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GRADUATE VIOLIN RECITAL

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GRADUATE VIOLIN RECITAL

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of
Master of Music

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GRADUATE VIOLIN RECITAL

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GRADUATE VIOLIN RECITAL

An Abstract of the Thesis by
Xiaotong Yang

My Master's thesis consists of a graduate-level violin recital and a supporting document of program notes. The repertoire for the recital include the following works: Max Bruch, Violin Concerto No.1 in G Minor; Johann Sebastian Bach, Violin Partita in D minor; Astor Piazzolla, Tango Etudes No.3, and an extra section that is about Musician Injuries. The pieces were composed over the past two centuries and they display a variety of styles and musical forms. The thesis includes a biographical sketch of each composer, a historical frame of the work, and a few interpretative analyses of each composition.

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CHAPTER I

MAX BRUCH

Biography

Max Bruch was born on January 6, 1838 and died on October 20, 1920. He was a very prominent German Romantic composer and conductor who wrote about 200 compositions. His mother was a great soprano and voice teacher who also gave him his first piano lessons. His father, August Bruch, was a famous lawyer and always encouraged young Max to pursue music as a profession. Some of Bruch's first teachers beside his parents were Ferdinand Hiller and Heinrich Carl Breidenstein. Bruch's musical talent at composing was revealed at a very young age. He wrote his first composition when he was only 9 years old. Within a few years, at age 14, he completed his first symphony which awarded him a scholarship to help him enroll in school and study composition. Since his early works, his compositional style followed those of Mendelssohn and Schumann. He also passionately promoted the values of traditional and folk music and strongly opposed the principles of the "*Neudeutsche*" (New German School) composition school. This is the reason why one would find a strong impression of folk songs in his melodies and harmonies. He always refrained

from dark and over-serious compositions and popularized lucid forms, harmonious tunes and splendor of sound.¹

In 1858, Bruch composed his first opera "*Scherz, List und Rache*" (Jest, cunning, and revenge) when he was a music teacher in Cologne. During 1861 and 1872, Bruch decided to continue his love for composing and he began to actively pursue a career in music and later moved to Leipzig where the city's music life was still influenced by Mendelssohn's music. He later moved to Manheim where he created two important works, the opera "Die Loreley" and the male voice cantata "Frithjof", these two works provided him a better reputation that he became a better-known composer among the German musicians.² After leaving Manheim, he was appointed Music Director of Coblenz, where he got the opportunity to show off his performing and compositional talents. In 1867, Bruch moved to Sondershausen where he accepted the position of Court Kapellmeister. It was in Sondershausen that Bruch discovered his passion for teaching and this is where he wrote his first violin concerto in 1868 in G minor op.26, a significant piece in the standard violin repertoire. From 1867 to 1870, he held a similar court post at Sondershausen, and earned a great reputation as an eminent German composer and worked independently in Bonn. He

¹ "Who Was Max Bruch? Everything You Need to Know." Accessed March 8, 2021. <https://www.thefamouspeople.com/profiles/max-bruch-421.php>.

² Grove Music Online. "Bruch, Max." Accessed March 8, 2021. <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.library.pittstate.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000004122>.

held the position of conductor in Berlin between 1878-1880, then moved to Liverpool from 1880 to 1883. In 1880, Bruch met Clara Tucek, a musician from Bohemia, during a concert tour and they were married in 1881.

Bruch loved folk music as a basic line of melody in his compositions, just like Brahms, and many of his works had influences from a lot of different countries such as Scotland (Scottish Fantasy Op.46, Das Feuerkreuz Op.52), Sweden (Serenade on Swedish Melodies Op.63), and Russia (Suite on Russian Folk Melodies Op.79b).³ He was adept in collecting musical elements from folk music, especially in his later compositions. He traveled to several cities in Europe to explore those interesting, mysterious, and imaginative musical motives. When he was in Berlin, he was a director of the Sternscher Gesangverein for a short time. During this period, he published several Jewish works including three Hebrew songs and Kol Nidrei Op.47. Both works were written in Liverpool where he succeeded Sir Julius Benedict as conductor to the Philharmonic Society for three somewhat turbulent years. In 1877 and 1879, he performed his secular oratorios *Odyseus* op. 41 and *Das Lied von der Glocke* Op. 45, (Song of the bell), and he got a big opportunity of those two works.

Later in his life, he was overshadowed by Brahms and Wagner who were a lot more innovative and creative than Bruch's music which didn't show any signal of change.

³ Grove Music Online. "Bruch, Max." Accessed March 8, 2021. <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.library.pittstate.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000004122>.

Violin Concerto No.1 in G Minor

This work is one of the most popular violin concertos in the repertoire. The piece was finished in 1866 and was performed the same year by Otto von Königslow with Bruch conducting. The concerto was later revised by Joseph Joachim which current version was completed in 1867.

The concerto is in three movements with a fast first movement, contrasting slow second movement, an extremely intense finale:

1. *Prelude: Allegro moderato* (in G minor)
2. *Adagio* (in E-flat major)
3. *Finale: Allegro energico* (in G major)

First movement

The first movement is marked *Prelude: Allegro moderato* in 4/4-meter. The movement starts with the orchestra, more specifically the woodwinds. The solo violin interrupts the calm line of the woodwinds with two short cadenzas starting in the tonic key of G minor followed by a second statement in E flat. With a more assertive character, this second statement, the solo line gradually brings the orchestra in with a strong and intense melodic line with a *marcato* marking. Theme II, in B flat major is more song-like and slower in character, gradually returning to the original tempo. The

movement ends the same way it began, with the two short cadenzas but more virtuosic than before followed by the orchestra's final *tutti* which connects into the second movement. The difference on this second statement is the second part of the cadenza does not modulate bringing the movement to a tonic home key of g minor. Another interesting fact is that the first movement is unusually short if we compare it with other concerti being written during the same period. Even though many experts support the premise of calling this particular movement 'unconventional sonata form,' it is my conclusion that the movement lacks the important traits of those of a traditional sonata form. For instance, the movement does not follow the structural form of a. Exposition (Usually, theme I in the tonic and theme II in the dominant or subdominant), b. Development, c. Recapitulation (Theme I in the Tonic and theme II also in the Tonic bringing the conclusive material to a more traditional end). This particular movement does not follow the basis of sonata form which creates a structural dissonance from music in a non-tonic key, and in the recapitulation, provides a structural resolution of the same material by transposing it to the tonic key. Because none of these elements are represented in this movement, I conclude that the movement follows what Bruch intended to serve as a prelude to the Second Movement. Furthermore, the fact that the last *tutti* of the orchestra is in the same key of the last cadenza, makes the 'form' of the movement unconventional and it is difficult to reconsolidate the fact of calling this a 'traditional' movement.

Second movement

The second movement is marked *Adagio*, in E-flat major. The first theme is presented at the beginning by the soloist filled with songful, melodic, and expressive lines in a rondo form following the patterns ABACABA. Section A is warm and emotional, played by the soloist and followed by the horns who present theme B with three descending sequences. Section C is a little more intense which takes the movement to its climax before the restatement of theme A. The difference this time is that theme B returns in a different key and eventually connecting theme A, with a beautiful and heartfelt melody in tonic key of E-flat major brings the whole movement to an end.

Third movement

The third movement is marked *Allegro energico*, 2/2 meter in G major. The orchestra plays a quiet, yet intense, opening introduction which leads to the soloist's statement of the first theme. The movement is fast and energetic. In this finale, Bruch's implementation of double-stops makes this movement technically challenging for any violinist. The second theme is first introduced by the orchestra, then it is taken over by the soloist. The character of the second theme is slower and contrasting to the first theme which sounds more lyrical and elegant. The whole piece ends with an *accelerando* to an extremely intense and fiery conclusive section with

faster tempo marking of *Presto* providing the typical brilliant and exciting grand finale.

CHAPTER II

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Biography

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) was born in Eisenach, Germany in 1685 and died in Leipzig, Germany in 1750. He came from a family of musicians, and is considered to be one of the most famous composers in all of music history. His father, Johann Ambrosius Bach, served as *Stadtpfeifer* (City Piper) in Arnstadt, as a violinist in Erfurt, and as orchestra musician in Eisenach. In 1668, Ambrosius married Maria Elisabeth Lammerhirt (1642-1694). When he was nine years old in 1694, he became an orphan because both of his parents died the same year and he was raised by his older brother, Johann Christoph Bach (1671-1721), who was the main organist in Ohrdruf. Sebastian received violin lessons with Johann Paul von Westhoff who was an accomplished violinist and a published author. His violin music influenced Bach's later violin works.⁴ In 1707, he married his cousin Maria Barbara Bach but she died in 1720 and he married Anna Magdalena Wulken (1701-1760). The couple had 20

⁴ Williams, Peter. *J. S. Bach: A Life in Music*. Cambridge, UNITED KINGDOM: Cambridge University Press, 2007. <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/pittsburgstate-ebooks/detail.action?docID=293379>. P.34.

children three of whom were accomplished musicians and composers who became famous in their lifetime. These are Wilhelm Friedmann Bach (1710-1784), Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-1788) and Johann Christian Bach (1735-1782).

In 1703, he went to Weimar, and became a musician of the Court even though he did not stay there for a long period of time since he did take the position as organist and violinist at Neukirche in Arnstadt. In 1708, Duke Wilhelm Ernst of Weimar heard Bach's organ playing and he offered him the position of court organist at his impressive palace. While he was working there, he mostly focused on performing and composing mainly for the keyboard. His works also show Italian influences such as Vivaldi's compositional style. Six years later, he left Weimar and took the organist's position of Konzertmeister in Arnstadt where he was required to participate in the Duke Johann Ernst's private *cappella* ceremonies and to compose a new cantata every month. Out of the many he composed for such services, "Ich hatte viel Bekummernis BWV 21" was the most important cantata he composed during that time.⁵

In August 1717, Bach accepted a position at the court of Prince Leopold in Cothen where he focused mainly on concertos for orchestra, sonatas for instruments, and keyboard music. He left the position in December of the same year. During his

⁵ "Bach, Johann Sebastian (21 Mar. 1685, Eisenach - 28 July 1750, Leipzig) | The Harvard Biographical Dictionary of Music - Credo Reference." Accessed March 9, 2021. https://search-credoreference-com.library.pittstate.edu/content/entry/harvbiodictmusic/bach_johann_sebastian_21_mar_1685_eisenach_28_july_1750_leipzig/0.

travels to Berlin, he met the Margrave of Brandenburg for whom two years later, he would present the Six Brandenburg Concertos. During the years of 1720 and 1723, he composed the Sonatas & Partitas BWV 1004 for solo violin. During this decade he composed such works as the Christmas Oratorio, the harpsichord concertos, and the *Clavier-Übung* (much for the Collegium musicum, which he directed 1729–41). His relations with Leipzig authorities were sometimes heated, as indicated by the often-mentioned power struggle in 1736 over the appointment of prefects. Because his position at Leipzig represented a lower social standing than a court post, he was anxious to retain a courtly title. In 1736 he obtained an appointment as *Hofcompositeur* for the Dresden court.⁶ During the last several years of his life, he continued his work on his masterwork “The Art of Fugue,” even though he lost most of his eyesight. Unfortunately, he didn’t complete it, and died of a stroke in 1750, in Leipzig.

He left about a thousand compositions for a variety of instruments which are treasures for many performers today.

⁶ “Bach, Johann Sebastian (21 Mar. 1685, Eisenach - 28 July 1750, Leipzig) | The Harvard Biographical Dictionary of Music - Credo Reference.” Accessed March 9, 2021. https://search-credoreference-com.library.pittstate.edu/content/entry/harvbiodictmusic/bach_johann_sebastian_21_mar_1685_eisenach_28_july_1750_leipzig/0.

Partita No.2 in D Minor BWV1004

The Italian term “*partita*” literally meaning “little part” or little division”. It’s commonly understood nowadays as simply as one of a sequence of dance movements. But an older meaning of the term remained in use during Bach’s lifetime: a set of variations.⁷ The D minor Partita has five movements: *Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, Gigue and Chaconne*. Usually, a Baroque Suite’s last movement is a Gigue, however, for this particular partita, the last movement is a Chaconne which is considerably longer than the other movements. That’s why Partita No.2 in D minor has the fewest movements. The Chaconne is one of the most famous pieces in Bach’s violin literature which usually it is stand-alone movement and one of the most famous in the violin repertoire.

Sonata No.2 in D Minor

Allemande

The earliest English reference to the Allemande is found in a Scottish chronicle of 1549 referring to dancing: "*Thai dancit a1 cristyn mennis dance, the alman haye.*" However, as indicated by its name, the Allemande (in Old English, *alman, almain* or *almayne*) has an Alemannic or German ancestry, and it is the only form contributed to

⁷Lester, Joel. *Bach’s Works for Solo Violin: Style, Structure, Performance*. New York, UNITED STATES: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 1999. <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/pittsburgstate-ebooks/detail.action?docID=4082810>. P.41

this group of courtly dances by the Germans. It was a very old mediaeval dance, and, in its primitive form, was undoubtedly performed with no great grace.⁸

This movement has a smooth, flowing style, that features a variety of steady rhythms. Most of them are sixteenth notes and sixteenth-triplets, with occasional pairs of thirty-seconds notes. Its form is binary: AB and every section repeats once.

Courante

From the beginning, *Courante* was called *Corrente* (from the Latin: “*curro*” means “to run”). The structure of Courante usually has two parts with often a sixteen or a thirty-two measures on each part. Two different versions were considered during that time - French and Italian. The French version is usually notated in 3/2, with a strong proclivity toward hemiola⁹ figures that combine 6/4 and 3/2 accent patterns as well as related syncopated figures. The Italian version is usually notated in 3/4 or 3/8 with fast triple meter and it is common to find triadic or scalar figuration in even eighth or sixteenth notes.¹⁰ obviously, this movement followed the Italian version.

⁸ Horst, Louis, and Janet Soares. *Pre-Classical Dance Forms: The Pavan, Minuet, Galliard, Allemand, and 10 Other Early Dance Forms*. Hightstown, UNITED STATES: Princeton Book Company, 1987. <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/pittsburgstate-ebooks/detail.action?docID=219174>. P. 25

⁹ Hemiola: A musical figure in which, typically, two groups of three beats are replaced by three groups of two beats, giving the effect of a shift between triple and duple meter.

¹⁰ “Courante [Fr.; It. Corrente; Eng. Corant, Coranto] | The Harvard Dictionary of Music - Credo Reference.” Accessed March 28, 2021. https://search-credoreference-com.library.pittstate.edu/content/entry/harvdictmusic/courante_fr_it_corrente_eng_corant_coranto/0.

The main difference with the Allemande is that the Courante is much more energetic with a steady rhythm, and a lot faster. The style of performance practice follows the dotted-note pattern that should be played cleared and relaxed, but with a strong syncopation.

Sarabande

The Sarabande is an original form, a much older dance in triple meter which can be tracked back to the 12th century France. Its structure is a slow movement in 3/4 with a characteristic weight on the second beat in triple time.¹¹ It is usually in binary form¹², with fairly regular four or eight bar phrases and simple melodies that invited profuse ornamentation, sometimes written out of following as a double.¹³ It became a normal piece of solo and chamber suites, following the courante.

The third movement compared with the first and second movements is much slower, and also the tempo is freer to an extent, especially for a four-note chords. The tempo is not that stable and it usually starts with chords, and repeats the first phrase with a second part that is longer than the first, but keeping the same style.

¹¹ "Sarabande | The New Penguin Dictionary of Music - Credo Reference." Accessed March 28, 2021. <https://search-credoreference-com.library.pittstate.edu/content/entry/penguinmusic/sarabande/0>.

¹² Binary Form is a musical form in two relative sections which can be briefly described as AB.

¹³ "Sarabande [Fr.; Also Ger.; It. Sarabanda; Sp. Zarabanda] | The Harvard Dictionary of Music - Credo Reference." Accessed March 28, 2021. https://search-credoreference-com.library.pittstate.edu/content/entry/harvdictmusic/sarabande_fr_also_ger_it_sarabanda_sp_zarabanda/0.

Gigue

A fast Baroque dance movement in binary form. Usually, it's the last movement of the suite. It also has two different versions— French and Italian. However, the details of rhythm and texture are different for these two models. Italian Gigue has triadic, sequential running figures in even note-values in 12/8 at presto tempo. The French version is always dotted rhythms in duple meter, syncopations, hemiolas, and crossed rhythms.¹⁴ The fourth movement has a stable tempo and most of the piece is sixteenth notes patterns.

Chaconne

The Chaconne has an early Spanish origin, "*chica*" is an earlier term for a "jig", and "*chanson*" is the French word for "song". The Chaconne has a slow tempo, a $\frac{3}{4}$ meter, a short harmonic progression grounded in an ostinato, and theme and variation form. The particular motive for Bach's authorship of the Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin, BWV 1001-1006 (with BWV 1004 containing the Chaconne) is uncertain. Most likely, these works were a personal undertaking, as no known commission had existed for them. There is also no documented performance of them until more than a century after their completion.¹⁵ Furthermore, Chaconne became popular around the

¹⁴ "Gigue [Fr., Fr. Eng. Jig; Ger. Gigue; It. Giga; Sp. Giga, Jiga] | The Harvard Dictionary of Music - Credo Reference." Accessed March 28, 2021. https://search-credoreference-com.library.pittstate.edu/content/entry/harvdictmusic/gigue_fr_fr_eng_jig_ger_gigue_it_giga_sp_giga_jiga/0.

¹⁵ "Bach and the Chaconne," Alexander Silbiger, *The Journal of Musicology* 17, no. 3 (1999): 358-85

late 16th century. The Chaconne as a dance has a long history and it was well known in Bach's lifetime. After Bach's original version, there are many composers that arranged this piece. For example, Ferruccio Busoni arranged it for piano and Immanuel Abraham arranged it for solo guitar. They kept the Bach's original version's music style, and also added their own instrument's idiomatic features.

The circumstances surrounding the creation of this particular Partita, particularly its last movement, "chaconne" is not well documented. As we know, the whole Partita was written around 1720 to 1723 in Cothen. However, Chaconne is different from the other four movements. Unlike the others, Chaconne has many of the variations occurring in the harmonic rhythm and tempo.

CHAPTER III

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA

Biography

Astor Pantaleón Piazzolla was born on March 11, 1921 and died July 4, 1992. He came from an Italian family and was born in the city of Mar de Plata, Argentina. He became famous for his tango music after World War II even though the tango genre had already been a way of life as well as an expressive form of music and dance for a number of years before his birth. His particular style of composition became to be known as *tango nuevo*¹⁶ (New Tango). When he was three years old, he and his parents moved to New York. In 1930, Piazzolla also studied classical piano with Bela Wilda, a hungarian pianist who study with Sergey Rachmaninov, and continue to study bandoneon with his father.

¹⁶ "Astor Piazzolla | Encyclopedia.Com." Accessed April 5, 2021.
<https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/literature-and-arts/music-popular-and-jazz-biographies/astor-piazzolla>.

In 1936, Piazzolla's family went back to their hometown in Argentina, and his passion for tango music was fired anew by violinist Elvino Vardaro's Sextet.¹⁷ In 1938, when he was still a teenager he moved to Buenos Aires, and started looking for a job as a musician. One year later, he got a job in the famous orchestra, Anibal Troilo, and stayed in this position for several years. During this time, he kept studying piano and music theory with pianist Raul Spivak and composer Alberto Ginastera for around six years. 1946 became an important year for Piazzolla as he created his first orchestra focusing on traditional tango music. After the band separated, he started working on the classical music scene of the city playing chamber music, sometimes collaborating with symphonic groups. In 1953, his piece "*Buenos Aires*" caused a stir for its use of bandoneon in a classical orchestral setting.¹⁸ Around this time he established his famous "*Quinteto*" – bandoneon, violin, piano, guitar, and double bass. The Quintet traveled all over the world, infusing in their compositions the influences of jazz and contemporary "classical" music to the traditional tango.¹⁹ In 1954, Piazzolla went to Paris because he won a scholarship to study there with Nadia Boulanger who encouraged him to continue pursuing his work on tango music. One

¹⁷ "Astor Piazzolla | Biography & History | AllMusic." Accessed April 2, 2021. <https://www.allmusic.com/artist/astor-piazzolla-mn0000607967/biography>.

¹⁸ "Astor Piazzolla | Biography & History | AllMusic." Accessed April 2, 2021. <https://www.allmusic.com/artist/astor-piazzolla-mn0000607967/biography>.

¹⁹ "Astor Piazzolla Biography - InstantEncore." Accessed April 5, 2021. <https://www.instantencore.com/contributor/bio.aspx?Cid=5014432>.

year later, he went back to his hometown and kept working on his tango music until 1958. Piazzolla went back to New York City again to try to find work there, however, with his father's death in 1959, he had to return back to Argentina and it was during this time that he composed one of the most famous pieces, in his father's honor, "Adios Nonino" (Good Bye Nonino). In 1967, he had a chance to collaborate with Amelata Abltar, who later became his second wife, to perform "*Maria de Buenos Aires*".

In 1970, Piazzolla toured many countries in Europe, South America, Japan, and Latin America which help him established a great reputation as a performer and as a composer.

Unfortunately, as he got older, he suffered from a weakening heart and had a severe heart attack, which led to his fourth surgery in 1988. After this surgery, he slowed his life down and dissolved his ensemble, but continued to perform solo. During this time, he collaborated with small ensembles as well as symphony orchestras. However, he suffered a cerebral hemorrhage while in Paris, and in August 1990, after two years of suffering the consequences of this incident, he died in *Buenos Aires* on July, 4th 1992.²⁰ He produced more than 1000 music pieces and had a very important influence on tango music. Undoubtably, he is one of South America's greatest musical figures ever, and a major composer of the twentieth century.

²⁰ "Astor Piazzolla." Accessed April 6, 2021. <https://teatroastorpiazzolla.com/en/piazzolla/>.

Tango Music

Tango is a complex popular genre that includes dance, music, poetry, philosophy, narrative, and drama. It also unites African, American, and European cultural and aesthetic elements. This diversity of influences has its roots in Argentine history.²¹

Tango music was a significant genre in Argentine culture, especially in the city of Buenos Aires during the early part of the 20th century. It evolved as it migrated from the slums and brothels of Buenos Aires to the highest level of European nobility.

Although the tango is prevalent in Argentine culture, the history and the development of the tango are as complicated and tangled as the dance itself.²² With tango getting more popular, the tango genre developed in two paths, one is the “Old Guard” and another one is the “New Guard”. The old guard keeps to the old style of tango that is still emphasized on beats, the melody part is the second important role for music. The new guard paid less attention to the tango rhythm, and raising up the aspects of melody and harmony as well as the improvisation creativity of the performers.

Tango Etudes No.3

The Tango Etudes No.3 is one of the Six Tango Etudes composed by Piazzolla. These are six solo pieces for violin or flute. The collection explores varying faces of

²¹ Clark, Walter Aaron. *From Tejano to Tango: Essays on Latin American Popular Music*. London, UNITED KINGDOM: Taylor & Francis Group, 2002.
<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/pittsburgstate-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1122985>. 25

²² “PQDT Open.” Accessed April 7, 2021. <https://pqdtopen-proquest-com.library.pittstate.edu/doc/1346231610.html?FMT=AI>. 13

the tango genre. Etudes No.3 has a clear and simple structure that displays a clear sense of the tango style emphasizing the tango's unique tempo and melody.

CHAPTER IV

MUSICIAN INJURIES

Introduction

Performing artists face injuries and illnesses that stem from years of intensive training and the demand for perfect functioning in the public eye. The first article on injuries was published in 1713. Although there are more physicians that are interested in the area of performers' injuries, there is still lack of professional knowledge, experience, and expertise in this particular area.

There are several causes for these types of injuries. Skin problems are the most widespread issue for strings players. The majority of instruments have some parts made of metal. Left-sided submandibular lesions develop in 62% of violinists and violists from holding their instrument.²³ Another is musculoskeletal injuries. This is a widespread problem caused by the repetitiveness of the movements. String players need to repeat the same gestures or movements over and over, sometimes thousands of times in the lapse of an hour. Aching, burning feeling, tiredness, and pain in one or

²³ Ostwald, Peter F., Barry C. Baron, Nancy M. Byl, and Frank R. Wilson. "Performing Arts Medicine." *The Western Journal of Medicine* 160, no. 1 (January 1, 1994): 48–53.

more body parts are usually the first signal. These problems usually appear after very intense practice or performances, and after that, it's hard to play again for a short time. Furthermore, there are a lot of players that develop more complicated conditions such as nerve entrapment and focal dystonia (also called "cramps"). The loss of sensation and eventual interference with motor control results from a variety of conditions that put pressure on adjacent nerves.²⁴ In serious cases, they even need surgeries to deal with the intense pain.

For string players in particular, there are four common problems that cause injuries. First, proper instrument-setup is very important: even when the instrument dimensions look standard, the different finger board length and width may affect considerably. Some finger boards are made wide for big hand players or narrow small hand players. Selecting the one that is the best fit for the student's finger and hand size, is the first step to avoid major injuries. Second problem is bad practice habits: this problem does not only affect string players, but also all other musicians that play an instrument that demands some physical effort. Before playing any piece of music, spending more time warming up is highly advised regardless of the type of instrument. This particular step in the practice process is what most players keep ignoring. Good practice habits include a good portion of the practice dedicated to warm-up sequence follow by a slow practice before taking over the difficult fast

²⁴ Ostwald, Peter F., Barry C. Baron, Nancy M. Byl, and Frank R. Wilson. "Performing Arts Medicine." *The Western Journal of Medicine* 160, no. 1 (January 1, 1994): 48–53.

passages. For violin players in particular, starting with scales and arpeggios is highly recommended. The third problem is body support for the instrument. Keeping the same body position for an extended period of time causes physical problems.

Tendonitis

Tendonitis means inflammation or irritation of a tendon. Tendonitis is the most common injury for musicians, especially for piano and strings players because of their technical demands in the repertoire.

In my case, I have been suffering from tendonitis since around last October. In the beginning, my right-hand pinky began to swell and feel pain when moving it. I stopped playing for three weeks to recover, but I started to practice again too soon due to the pressure of proper preparation for my recital. I had the same finger affected again but this time, the ring-finger started to feel uncomfortable and numb. During the whole winter break my doctor and my professor recommended I completely stop playing, since by this time the pain had already expanded to my whole left hand and continued to get worse. In my experience, I think that since I started playing the violin competitively at college level, I missed the signs that my body was giving me. It only became worse when the repertoire to prepare became more demanding and difficult. I realize now that my practice habits during that time were wrong: I didn't spend enough time warming up before I played the pieces that demanded double-stops, extended techniques, and high demand of speed. In addition, the time period I spent practicing needed to be much longer than before, because at the time, I was planning to apply for a performance and pedagogy program. I realize now that all these factors

contributed to this situation that have stopped me from doing what I love the most,
playing my violin for others.

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