graduation concert when he was younger and every time he gives it to the students, it is a little more special. He added that ‘the music speaks
for itself. Popper pieces are charming and exciting to play and listen to.

They are lovely and charming pieces. Popper was a great musician. I never get sick of listening to them. I can be sick of Elgar concerto but not Popper pieces, which is very strange. I noticed when I give certain pieces at certain time in the learning process it can actually push the students up, for example, I find Popper Polonaise always lifts the students up. They always feel delighted to learn, and play -happy to be alive. When students are going through a hard time, it can really change their motivation.

This comment of students’ motivational attitude is also evident in the following comment:

In fact, I prefer teaching shorter pieces, because then students can feel that they can play these pieces and feel ready to tackle the big repertoires. I mean let’s face it not many students can actually play these big repertoires well enough. I rather have them learn these shorter pieces to learn basic technique and consolidate and have the repertoire ready for performance in their “back pockets”. It’s for students’ confidence level.

Most of the teachers agreed that Popper helps students’ confidence. Putting it succinctly Judith Glyde articulates the process:

I think it is to be confident. This is what I wish. This is why I use Popper and what I wish for students. For them to be so confident with the left hand so that they can move out of left hand and think more about what their bows are doing. So for me Popper is especially great for left hand. So when students are confident with the left hand I think they can be more aware of what their bows are doing, they can realize what effect they can have on an audience by how they are using their bows. You are making music and sending sound to the back of the hall. You not only have to project your sound, but you have to send your energy and music up to the audience to have them sit up and listen and then you’ve got their energy back and it becomes like an infinity sign (musical synergy). For that! If you are that confident with your left hand you can forget about it and you can think about making music if you know how to make a shift, if you know how to play in thumb positions and feel secure then
you can make music. I don’t appreciate students that are just playing perfectly in tune, but not making music.

It was great to hear different accounts supporting positive experiences of Popper in promoting the students’ learning curve. Not only do teachers take care of the technical development of each individual student, but they also help with their personal development: to mature and endure what can be hard and strenuous exercise to master an instrument that has so many possibilities. Teachers also take audience interaction into consideration. Most students’ first audiences are their parents and the teachers and they are an important part of students’ learning processes.

On the technical level, teachers mentioned that Popper studies are excellent in setting up beginner to intermediate level students as they are very melodious, easy to memorize and to enjoy, but contributed to rhythmic development and various bowing techniques as they consolidate different and varied types of bowing styles. They also agreed that Op. 15 is great for extension for the left hand and by having the second cello part students could hear correct intonation and enjoyed playing music with the teachers:

I’ve just started using 15 easy studies…it’s really consolidating [the] 1st position. It’s got lot of accidentals so great for extensions and half position, but I think it’s more extensive on bow technique, for example, slurring, saving bow for an early grade…

The easy studies are fantastic because they are very melodious, very easy to memorize, to love, and to enjoy. On a microscopic level they give an awful lot of background to the cello playing. There are some rhythmic difficulties, some syncopation, and some tricky notes. And the fact that there is the second cello part so you can actually play together which is always something that students enjoy…So it helps with intonation and general listening and harmonization…

In regard to intonation, teachers mentioned that Popper’s chromaticism and patterns in the thumb positions assist students to become familiar with the fingerboard. One teacher testified:
With the High School study (Op. 73), they are very useful in a different way. They are extremely chromatic and quite difficult to learn at the beginning, because they have so many flats and sharps, and melodies are so weird and so difficult to figure out in the beginning. However, once you learn students realize that most of them are based on patterns – and quite repetitive. Once those patterns are obvious for students they become not quite as difficult. They are excellent for pitch especially for diminished and augmented intervals. Pitching these are quite challenging. I think it really opens up the scope for students. Usually students just like the pieces, which are quite easy to learn. So these studies really help their pitch, and understanding. Technically these are very demanding as well, e.g. long distance shifts – most of them are better for the left hand.

Since every interval is built on tone and semi-tone relation, it is vital that students get musical exposure to chromaticism. As a teacher myself, I find that once students understand how to pitch the intervals their intonation goes up a level. Furthermore, the importance of chromaticism in thumb position is that the distance of intervals change depending on the position on the fingerboard and that subtle contraction and expansion can be learnt through chromaticism playing as many thumb positions as possible. Patterns are great as they help students to recognize and comprehend technical executions.

Teachers agree that Popper studies are very specific and idiomatic to the cello and have generously shared their particular syllabi of teaching different techniques over their long and established teaching careers in the interviews. In response to question 5 whether there is a sequence of studies that is used overall and how Popper fits into that sequence, everyone gave their own sequences on technical studies. Teachers vary in their level of organization. Some had a very strict sequence of how studies were given at different levels and some vary according to students’ individual needs. All agree that Popper is demanding technically and list it on the top end of their sequences. Other authors they commonly include were Duport, Piatti and Gruetzmacher and unusual inclusions were Paganini, and Franchomme.

I think usually my beginning point, depending on the needs, certain
deficiency in certain area of their playing then I would look for appropriate study. Whether it’s a sequence that one must do something first then followed by something I don’t know. I’m not that organized myself you see.

Franchomme for enjoyment and music, Piatti, Servais, Duport for basic bowing, and coordination of chords and position, Popper is more virtuosic…then Gruetzmacher Vol.II and Piatti for advanced students only…it’s the most difficult one…

Other common responses with the *Forty Studies*, Op. 73 was that it is not necessary to progress in sequential order, but it can be very effective and beneficial to choose studies on a specific needs’ basis. Due to the repetitive nature and difficulties, only sections of studies are taught at times as well. One teacher responds: “I don’t go in the order of the studies (Op. 73). I pick according to difficulty. I try to give it variety. It also depends on the student’s need.”

**Short Pieces**

In relation to short pieces, teachers gave various responses. A third of the participants suggested they did not have enough time to cover these pieces, as there is more important repertoire to be learnt. Although they feel Popper is inseparable from the study of cello playing, the short pieces are not as essential as the studies. The others answered that they choose these short pieces for musical enjoyment and boosting confidence and motivation levels of the students. Some teachers also commented that some short pieces are taught in preparation for demanding major repertoire, which shares similar demands of cello playing. One teacher made a connection between the last movement of the Kodaly Solo Sonata with Popper’s *Spinning Song, Op. 55, No. 1* as both pieces require a fixed thumb and stretching out of position for fast passage work. Furthermore, one teacher drew the connection between Brahms and Popper. The two were close associates of the same era. He was convinced that the style and phrase structure resembled the music of the Brahms and other better-known composers of the time and Popper intentionally composed in this way as his associates inevitably influenced him. In summary, teachers choose the Popper pieces for all the right reasons – technical, musical and for well being of the students as
The next question is about their experience with Popper. Has it changed over time? Did students always learn what teachers intended them to learn? The responses were very straightforward. The majority answered that they are certain and more convinced that the experience of Popper is positive for many different reasons for the students.

Participants were in agreement that for each student learning Popper was beneficial and had an impact on either or both technique and musicality. Musical inspiration is a common reason in the participants’ answers why their Popper experiences have not changed over time. Furthermore, teachers who teach internationally, with masterclasses and students coming from all over the globe, express how universal Popper is amongst cellists. Teachers themselves continue to be inspired by the music of Popper and have conducted performance projects of studies and pieces. One interviewee has recorded the entire Popper studies (Op. 73) on DVD. He shares this unique experience and testifies the enjoyment of the music and challenges one could learn from playing the studies:

I hope that it [my project] is helpful for somebody. I know I made a joke before saying “let’s get it over and done with”, but to tell you the truth. I enjoyed doing the project. I’ve always enjoyed playing Popper. I never thought of it as a punishment. You know when you are younger you tend to think that way a little bit. So long as you realize something is good for us, like taking vitamins, if you do it you know that it’s going to help you down the track and give us certain freedom and pleasure. I guarantee that any mature students will enjoy playing them. I enjoy playing them even till this day, even after the project; never again will I play these again? But they can be fun. Any mature student, who realizes they have certain needs, will understand that it is part of the job, something that you need to do.

The final section of the interview questionnaire asked about any other comments each subject might have that had not been asked throughout the interview. I also took an opportunity to ask something about their particular background and
specialities in relation to Popper. In asking subjects’ views on the value of the Popper and implicit pedagogy, one participant gave a great conclusion:

You know that is almost unnecessary question for me only because I’m never far away from these studies. I dedicated a lot of the time to promote these studies and have them more easily used by people out there. I can’t put any higher value on what they have done for me, and my playing. I really think without them I wouldn’t understand many of the things I’m trying to do right now or at least would’ve taken me a lot longer to solutions to solve the certain problems if I waited for the same problems to occur in the concerto or in the repertories. You know it just accelerates your exposure to so many things. If you make the studies your central part of your development, you are saving yourself a lot of time. I am not a time waster. I don’t like to practice in circles like a dog chasing its tale. I want the solution. I wanted it yesterday. I look at the situation as if it’s a math problem, and I look at it as a challenge like a game almost, like solving a crossword puzzle. We need to learn to play the cello; we don’t need to learn to play the repertoire. We have to understand how to play the cello and after that any piece you put is basically a repetition or a variation of some problem that you’ve seen someplace before. If you can’t recognize that, it can be very slow and painful process learning piece after piece. So instead why not learn to play the cello, know what your problems are, how to move comfortably, and all the things we’ve talked about before. Then you will be presented with new repertoires throughout your lives, newly composed, and transcriptions – you kind of get tired playing the same five Beethoven sonatas for many years, you want to grow and find new pieces – and in finding those pieces, you have to find solutions, because you haven’t seen anyone play these pieces before so you look at the pieces and phrases and try to get the answers immediately by reading through and repeating until you think you are finally getting things, you never improves anybody. On a good day you can get 85% - 90% and on a bad day you can be miserable. So you really have to shoot for higher level of consistency and greater understanding of what is going on. And you do that right off – how to arrive, what finger to use, how to coordinate the bow, and think what the best combinations are then you solve your problems like a mathematician basically and of course you are doing this to serve whatever the musical needs are, not just how to play the cello, but you are serving
whatever musical needs of the phrase, composer, style, and period. Once you’ve done that it’s not so much a matter of practicing any more. It’s a matter of just remembering what were the solutions. If you do that I think you can save yourself a lot of time and you can go and do other things in life otherwise you probably spend too many hours in a practice room in your whole life. So Popper saves me a lot of time. If you work efficiently you understand how to solve your problems, it’s going to save you a lot of time later on in life with other pieces and problems.
CONCLUSION

David Popper was a superb cellist whose contribution to modern day cello technique has been seminal and innovative. This project consisted of three parts. Firstly, a textual analysis of Popper’s legacy has revealed that Popper stretched existing boundaries and limits to fully develop cello playing, as we know it today, making an original pedagogical contribution. This development was also inspired by Salon music as an increasing number of amateur players and audiences appreciated the music increasing the appeal for students at Conservatories. Hence, there arose a heightened inspiration to persuade budding talents of the next generation. Popper supported this interest with his didactic compositions, including the *High School of Cello playing*, Op. 73, which provides tools for students to expand their limitation further. De’ak records that many of Popper’s fingerings were designed to cope with technical difficulties and at the same time fulfilled an artistic purpose. Popper made a unique contribution to the history of music mastering his instrument, showcasing its beauty in performances, composing to promote his own instrument and finally passing down the tradition by being a devoted and organised teacher. His studies still remain essential to acquiring techniques, because they are based on the repertoire that Popper had encountered in his performances. They express his capacity as a virtuoso cellist, which is the reason why they are still widely used.

Secondly, performance practice was analysed to investigate how Popper may have played the cello. This is implicit in the practice and is usually not written on the score, but would have been an assumed knowledge. In this part *portamento* and *rubato* were studied in depth. In my opinion, the art of *rubato* playing is one of the key elements in shaping individual musicality. They are interdependent on a string instrument as on a keyboard instrument. The technique of going from one note to the next has to be learnt to create a musical sound and phrasing. Teaching methods by a group of performance oriented masters, Alexanian, Starker, Bunting, and Gendron explain the art of *portamento* from the physical momentum to fingering choices. The main concern was how the *portamento* was treated as it determines style and taste of an interpretation. The methods by teachers were also analysed. They approached the art of technique with simpler instructions building up the core from perhaps younger and less developed stages. It is vital to know how to shift and what shift to select in
order to fulfil the demands of certain musical styles. One should know how to play or omit *portamenti* according to the demands of musical texts.

This study argued that in Popper’s time *rubato* was frequently used in performances. It impacts on both technical and musical demands. There are two different styles as their origins are found in different stylistic periods. There are reputable performers who mastered the art and influenced many others, namely Liszt and Chopin. The early type was of a narrower perspective crafting more detailed timing as distinguished from a latter type where *rubato* is used in a more structural sense. Popper personally knew Liszt, Wagner, and Brahms and he knew Chopin’s music. It is highly likely that Popper was aware of their use of rubato and familiar with the practice as he worked closely with most of the artists. This section was then followed by a harmonic and structural analysis of Popper’s Mazurka, Op. 11/3 and also an analysis of recordings from 1925 to 2011 by various cellists. Every cellist was different and successful in their individual way of conveying musical phrasings and ideas enhanced with the use of *rubato*. The cellists proved that physical distance on the fingerboard required time; they found their own ways to musically accomplish this. The range of *portamenti* used demonstrated trends and tastes of different eras, with for example more frequent use heard in Casals’ recording (1925) than in the one by Mezo (2010). Despite the fact that the score has no *rubato* marking, the performers took liberties to mark different sections and characters (the late type of *rubato*) and varied melodic lines or some gestures including dotted rhythm and grace notes, evidence that the practice of *rubato* is still in place in modern-day performance as well. It is evident that the distinct characters of a piece inspire performers to express the mood by means of *rubato*. It was shown that performers do express ideas and enhance the mood by understanding the structure of the piece and genre.

In the final part, information from current teachers was collected via interviews. The teachers taught a range of students from primary to tertiary levels. The six participants have been teaching for an average of 24 years. The results of the interviews give a first-hand insight into how current students are taught. Every teacher expressed a high level of concern and devotion. A variety of Popper’s works was being used with the clear essential being the *Forty Studies*, Op. 73. His character pieces taught includes Op. 3/4, Op. 11/3, Op. 14, Op. 23, Cello concerto No. 2, Op.
Some teachers include many pieces by Popper purposefully, and there were teachers who testify that there is not enough time for all the pieces in one’s learning process. The teachers in the latter cases also answered that Popper was to facilitate students for the major repertoire. One of them answered that one’s aim was to boost the confidence and overcome technical difficulties by learning the works by Popper. If one is confident with the left hand one can forget about the technical difficulties and can think about making music. If one knows how to shift, and knows how to play in thumb positions securely then one can make music. Perhaps this liberating and positive experience motivates the students. There were other teachers commenting that these not only proved to be beneficial in developing technique, but also to motivate students in the long, arduous path of mastering an instrument. One participant also expressed how Popper accelerates one’s learning: rather than waiting until students encounter technical difficulties within the repertoire, the teacher takes them ahead by learning the necessary techniques from the Op. 73 studies. The ultimate goal always was the music, and learning Popper again proved to be the short cut towards this goal. It is intriguing that Popper’s compositions reflected the ‘modern’ playing of Popper’s time, but the technical issues are still arguably most advanced and valid in current day teaching.

In addition, there were testimonials of how Popper’s music assisted students to be able to play melodic writing more expressively. The teacher was convinced that students develop musically since being able to play Popper beautifully was an art. The charm and elegance of Popper as described by critics is reflected in his pieces and when a student learns to acquire elegance in technique and music, it becomes an art of virtuoso playing. A more aware and intentional practice of shifting in Popper would lead to unique personal expressivity as seen in the recording analysis. According to a participant from Hungary ‘the studies are taken a lot more seriously and Popper is still very well respected and has historical fame as a performer and pedagogue.’ Moreover, as teachers testify, Popper is truly universal and taught in studios all over the world. It was most inspiring to see teachers not only teach purposeful technique with Popper, but also the music and the whole art of cello playing – gaining an understanding of music and style and boosting confidence and motivation. This perhaps is the true legacy of Popper as a cellist, composer and pedagogue.
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APPENDICIES

I. List of compositions
(Works with Opus number)
Op. 2 – Five Songs for Soprano
Op. 3 - Scenes from a Masked Ball (Maskenball-Szene) 6 Characteristic Pieces for cello and piano
   No. 1, Arlequín (Harlequin) in F Major
   No. 2, Warum? (Why?) in A Major
   No. 3, Erzählung (Story) in E Major
   No. 4, Papillon (Butterfly) in D Major
   No. 5, Begegnung (Meeting) in F Major
   No. 6, Lied (Song) in G Major
Op. 5 – Romance in G Major for cello and piano
Op. 8 – Concerto No. 1 in D Minor, for cello and orchestra (pub.1872?)
Op. 10 – Sarabande and Gavotte in D Minor for cello and piano
Op. 11 – 3 Pieces for cello and piano:
   No. 1 - Widmung (Dedication)
   No. 2 - Humoreske
   No. 3 - Mazurka No.1 in G Minor
Op. 12 – Mazurka No.2 in D minor, for cello and piano
Op. 14 – Concert Polonaise for cello and piano
   Andante grazioso, Gavotte, Scherzo, Largo espressivo, Marcia, finale
Op. 16a – Tempo di Marcia for 2 cellos (alternative last movement to Suite Op.16)
Op. 18 – Sérénade orientale, for cello and piano
Op. 22 – Nocturne No.1 in G Major, for cello and piano
Op. 23 – Gavotte No.2 in D Major for cello and piano
Op. 24 – Cello Concerto No. 2 in E Minor, for cello and orchestra
Op. 27 – Präludium (Andante Serioso) for solo cello and Gavotte No.3 for cello and piano
Op. 28 – Concert-Polonaise No. 2 in F Major, for cello and piano
Op. 32 – 2 Pieces for cello and piano:
   No. 1 - Nocturne No.2 in B flat Major
No. 2 - Mazurka No.3 in A Major
Op. 33 – Tarantella in G Major for cello and piano
Op. 35 – 2 Pieces for cello and piano
   No.1 - Marche Funebre (Trauermarsch, Funeral March)
   No.2 - Mazurka No.4 in D Major
Op. 38 – Barcarolle, in G Major for cello and piano
Op. 39 – Elfentanz (Dance of the Elves), for cello and orchestra or piano
Op. 40 – Three Songs (for Soprano or Tenor)
Op. 42 – Nocturne No.3 in G Major for cello and piano
Op. 43 – Fantasie über das Kleinrussiche Lied (Fantasy on Little Russian Songs), for cello and piano
Op. 46 – 2 Transcriptions for Cello and Piano
   No.1 – Schlummerlied aus der “Mainacht” by Rimsky-Korsakov
   No.2 – Träumerei aus den “Kinderszenen” by Schumann
Op. 47 – Nocturne No.4 in B Minor for cello and piano
Op. 48 – Menuetto in D major for cello and piano
Op. 50 – Im Walde (In the Forest) Suite for cello and orchestra or piano:
   No. 1 - Eintritt (Entrance)
   No. 2 - Gnomentanz (Gnome's Dance)
   No. 3 - Andacht (Devotion)
   No. 4 - Reigen (Round Dance)
   No. 5 - Herbstblume (Autumn Flower)
   No. 6 - Heimkehr (Homecoming)
Op. 51 – Mazurka No.6 in C major for cello and piano
Op.52 - 2 Pieces for Cello and Piano
   No.1 – Albumblatt or Feuillet d’album (An Album-Leaf)
   No. 2 - Mazurka Fantastique in B Minor
Op. 54 – Spanish Dances for cello and piano:
   No. 1 - Zur Gitarre
   No. 2 - Serenade
   No. 3 - Spanische Tänze Carnaval
   No. 4 - L’Andalouse
No. 5 - Vito
Op. 55 – Concert-Etudes (2 Concert Etudes for cello and piano):
   No. 1 - Spinnlied (Concert Etude)
   No. 2 - Jagdstück (Hunting Piece)
Op. 57 – Tarantella No.2 in D Major for cello and piano
Op. 59 – Cello Concerto No.3 in G Major (in one Movement), for cello and orchestra
Op. 60 – Walzer Suite, for cello and piano
Op. 62 – 3 Pieces for cello and piano:
   No. 1 - La Mémoire
   No. 2 - La Chanson villageoise (Village Song)
   No. 3 - La Berceuse
Op. 64 – 3 Pieces for cello and piano:
   No. 1 - Wie einst in schöner’n Tagen (Once in Fairer Days), for cello and piano
   No. 2 – Tarantelle No.3, in A Major
   No. 3 – Wiegenlied (Lullaby)
Op. 65 – 3 Pieces for cello and piano:
   No. 1 - Adagio
   No. 2 - Menuetto No.2
   No. 3 - Polonaise
Op. 66 – Requiem, for three cellos and piano (originally for three cellos and orchestra) Adagio
Op. 67 – 2 Pieces for cello and piano:
   No. 1 - Largo
   No. 2 – Gavotte (im Alten Style) No.4 in D Minor
Op. 68 – Hungarian Rhapsody, for cello and piano
Op. 69 – Suite in A Major for cello and piano
   - Allegro gioioso, Tempo di menuetto, Ballade, Finale
Op. 69a – Largo a l’ancienne mode, for cello and piano
Op. 70 – 3 Pieces for cello and piano
   No. 1 - In der Dämmerung (In the Twilight)
   No. 2 - Im Sonnenschein (In the Sunshine)
   No. 3 - Ballet Scene
Op. 71 – Schottische Fantasie (Scottish Fantasy) in B Major for cello and piano
Op. 72 – Concerto No. 4 in B Minor, for cello and orchestra
Op. 73 – High School of Cello Playing: Forty Etudes for Cello Solo (Leipzig, Hofmeister, 1901)
Op. 74 – String Quartet in C Minor
Op. 75 – 3 Pieces for cello and piano
  No. 1 - Serenade
  No. 2 - Gavotte No.5 in A Major
  No. 3 - Venetian Bacarole
Op. 76 – 10 Studies Preparatory to the High School of Cello Playing (middle difficulty)
  No.1 - 15 Easy Melodic, Harmonic and Rhythmical Etuden for Cello
  No.2 - 10 mittleschwere grosse Etüden for cello
Op. 76a – 15 Cello Etudes, in the 1st position
Op. 81 - Gavotte in A Major for Cello and Piano

(Works without Opus number)
  • Chant du Soir for cello and piano
  • Improvisation über Die Meistersinger for cello and piano
  • Notre Dame de Londres, for soprano, cello obligato and piano
  • Evening Song
  • Cadenzas for cello
  • Joseph Haydn: Cello Concerto in D major
  • Camille Saint-Saëns: Concerto in A minor, Op. 33
  • Robert Volkmann: Cello Concerto in A minor
  • Robert Schumann: Cello Concerto in A minor, Op. 129
  • Molique, B.: Cello Concerto in D major
  • Romance in G major for cello and piano, originally for violin and piano
  • Chant du soir, cello and piano

(Arrangements by David Popper)
  • Haydn, Joseph- Cello Concerto in C Major, Hob.VIIb:5 (arr. D. Popper)
  • Svendsen, Johan- Romance, Op. 26 for cello and piano (arr. Popper)
  • Wagner, Richard- Romanze for Cello and Piano (arranged by David Popper)
Perles Musicales Collection (published by Andre)

No. 1 – Schubert, Du bist die Ruh’
No. 2 – Pergolesi, Nina
No. 3 – Rubinstein, Melodie Op. 3 No. 1
No. 4 – Chopin, Nocturne Op. 9 No. 2
No. 5 – Schumann, Traumerei Op. 15 No. 7 (Popper Op. 46 No. 1)
No. 6 – Tchaikovsky, Chanson sans paroles Op. 2 No. 3
No. 7 – Jensen, Murmelndes Lüftchen (from 7 Songs Op. 21)
No. 8 – Jámbor Eug., Nocturne Op. 8
No. 9 – Tchaikovsky, Chanson Triste Op. 40 No. 2
No. 10 – Schumann, Abendlied Op. 85 No. 12 (Popper)
No. 11 – Schubert, Ave Maria Op. 54 No. 2
No. 12 – Campioni C. A., Menuetto Pastorale (Popper)
No. 13 – Purcell, Air
No. 14 – Giordani T., Caro mio ben, Air
No. 15 – Cherubini L., Ave Maria
No. 16 – Tchaikovsky, Bacarolle Op. 37 No. 6
No. 17 – Tchaikovsky, Perce-Neige Op. 37 No. 4
No. 18 – Tchaikovsky, Chant d’Automne Op. 37 No. 11
No. 19 – Handel, Large
No. 20 – Handel, Sarabande
No. 21 – Bach, Arie aus der D-dur Suite
No. 22 – Schumann, Schlummerlied (Popper Op. 46 No. 2)
No. 23 – Schubert, Der Neugierige
No. 24 – Schubert, Sei Mir gegrüsst
No. 25 – Schubert Litanie auf das Fest ‘Allerseelen’
II. Mazurka: Harmony analysis

Mazurka
Op.11, No.3

Lebhaft und frisch

Violoncello

Piano

Vlc.

Pro.

Vc.

Pro.

Vc.

Pro.

David Popper
(1846-1913)
III. Critical notes

DMA Final Recital

Minah Choe

Phillip Shovk, Piano
Shan Yew, Violin

Adagio for cello and piano (8’)—---------------------------------Zoltan Kodaly
(1882-1967)

Mazurka (3’)—-----------------------------------------------David Popper
Wiegenlied (2’50”)
Fantasie über Kleinrussische Themen (11’30”)
Study No.22 from High School of Cello playing, Op.73 (2’)

Toccata Capricciosa for cello solo, Op.36 (7’30’’) ----------------Miklós Rózsa
(1907-1995)

“Double” Concerto for Violin and Cello, Op.102 in a minor (29’’) ---Johannes Brahms

I. Allegro
II. Andante
III. Vivace non troppo

(1833-1897)
The topic of my DMA thesis is the pedagogy and performance practice of David Popper investigating his influence on modern day teaching. This recital program is put together to present the Hungarian school of cello playing. Many musicians in the nineteenth century mistakenly confused gypsy music with native Hungarian folk music until Bartok and Kodaly completed ethnographic studies and collated Hungarian music according to the regions of origin. Such composers as Liszt and Brahms incorporated Hungarian traditional music into their own music. Liszt in particular was one of the greatest exponents of Hungarian music and musicians founding a national academy in Budapest where many influential artists of Hungarian music received their training.

**Popper**

Popper is an interesting case. Popper is known to be the founder of Hungarian school of cello playing even though he was born in Prague and had a German background in his musical training. When Liszt founded the Hungarian National Academy, he knew that Popper was appropriately internationally famous to attract local students and keep local talent within the country. The appointment to the Hungarian National Academy was Popper’s first and the only teaching post. At the start he had a few students resulting in his attention to a preparatory division, a methodological challenge evident in his studies, Op.76a, *15 Cello Etudes in the first position*, Op. 76, *10 Studies Preparatory to the High School of Cello Playing (middle difficulty)*, No.1, *15 Easy Melodic, Harmonic and Rhythmic Etudes for Cello*, No.2, *10 Mittelschwere grosse Etüden für cello and High School of Cello Playing, 40 Studies*, Op. 73. This is the beginning of the Hungarian School of Cello playing.

Popper played a significant role in establishing the cello as the solo instrument we know now as a performer, teacher and composer. His salon music output is huge. Several of these pieces are popularly played in recitals, but others are becoming extinct despite their musical charm and pedagogical values. The selected works by Popper in this program are perhaps not the most frequently played.

While Popper was composing for himself, his compositions quickly became popular both in his own public appearances and in private salon concerts. According to De’ak ‘Popper was able to discriminate effectively in producing music which
satisfied the demand for appealing music, and elevated the standard of cello salon literature, while incorporating a special touch of originality and new technical effects.¹ Viennese critic Hanslick wrote:

The concert literature of the violoncello, as is correctly understood, is sparse, and no virtuoso could be blamed when he fills this gap with his own compositions. Popper has composed a number of very effective bravura pieces...His pieces found acclaim everywhere, and are also played by other virtuosos, and sell well. This all proves their practical value.²

Popper’s ‘effective’ pieces were not only loved by cellists, but also by violinists. Cellists often had to borrow from the violin repertoires, but in Popper’s case violinists such as Auer, Sauret, Hermann, and Neruda made personal transcriptions of the Spinning Song, Op. 55.³ The rise of salon music culture consequently attracted more students and amateurs and resulted in performance editions with interpretative indications such as vibrato, and slide.⁴

Arguably, Popper’s major contribution to cello playing is the High School of Cello Playing, Op. 73. It is a build-up of his concert career summarized in 40 Studies. Popper had already expanded the limits of the instrument and explored its scope to a new level in his compositions for the cello. The ideas of these new technical possibilities were expanded in the form of studies. They were initially published in four volumes of ten studies around 1901 and 1905. Until 1886, when Popper was appointed on the faculty of the academy, he was one of the most celebrated virtuoso cellists at the time. Although he was constantly on the road travelling to concerts, he did not stop composing. Salon music culture was very popular, attracting large

¹ De’ak, p.88
² Ibid., p.89-90
³ Campbell (1988), p.106
⁴ De’ak, p.91
audiences. The concerts usually showcased a variety of instrumentalists. Popper had to fill up the existing, rather sparse repertoire himself, resulting effectively in a significant promotion of the cello as a solo instrument. Without this initiative his studies, too, would not have been the same. Many of these studies explore technical problems, which Popper had encountered in the music of his contemporaries such as Wagner, Liszt, Berlioz, Schumann, Saint-Saëns and Volkmann as well as those he had introduced into own concert pieces.\(^5\)

There are new scholarly editions of Popper’s works including a new annotated edition of Op. 73 and 76 by Martin Rummel (Bärenreiter, 2004)\(^6\), and essays by performers and teachers (Foster, 2004\(^7\) and Parker, 2003\(^8\)). These researchers agree that Op. 73 provides vital foundations for cello playing. According to De’ak, Popper’s ex pupil, Popper intended to inspire his students to develop a higher proficiency and build a reserve of technical resources.\(^9\) This legacy continues in my own experience, and this ‘modern’ playing is still very valid. The studies are of musical value and are based on real musical contexts of the above-mentioned composers. For example Study No. 19 is based on the cello part of Wagner’s ‘Lohengrin’, Act III, Scene III and No. 5 is based on Wagner’s ‘Valkyrie’, Act III, scene I. One can speculate Popper’s zeal in advancing the instrumental idiom through a fascination for the music he admired.

Kodaly

\(^5\) Ibid., p.261


\(^8\) Dennis Parker and David Popper, *The Popper Manifesto : A Do-It-Yourself Guide to David Popper's "High School of Cello Playing" (40 Etudes Op. 73)* ([S.l.: N.p.], 2003)

\(^9\) De’ak, p.261
Apart from Brahms, all other composers in this program are of Hungarian nationality. Kodaly is among the most important composers of the music of Hungary in the twentieth century. He was instrumental in defining a unique voice of the region and undertook a project of collecting folk tunes from different provinces. Being a passionate educator and promoter of Hungarian music, Kodaly has written articles on Hungarian folk music including “What is Hungarian in music?”10 In this essay he writes that it is not easy to come up with a homogeneous national voice that displays a distinct character given the diverse history of the nation.11 He believed the fitting medium in such project was folk music as the people of Hungary live within an oral tradition. He called it “the mirror of the spirit of the entire Hungarian people”.12 Kodaly devoted himself to teaching all his life, as he believed education was an evident way to raise the standard of musical culture in Hungary. He valued the beauty and simple form of the folk music and believed that it expresses everything from “gentle jokes to tragedies”13 referring to it as a mother tongue.14

Bartok worked with Kodaly extensively in this project and remarked:

If I were to name the composer whose works are the most perfect embodiment of the Hungarian spirit, I would answer, Kodály. His work proves his faith in the Hungarian spirit. The obvious explanation is that all Kodály’s composing activity is rooted only in Hungarian soil, but the deep inner reason is his unshakable faith and trust in the constructive power and future of his people.15

11 Ibid., p.28
12 Ibid., p.24
13 Ibid., p.24
14 Ibid., p.30
The *Adagio for Cello and Piano* was composed in 1905 and originally scored for the viola. There is a version for violin and double bass as well. It is an early work and the year of its composition, 1905, was the same year that Kodaly commenced his field trips on which he collected folk tunes. As is stated in Oxford Music Online Kodaly’s early compositions are known to be “in the spirit of Viennese Classicism (up to 1900) or of the German Romantics, particularly Brahms (1900–04)”.

On his lyricism Bartok wrote:

Kodály’s compositions are characterized in the main by rich melodic invention, a perfect sense of form, a certain predilection for melancholy and uncertainty. He does not seek Dionysian intoxication – he strives for inner contemplation … His music is not of the kind described nowadays as modern. It has nothing to do with the new atonal, bitonal and polytonal music – everything in it is based on the principle of tonal balance. His idiom is nevertheless new; he says things that have never been uttered before and demonstrates thereby that the tonal principle has not lost its raison d’être as yet.

The *Adagio* is in binary form. The opening phrase (bars 1-13) is expanded in subsequent entries in bars 14 and 35. The expansiveness in the lyrical line is achieved by long slurs, which sublate the feeling of a strong beat or indeed an expectation of a beat or pitch creating a sense of improvisation. The second theme of the first part (A) moves slightly forward with the syncopated piano part in bar 47 marked ‘*Piu Andante*’. Here the melody starts to include the typical Hungarian rhythmic fragments. In bar 50 the slurring helps the emphasis on the first beat on the first semi quaver.

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16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
This section builds up and explodes to a cadenza-like exclamation in the cello part from bar 72 to 79.

Kodaly marks with tenutos and accents on the notes requiring emphases.

In the second part of the piece, the opening phrase returns now an octave higher over cimbalom\textsuperscript{18}-like arpeggiation in the piano. The piece ends with a coda,


Cimbalom is an elaborate stringed instrument, which was used in gypsy music. It was reinvented in Budapest about 1870 by Jozsef Schunda and was considered to be the national instrument of Hungary.
which starts like the syncopated part of bar 47, but ends in solemn and atmospheric chords.

It is fascinating how the Hungarian national composer Kodaly was influenced by the music of Brahms. Brahms on the other hand was inspired by the gypsy music of the Hungarian region. Perhaps Brahms’ nineteenth century generalization of referring to all gypsy music as Hungarian might have initiated Kodaly and Bartok to pursue the authentic roots of Hungarian music. Nonetheless, the Adagio expresses the unique voice of Hungarian music in its rhythm and Kodaly’s non-conventional harmony. The use of chromaticism is evident in the arpeggiated piano part from bar 83.
Rozsa

Miklos Rozsa was born in Budapest in 1907. He received his training in Budapest and Leipzig. He became on of the most respected and popular composers in Hollywood. He worked on numerous films dating from 1937 to 1982, winning 3
Oscars, 16 nominations, 3 Golden Globe nominations and a Grammy Award nomination for *Ben-Hur* and other notable films. Moreover, he worked with the most prominent figures in the US at the time including Leonard Bernstein, Jascha Heifetz, Janos Starker and Gregor Piatigorsky.

The *Toccata Capricciosa* was written in 1979, dedicated to the memory of Gregor Piatigorsky. It was premiered by an American cellist Jeffrey Sollow. The *piece* displays virtuosic cello playing in the Hungarian folk idiom. As the title suggests the work undergoes several mood changes. The opening theme, *Vivo con spirito* is a long chain of mostly step-wise motion with C-G-D open string triple chords interrupting the line. It conveys an improvisatory and capricious impression. Then next section, *Piu mosso* takes over rather abruptly and contains a Kodaly-like barriolage figure—a notorious in the last movement of the Kodaly Solo Sonata (fig. 4 and 5). This imitates a hurdy-gurdy like sound, which was a well-developed folk instrument in Hungary and other parts of the Eastern Europe.

Fig.4 Kodaly Solo Sonata, Op.8, third movement (Universal Edition)
Then follows a *meno mosso* section, which is based on a pentatonic scale, an obvious folk music influence. He precedes the section with parallel fifths contributing to this modal tonality.

There is a return to the first *vivo con spirito* theme in bar 96, which leads to a beautiful cantabile *Piu lento* section in bar 114. Here the idea of the thematic interval of the second is inverted to a major or minor 7\(^{th}\) leap. Again, the left hand pizzicato suggests an allusion to Kodaly’s solo sonata for Cello.
This expansive lyrical lento then proceeds to the bariolage figure of the second theme. This time in bar 208, the pentatonic figure is in octaves alternating with C and G open string double stops, which leads to a Coda which starts with the pentatonic theme in parallel fifths in bar 234. These chords accelerate towards the *Vivace* ending of the piece finishing on a D -A modal chord.

Fig. 8 bars 208-215
Brahms

How does Brahms fit into this program? As mentioned earlier Brahms had a strong affiliation with Hungarian music and musicians throughout his life. The 20-year-old Brahms met Hungarian violinist Eduard Reményi in 1853 and joined Reményi in concert tours accompanying on the piano. Reményi's playing of Hungarian gypsy tunes became the inspiration for Brahms' Hungarian Dances, which are the most famous and popular works by Brahms. His other artistic influence naturally would be his close friend and frequent dedicatee of his works, Hungarian-Jewish violinist Joseph Joachim. The double concerto was written in reconciliation for his friendship with Joachim, which was shaken by Joachim’s troubled marriage.

Although Brahms dedicated his two cello sonatas and the double concerto to Robert Hausmann, Brahms and Popper were life-long friends. They respected each other and frequently performed together. When Popper was the solo cellist in the Vienna Opera and Philharmonic, he was also as a member of Hellmesberger Quartet, which premiered Brahms’s piano quartet in g minor, Op.25 with Brahms on the piano. After Popper moved to Budapest, he formed the Hubay-Popper quartet, sometimes known as the ‘Budapest’ quartet, with Jenő Hubay and colleagues at the Academy. Brahms frequently visited Budapest, performed with the group, and gave first performances of his chamber works.

In this performance of the Brahms Double Concerto, the ‘Starker Performance Edition’ is primarily used. The violin part is edited by William Preucil and the cello part is edited by Janos Starker. Starker is known to be the greatest exponent of the Hungarian School of cello playing. His training heritage goes directly back to Popper as he learned from one of Popper’s pupils, Adolf Schiffer. In his edition Starker
writes that he wanted to suggest ‘underlying rules of string playing’:

If a player reaches proficiency in handling the bow and masters the geography of the fingerboard, any number of possibilities becomes available to play a melody or a passage. The decision, therefore, are led by musical considerations, which are highly subjective, and by mechanical issues which are more definable.19

He explains that there are set of rules in his choice of fingerings. Mostly they occur at position changes. The rules are:

1. Avoid unnecessary motions,
2. Change at smaller distances,
3. Avoid contrary motions in succession,
4. In distant connections use higher fingers to lower fingers or the same finger, so as to allow the rotation of the forearm, and to continue to touch the strings at an identical angle.

The goals are centred intonation and control of vibrato, but not necessarily musical subtleties, which is subjective to individual performers.

Below is the second theme of the first movement in the cello part starting at bar 152.

In bar 158, the C# is played with a second finger with an unusual extension, so that the next long distance shift is executed with 3 to 2, from a higher numbered finger to the lower number. The C# can also be a semi-tone shift from the D, hence shifting at a smaller distance. Then in bar 160, the pick-up G# to the B is played with 2-2, a same finger shift, rather than 2-3 so that the arm can rotate as it would in an upward motion.

Another example is shown in the notorious opening of the second movement, as the theme is played on the G string.
In bar 3, the fingering is 1-1-3-3-1-4. Here 1-1 on the first two notes, A and D may seem odd, but this is to avoid unnecessary motions so only sufficient position changes are made. If one played the D with any other finger, then there will be shift to the next E, and again to the top A in succession. In this passage Starker suggests an ‘anticipated’ shift, which is initiated with the 1st finger instead of the playing finger, i.e. the next fingering—in this instance, 3. Again, this promotes the rotation of the arm and is more controllable as one can measure the pitch when the first finger gets closer to the octave B. If one played a delayed shift on the B, there would be a lot more portamento. Since the theme is in unison with the violin, perhaps the portamento should be kept to a minimum. In addition, a delayed shift could be a bit less secure as the player has to land on the right note with one rotation of the arm.

In bar 10, the A is played with the first finger. This is also to avoid the shift to the next note, C. Rather than shifting on the down beat, he chose smaller interval between G# and A. This careful consideration is needed as the theme is on the G string and requires controlled shifts rather than accidental shifts as it could create too many portamenti in unwanted the places.
In the last movement, there are many difficult passage works, which require intelligent fingerings.

Here the solo cello and the violin tail each other with arpeggio like figures. In the ascending figures, one may have shifts in succession so one can avoid shifting unnecessarily. In bar 185, Starker goes up the D string and shifts on the note D with the second finger. This D is a natural harmonic located exactly on half of the string length—a very familiar location, which most cellists use to tune the cello. It cannot be any more secure than this. Therefore, Starker avoided strained finger extension of 1-4 on the D going to G at the end of the bar. These passages also require smooth rotation of the left arm, hence, the chosen fingerings only shift once and also avoid extensions as in this fluent tempo the intonation cannot be centred if there are too many shifts or extensions.

**Summary**

The recital program presents the Hungarian school of cello playing from various angles - musical and technical. From its founder Popper to Rozsa there are some interesting links between the compositions. Popper’s character pieces were composed for his own use as concert repertoire as the existing repertoire then was limited compared to the repertoires of the popular solo instruments such as the violin or the piano. When Popper held his post at the Liszt Academy, he published the *40 Studies, High School of Cello Playing, Op.73* to teach his art to the next generation of
cellists. The studies were extensions of what Popper had encountered in the modern
day repertoire of his time such as the operas by Wagner, or his own creation and
virtuosity in the character pieces. Brahms and Popper were friends and colleagues
who performed together often. Both composers are not Hungarian by birth, but
worked with very influential Hungarian artists whom they admired, e.g. Liszt,
Reményi, Joachim and Hubay. Brahms’ fascination with Hungarian gypsy music is
evident in his popular Hungarian Dances. Kodaly devoted his life to establish a
Hungarian voice from the music of the native land. Interestingly his early works were
influenced by Brahms’ lyricism and romanticism. Rozsa created a virtuoso solo cello
piece based on the Hungarian idiom of pitch and rhythm. The piece also reveals
influences of Kodaly’s Solo Sonata, Op.8, which represents a pinnacle of solo-cello
writing in its virtuosity and grandeur. The Starker edition of the Brahms Double
Concerto propose thoughtful, and sophisticated fingerings thus continuing the
tradition of virtuoso playing of Popper.
Bibliography


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DVD: Final recital (3/05/11, 6:30pm, Recital Hall West, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, Associate artists: Phillip Shovk, Piano, Shan Yew, Violin)