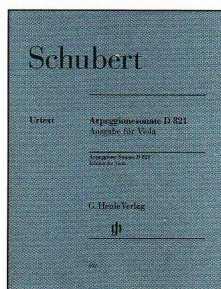


SCHUBERT'S ARPEGGIONE SONATA – SECOND AND THIRD MOVEMENTS

Violist Paul Neubauer considers the merits of a more Classical interpretation for this often over-romanticised work



From Schubert
Arpeggione Sonata
in A minor D821 (op.
posth.). Urtext edition,
version for viola and
piano, paperbound with
marked and unmarked
string parts. Editor
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This beautiful sonata has become one of the mainstays of the viola repertoire and with good reason: its singing melodies and dramatic passages suit the sound and the soul of the viola in a ravishing way. I see the second movement as a song without words – the closing section, from bars 49 to 67, seems to delve into another world. The third movement's main lilting melody contrasts with more agitated sections, including the folk-like music from bar 212, which reminds me of yodelling. But for all the sweet melodies that pervade this sonata, there is also a feeling of melancholy, and players must come to terms with a character that is bittersweet.

Performance considerations

I like to perform these two movements without page turns, since they would need to be quick and can be disruptive. In addition to some inventive cutting and pasting, one way to facilitate this is to note that, in the third movement, bars 17–40 can be repeated and bars 161–211, apart from variations in bars 183 and 199, have the same material as bars 1–75 without the repeat. Of course, the sonata could be played from memory or with an iPad.

Back to basics

The more you know about any composer and the music you are playing, the more confidence you will have on stage. I think audiences can sense that added depth: they can tell the difference between someone who just goes out and plays beautifully but hasn't done their research, and someone who has listened to Schubert's music, read his letters, knows his background and is really cognizant of everything that made him who he was.

I believe that, whenever possible, you should look at the original source of any piece you study. Of course, there is often debate about what the original is, but in the case of the >

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SEAL, SONY CLASSICAL

'This is not bombastic Schubert. It is a gentle piece and it's not about showing off – it's about sharing music between friends'



Paul Neubauer has recorded the Arpeggione Sonata with pianist Juho Pohjonen. See bit.ly/2qoIpa6

Arpeggione Sonata the music was not published during Schubert's lifetime and his manuscript is our only source. I would encourage anyone who plays it to identify discrepancies between that and published editions. The manuscript can be found online (see bit.ly/2qoIpa6).

The Henle edition is excellent and it is the one that I use. However, there are a few instances where the manuscript could be interpreted differently. For example, in the final bar of the second movement (figures 1a and 1b), the manuscript has all the notes beamed or grouped together, with the fermata over the last four quavers (♩). This indicates to me that they should slow into the next movement rather than make a triplet pickup. After all, in Schubert's time, changing this bar into a 7/8 bar or notating a septuplet over the six quavers would not have been an accepted style of notation.

Another example is the accents in the third-movement opening (figure 2), in the piano score. Most editions print accents on the second of each pair of quavers. It is possible that this is what Schubert intended (again, see bit.ly/2qoIpa6), but one could interpret the manuscript to mean the accent (or diminuendo?) should be on the down-beats. This is a big decision to make, since the figure is employed throughout the movement. One could also reinterpret the fermatas in bars 160 and 395 (see figure 3):

Figure 1a The final two bars of the second movement, from Schubert's original manuscript

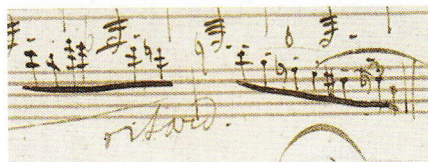
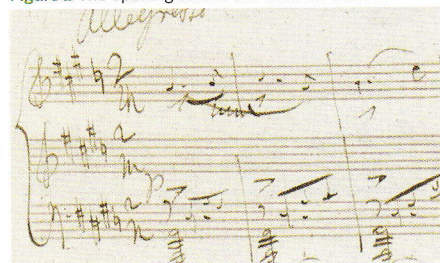


Figure 1b The same two bars as interpreted by Henle



Figure 2 The opening bars of the third movement



should they be over one note, as indicated by most editions, or over three, as Schubert wrote? Or is the fermata only intended where the dot is placed, no matter how large the sign?

Look out for differences between accents and decrescendos; notice how the apex of the crescendo in bars 37–39 (61–63 in the repeat) and 197–199 appears to be at the end of the dotted crotchet (♩) in bars 38 (figure 4), 198 and 417 of the original. Also look at where Schubert made corrections. The haste in which the music seems to have been written indicates that these may not be Schubert's ultimate thoughts. Had he returned to the score to prepare a published version, he may have refined his markings.

I try to adhere to Schubert's phrase markings and make sure they are clear, whatever bowings I use. I also try to keep the pitch range as close to the arpeggione's as possible. Sometimes this goes below the standard viola C string, so compromises must be made. Even though the Henle edition indicates most octave changes, study the manuscript to decide what is most appropriate for you.

Classical or Romantic?

The general approach to this sonata is also up for debate. Is it Classical, Romantic or a combination of the two? Schubert composed it aged 27, in what is usually considered his Romantic period; there are Romantic melodies, virtuosic passages and abrupt changes of mood. But this is not bombastic Schubert – these are beautiful, poignant melodies. It is a gentle piece and it's not about showing off – it's about sharing music between friends.

I first learnt it when I was 14 or 15 and I used up-bow staccato and many slides; it was Paganini meets Schubert! At a certain point I decided to put it away for five or ten years. When I returned to it, the first thing I did was listen to an arpeggione recording. It had a very pure and straightforward sound, more like a viola da gamba than a modern viola. I found it interesting that Schubert wrote this piece for an instrument that sounded so Baroque, and that made me wonder why everyone played it so romantically. Listen to a version for arpeggione – there are plenty on YouTube – and see what you think. These days I see it more as a Classical work.

Figure 3 Bars 159–160, third movement

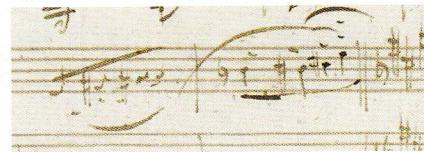


Figure 4 Bars 37–39, third movement



Performance tradition has been greatly influenced by recordings. Rostropovich's passionate version of this piece, for example, has lots of rits and beautiful nuances. When people hear him play, they're affected and they want to do the same. But as spectacular as his recording is, I feel the piece in another way now. Listen to different recordings while following the score, identify where they slow down and slide around, and ask why. Is there a technical problem? (For example, people may need to take more time for the jump in bar 225 of the third movement.) Or is there a real musical reason?

Some unusual fingerings

I use extensions, stretches and light shifts to help eliminate Romantic slides – for example, in bars 46–47 in the second movement, most violists shift or slide up from first position. My fingering puts you in fourth position from the previous line, so that your second finger falls on the E in bar 45. This way you can play everything across the strings, without a shift.

Whatever you do, you will have to make compromises: this piece was written for a completely different instrument, with six strings. In places you might have to choose between an unseemly shift and awkward string-crossings. Weigh up your options. I enjoy trying to figure out what works best, always thinking about the big ideas of the piece and how I want it to sound. It's like a puzzle that evolves over time. >

INTERVIEW BY PAULINE HARDING

Adagio

Musical score for Viola, Adagio, measures 1-72. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). It features various musical notations including triplets, slurs, dynamics (*p*, *pp*, *mf*, *f*, *fp*, *dim.*), and articulation marks (accents, breath marks). Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4. A *ritard.* marking appears at measure 67.

Measures 1-10: *p*, triplet, *V*, *3*, *3*, *2*, *4*.
 Measures 11-17: *pp*, *3*, *1*, *(b)*, *1*, *3*.
 Measures 18-23: *pp*, *cresc. 3*, *mf*, *3*, *V*, *3*, *V*, *3*.
 Measures 24-29: *p*, *3*, *V*, *cresc.*, *f*, *p*.
 Measures 30-36: *2*, *3*, *0*, *(cresc.)*.
 Measures 37-43: *fp*, *V*, *1*, *3*, *3*, *V*, *1*, *cresc.*.
 Measures 44-49: *(>)*, *fz*, *dim.*, *p*, *3*, *V*, *2*.
 Measures 50-57: *1*, *4*, *1*, *4*, *1*, *pp*.
 Measures 58-66: *4*, *V*, *2*, *(b)*, *(#)*, *V*, *2*.
 Measures 67-72: *ritard.*, *V*, *3*, *2*, *1*, *4*, *3*, *2*, *3*.

Allegretto

13 2/4

(p)

8

cresc.

15

pp

22

cresc.

30

p

37

44

52

cresc.

p

60

p

67

pp

(fz)

The musical score is for a Viola part in 13/24 time, marked Allegretto. It consists of nine staves of music. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4. A pink double-headed arrow is placed below the staff at measure 37, spanning measures 37 to 44. Another pink double-headed arrow is placed below the staff at measure 60, spanning measures 60 to 67. The score ends with a fermata and a final dynamic marking of (fz).

76 *mf*

80

85 *pp* *mf* (1)

90

95 *p* *pp* 3

101

107 2 *V* 3 *V* *V* *V*


115 *fz* *cresc.* *mf* 8va 1 0


119 (8va) 1


124 *pp* 4 4


Viola


9

131 


138 


145 

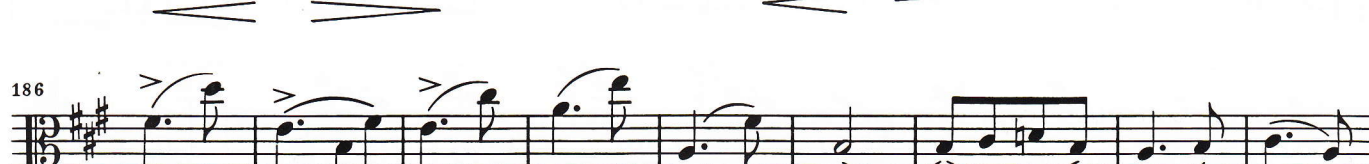
153 

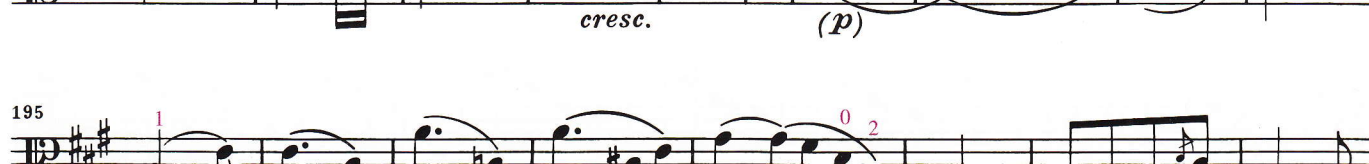
161 *(a tempo)* 

169 

178 

186 

195 

203 

*) Zum ritard. hier und T. 385 ff. siehe Bemerkungen.

*) Regarding ritard. here and M. 385 ff., see Comments.

*) Concernant ritard. ici et aux M. 385 ss., cf. Remarques.

10

Viola

212 *p* *pp* (*p*) *pp* *leggermente*

220 *pp* *cresc.*

236 *f* *p* *p*

244 (264) *fp*

250 (270) *cresc.*

255 (275) (*f*) *pp*

283 *cresc.* *f* *pp* *p*

293 8vb pizz. *sim.*

304 (8vb) *arco* (*mf*)

314 *mf*

321 *pp* *mf*

327 *pp* *mf*

Viola

11

334

340 *pp* 4 0 4 0

347 *p* *pp* 4

356 *fz* *cresc.* *p* 0

362

368 *pp* *p* *ritard.* 1

376 *pp* 3 2 1

388 *ritard.* *ritard.* (*a tempo*) 2 1

398 1 3 2 *cresc.* 3

410 *pp* *p* 3 2 1 4

421 *cresc.* *p* 1

433 *p* *decresc.* *pp* 3

442 *dimin.* *ff* *p* 1 0