



L'Archet Révolutionnaire

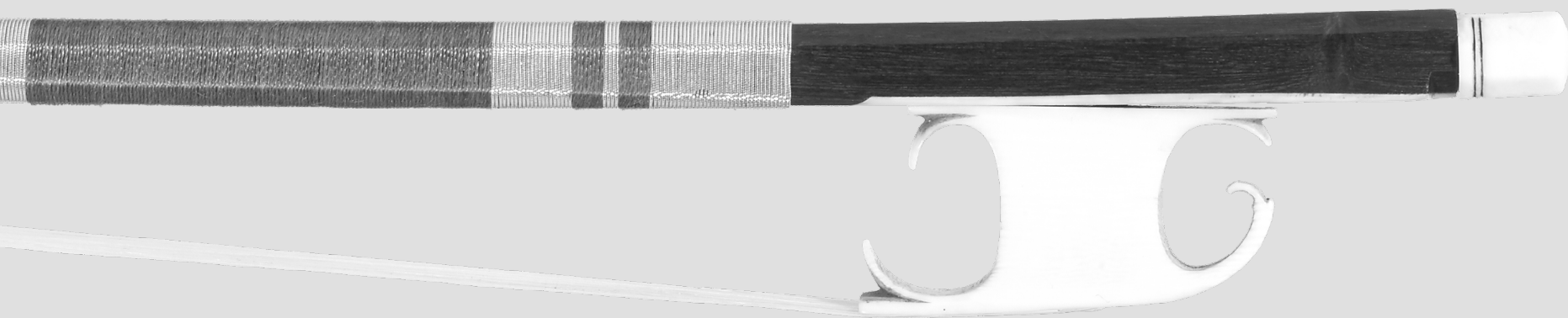
Violin, viola & cello bows of the 18th century

Exhibition

Highlight Catalogue

October–November 2015

Tarasio
FINE INSTRUMENTS & BOWS



Violin, viola & cello bows of the 18th century

L'Archet Révolutionnaire

Exhibition

1–3 November 2015

Westbury Hotel, 2nd Floor Gallery,
New Bond & Conduit Street, London W1S 2YF

Lectures & Performances

27–31 October 2015

Hinde Street Methodist Church,
19 Thayer Street, London W1U 2QJ

Curator

Jérôme Akoka

Expert Advisers

Cabinet d'Experts
Jean-François Raffin


Musical Adviser

Christophe Coin

Presented by

Tarisio

In collaboration with

 Orchestra of the
Age of Enlightenment

 ACADEMY OF ANCIENT MUSIC



L'ArchetRévolutionnaire

Pierre Baillot, Ingres, 1829

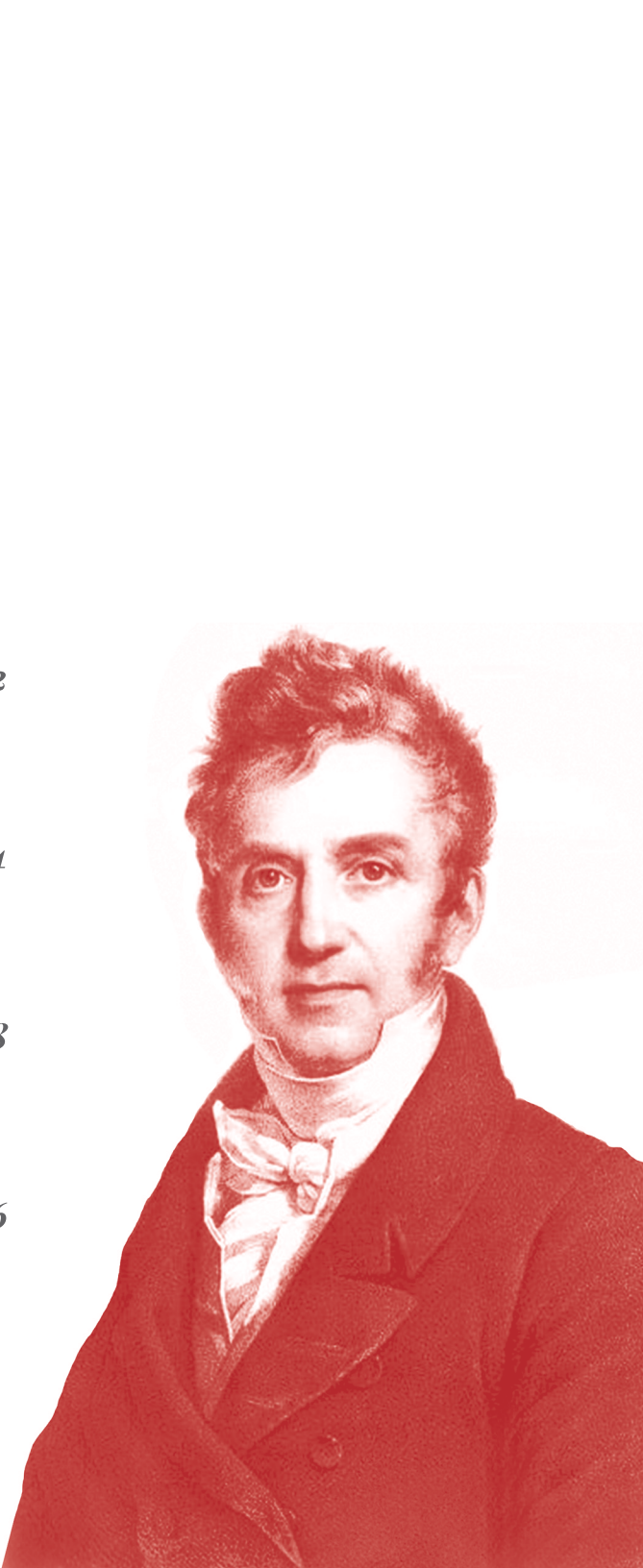
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Pierre Rode, Private collection

Foreword

by Jason Price



Much has been written about the history of the violin in the 17th and 18th centuries but research about the radical development of the 18th-century bow is still evolving. Unlike the violin, which remained more or less constant in form and dimensions from the time of Andrea Amati (c. 1505–1577), bows for stringed instruments were subject to ongoing experimentation and enormous transformation until the modern bow emerged in the late-18th to early-19th centuries.

Violinist and bow collector Jérôme Akoka first approached me a year ago to suggest holding an exhibition and symposium in London on the 18th-century bow. Most importantly, he convinced me that this subject appeals equally to musicians and makers; that authentic performance practice and the technical development of the bow are seamlessly intertwined; and that to better understand the music of Bach, Haydn and Mozart one must understand the equipment on which it was originally played. By exploring this subject with interactive formats of round-tables and masterclasses, we hope that modern bow makers

and period players will be able to learn from each other and from the artefacts of the past.

To set the stage, let us consider the violin bow at the beginning of the 18th century. The basic specifications of length, weight, materials and form remained greatly unsettled and varied from region to region across Europe. Generally speaking, bows in the late-17th and early-18th century were usually shorter, with lower and more pointed heads than their modern counterparts. The frogs were normally higher than what we are now accustomed to, and were either clipped onto the stick or made adjustable by a simple iron screw. The sticks were made of European hardwoods including ash, yew, pear and ironwood or more exotic imports such as snakewood, logwood and amourette, and were usually concave in camber, lighter at the tip and heavier at the frog.

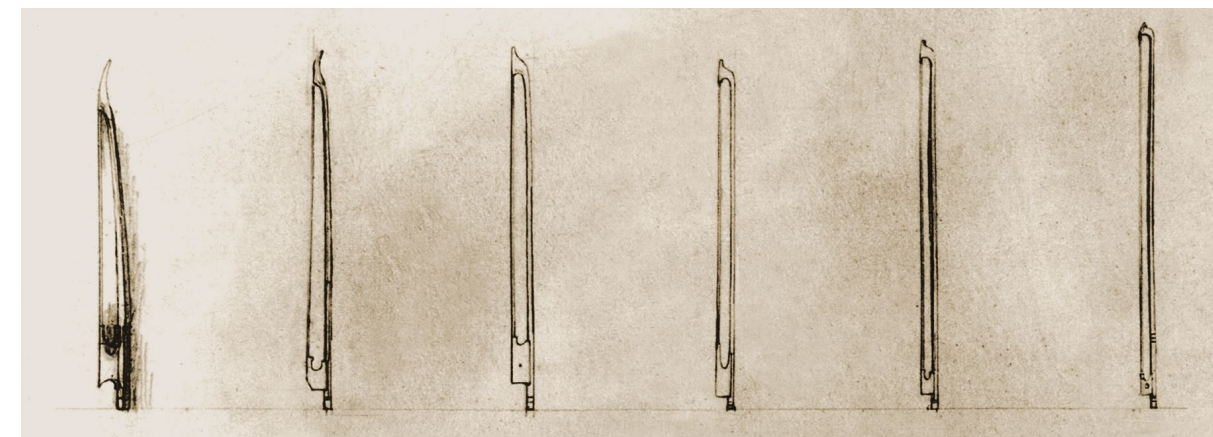
Fast forward a century and by 1790–1810 we see bows made by the Tourte brothers that look more or less like the modern bow we use today. The sticks have a convex camber, a

Not necessarily a linear evolution: variations of the form and dimensions of the bow in the 18th century
L'Art du Violon, Pierre Baillot, 1834

standard length and are made predominantly of pernambuco. The heads are almost equal in height to the frogs and are reinforced with metal or ivory. The frogs are made of ebony or occasionally of ivory, the hair is spread at the frog with a metal ferrule and anchored in a covered mortise. The buttons are reinforced with metal.

The goal of this exhibition is to show how a convergence of events led to this dramatic evolution of the bow during the 18th century. The French Revolution and the social and political changes that surround it take centre stage, including the relaxing of the guild system governing production of specialised goods, and the advancements for artisans during the Enlightenment. Expanding New World trade routes played a major role as well, with the introduction of exotic hardwoods from the West Indies and South America often discovered as collateral benefits of the sugar trade and the dye industry.

Perhaps of greatest significance was the growing internationalisation of music, which scattered itinerant players across Europe and stimulated the development and circulation of new ideas and techniques among a growing population. Collaborative efforts between performer and luthier must have played a major role in the evolution of the modern bow, but for the moment there is only circumstantial evidence to complete these connections. Legend has it that Giovanni Battista Viotti (1755–1824),



Wilhelm Cramer (1746–1799) and Viotti's teacher Gaetano Pugnani (1731–1798) had collaborative relationships with the Tourte brothers. All three musicians toured widely through the major cities of Europe, in particular Paris and London. No doubt they brought with them new musical ideas and the latest bow designs to share with the Tourtes of Paris and the Dodds of London.

One point that I hope will be clear in our masterclasses and panel discussions is that we should resist the temptation to view the modern bow as naturally superior to its 18th-century ancestor. The modern bow has evolved to be better-suited to the demands of the music, ensembles and performance venues of the modern era. But this does not necessarily make it preferable to use for music from earlier periods. At the very least, 18th-century bows provide an indispensable window to the musical and aesthetic intent of the time in which they were created.

And finally, a disclaimer: in spite of our best intentions there is much that may never be knowable about the bow making of this period. Bows in the 17th and early-18th centuries seem

to have been created as workshop productions, made as accessories by junior craftsmen much in the same way as a workshop produced cases and pegs. As such, bows were generally made anonymously and almost never branded. Materials and construction techniques were such that early bows were much less durable and were readily discarded when broken or out of fashion. This complicates the task of the historian and requires us to flesh out our understanding of the evolution of the bow by relying on iconography, historical sources and sometimes informed conjecture.

We are grateful for the diligent and tireless work of those who have made this exhibition and symposium possible. Jean-François Raffin, Christophe Coin, Constance Frei, Bernard Gaudfroy, Kai Koepp and Bernard Millant have all generously leant their time and invaluable knowledge to the project. Pavlo Beznosiuk, the Chiaroscuro Quartet and Alexander Janiczek have graciously and enthusiastically agreed to lead masterclasses and performance demonstrations. And most of all Jérôme Akoka has given this subject his prime attention for several decades; his enthusiasm and curiosity for the subject is contagious. ■

*to better understand the music of Bach,
Haydn and Mozart one must understand the
equipment on which it was originally played*

In 1740 the Baroque period was drawing to a close. Bach and Handel were in the last decades of their lives, as were Vivaldi and Rameau. Music was about to undergo an astonishing transformation over the next 60 years, through the Classical period of Mozart and Haydn to the emerging Romanticism of Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Berlioz in the early 19th century.

These musical developments took place during a period of political and social upheaval, with

the French Revolution of 1789 taking centre stage, and together they were to affect bow making dramatically. Our exhibition explores the bows of this period and questions the traditional view of the evolution of the bow from the Baroque and Classical (or Transitional) styles to the modern form known today.

Early bow making was seen as an experimental, evolving process, with clumsy or imperfect results, until François Xavier Tourte finally established the form of the modern bow around 1810. After this

time the earlier bows fell out of use and were eventually relegated to the level of obsolete artefacts, displayed in museums or hidden as curios in bow connoisseurs' collections.

It is true that bow makers lacked social status in the 18th century. In Paris they were not permitted their own guild or even to belong to the luthiers' guild, and instead had to pay to establish themselves in the *lieu privilégié* areas of the city, which allowed them to work free of the many guild restrictions. Makers in the *lieu privilégié* areas had to stamp their work with proof of their address, hence brands such as 'Leonard Tourte Aux 15 vingts' and 'Lefebvre au Cimetière Saint Jean'. Perhaps as a result, few makers specialised in bows, and workshops such

18th-century bows are actually perfect for the music of their time

as that of Nicolas Pierre Tourte in 18th-century Paris produced bows alongside instruments.

Until the mid-18th century, bows were produced with a different standard of durability in mind. The frog and tip had no metallic reinforcements; buttons were made of organic materials such as horn, bone or ivory; and there was no ferrule before around 1780. Surviving bows are often damaged as a

result. Materials for the stick included ironwood, amourette, snakewood, bois de la Chine and bois de corail as well as pernambuco, and the ribbon of hair in the bow was very thin.

The sheer variety of bow forms during this period might at first glance suggest it was a phase of experimentation to improve the bow. The length and weight of the stick ranged enormously, as did the height of the frogs and heads – it was a long way from the standardisation of the 19th-century bow.

Yet, as we now know, 18th-century bows are actually perfect for the music of their time. They are



Above and right: A Cramer model violin bow by Nicolas Léonard Tourte c. 1775

L'Archet

c. 1740–1820

Révolutionnaire

A history
by Jérôme Akoka





A cello bow by John Dodd
for William Forster c. 1790

accomplished, sophisticated creations, each one designed for a specific repertoire and expected only to fulfill this function. Unlike modern bows, they were designed to resonate rather than project, and consequently had thinner bow hair to avoid dampening the gut strings. Similarly their open frogs created a slight bevel in the hair, rather than a flat ribbon; this helped to produce a less direct attack and allowed the player to create the contrasting accents necessary in Baroque music.

Overall Baroque bows tend to be shorter in length due to the practice of holding the violin quite low on the chest, but the variety in length and weight of surviving examples again suggests they were designed in response to the needs of different repertoire. Shorter bows were probably used in orchestra pits and for continuo, while longer ones could serve for sonatas and solo playing. Particularly short ones were used by dancing masters to accompany their pupils. Some extremely heavy viol or cello bows of around 80g survive. These are likely to have been used for continuo and recitativo, or possibly for the 'procession' basses with thick strings, which needed more weight to attack the note.

Contrasting French and Italian styles of music also influenced bow production in those countries. The French court from the time of Lully and Louis XIV had a famous tradition of ballet, and French bows before 1750 were mostly designed to play elaborately ornamented dance music with strongly articulated down beats. These bows typically have a pike head that is lower than the frog, while the upper two thirds of the stick is fluted. This created a bow that was much heavier at the heel than at the tip, perfectly designed to play accented down beats and lighter up beats. Italian Baroque music placed more importance upon melody, and Italian bows of the early 18th century tend to be correspondingly longer with higher heads, allowing for more lyricism in the sound.

After 1750 the extraordinarily rapid developments in music required both musicians and bow makers to adapt to a quite different performing style. Melody now played a far more important role, concert halls and orchestras became larger, and it became necessary for bows to be able to sustain and project. After the deaths of Nicolas Pierre Tourte, Jean-Philippe Rameau



A pike-head bow
by Nicolas Pierre Tourte
c. 1740–1750

and Jean-Marie Leclair and (all three in 1764), the first Haydn quartets and Gluck's *Orfeo and Eurydice*, some changes begin to appear.

This was the start of what is now known as the Transitional period of bow making. The most famous Transitional model, the Cramer, was developed in Germany, where the first known examples were used in the Mannheim Orchestra.

more equal sound at the heel and the tip and was better suited to playing sustained melodies.

At the same time, the enormous political changes created by the French Revolution greatly improved the lot of bow makers in France. In particular, the abolition of the Parisian guild system in 1791 removed the many guild restrictions, including the rule that had prevented

Working at first together and then separately, they produced an impressive quantity of remarkably high-quality bows. They gradually imposed the ferrule on the frog to spread the bow hair evenly and create more stability for the player. They also introduced metal fittings and head plates, making bows more durable. Pernambuco became the favoured wood, thanks to its ability to vibrate and therefore compensate for the loss of vibration

caused by the introduction of the ferrule. By around 1810, the new Tourte model had taken on its definitive form, which was to influence all future bow makers.

For the musician, the collector, the bow maker and the expert, bow making in the 18th century

is an absorbing subject, with its diversity of styles, aesthetic changes and its connections to historical and musical developments. This exhibition, covering the work of the Tourtes, Duchaine, Mauchand and Pajot in France and John Dodd in England as well as examples from Italy and Germany, provides a fresh viewpoint on this remarkable period. ■

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It was popularised by the violinist Wilhelm Cramer, who is thought to have brought the bow to Paris around 1770. The Cramer model had a head that was stronger, heavier and taller than Baroque bows. The stick was longer and had a concave cambre, reinforcing a trend seen in some late Baroque French bows. This was the first step towards a bow that could produce a

wood workers from using metal, and allowed bow makers to work as equals to violin makers.

It is hard to over-emphasise the influence of the Tourte family in the development of the bow at this pivotal time. Nicolas Pierre Tourte and his sons Nicolas Léonard and François Xavier were swift to adopt the style of the Cramer bow.

'ArchetRévoluti

This exhibition features fifty bows from French, English, German and Italian makers, including the Tourte family, Duchaine, Dodd, Mauchand, Pajeot and others.

The following bows are a selection of eighteen from the exhibition.

Nicolas Pierre Tourte

c. 1740–50

This pike-head bow in amourette has all the typical characteristics of Nicolas Pierre Tourte's work: the style of the fluting, which wraps elegantly around the sides of the head into the tip; the finely carved 'V' at the back of the head between the fluting; the sides of the frog which are left full and flat towards the heel and hollowed into the throat; and the sturdy and square tongue, which in this example is missing the ligature ridge seen on his bows of the following pages. The turned button is also typical, with several raised collars and a small ball decoration at the end. This example was possibly originally intended as a viola bow, as it is the stylistic twin of the first violin bow on page 11, but heavier and longer.



Nicolas Pierre Tourte

c. 1740–50



Nicolas Pierre Tourte

c. 1740–50



Nicolas Pierre Tourte

c. 1740–50



Nicolas Pierre Tourte

c. 1740–50



Nicolas Pierre Tourte

c. 1750–60

This bow shows the beginnings of stylistic change. It is made from pernambuco rather than amourette and the stick is left round and unfluted. The two chamfers at the back of the head come together to create a 'V' shape in cross-section, a feature also adopted by Nicolas Pierre Tourte's sons, Nicolas Léonard and François Xavier. The pernambuco frog, however, is similar to the earlier Nicolas Pierre Tourte frogs presented here. This bow has a relatively short stick and was possibly intended as a viol bow. It was discovered with a viola d'amore.



François Xavier Tourte

c. 1765–70

This exceptional violin bow in pernambuco has remarkably fine and elegant fluting on the upper two-thirds of the stick. The high upright head follows the Italian style compared to the pike-head model that was more commonly employed by his father. The frog has delicate chamfers on the edges of the throat and the ivory button is compact with discrete collars and no ball decoration at the end. The head and frog mortises are similar to those of the later work of François Xavier. A similar early example can be found in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.



François Xavier Tourte & Nicolas Léonard Tourte

c. 1765–70



François Xavier Tourte

c. 1775

This early example of François Xavier Tourte's work is a Cramer model made in ironwood. The head is only slightly different to the model used by his elder brother Nicolas Léonard Tourte (see page 17). The sides of the frog are not flat but rounded somewhat back to front. As with all open trench frogs up until the introduction of the metal ferrule, the bow hair is formed in a slightly convex ribbon, allowing for a softer production of sound. The tongue at the back of this Cramer-style head also forms the hair into a beveled ribbon. The handle is fitted with another invention often seen on Cramer models – a flat ivory plate with a protruding pin designed to guide the frog as it slid backwards when the bow hair was tightened. When in tension, the stick is intended to be parallel to the hair.



Nicolas Léonard Tourte

c. 1775

The Tourte family quickly adopted the new Cramer style of bow that arrived in Paris towards the end of the 1760s and was better suited to the early Classical style of music. The frog of this example is still made in the Louis XV style, but the head has the much higher Cramer style.



Nicolas Duchaine I

c. 1775

The Duchaine father and son were very active in Mirecourt between the late-18th and the early-19th centuries. They were some of the earliest known makers outside Paris to brand their bows. This Cramer model was made by Duchaine the father in pernambuco and ivory. The sides of the frog are flatter than those of the Tourte family and the frog is thicker. It has an example of an early head-plate; these first appeared on Cramer-style bows and help to reinforce the trailing edge of the head. This violin or viola bow is quite long and some have speculated that bows of greater length were intended more for solo repertoire.



François Xavier Tourte

c. 1775



François Xavier Tourte

c. 1790

This elegant cello bow shows a stylistic change that occurred around the time of the French Revolution. With a graceful swan-head and a frog made of the same pernambuco, the bow has a more classical, less decorated style than before. As the frog is quite high, the cut-off angle at the heel helps it not to touch the strings or the C-bout at the beginning or end of the bow-stroke.



François Xavier Tourte

c. 1790

The frog and head of this cello bow are slightly lower than the example on page 20. The ivory frog is more typical of the later bows of the family, although it has no metal parts. It bears the 'Tourte' brand used at first by the brothers for their joint work after they had established themselves in Paris, and then by François Xavier alone after Nicolas Léonard had apparently distanced himself from the business for a time during the Revolution. The Tourtes' move into Paris from the *lieu privilégié* meant that they were no longer required to stamp their bows with the location where the bow was made.



John Dodd

c. 1780–90

This fine violin bow is a characteristic example of the early work of John Dodd. The stick is in handsome pernambuco with ivory mounts. Although based on the Cramer model, the style is inventive and the frog, button and head do not show significant French influence. Dodd's ivory frogs are often slightly narrower than the stick, which helps to protect the edges from damage.



John Dodd

c. 1790

This stunning pernambuco and ivory cello bow again shows that English makers had access to pernambuco of the highest quality, perhaps thanks to the strong British merchant navy of the 18th and 19th century. It is branded 'Forster' to the stick and frog and shows a strong French influence (see page 20) as is typical of the bows that Dodd made for William Forster.



John Dodd

c. 1790



John Dodd

c. 1800

This bow is of a similar weight to modern cello bows, and of a stronger model than the earlier example on page 23. The pernambuco has a few natural defects that are compensated for by the thickness of the stick. The head is quite square and the frog retains its original cut-off angle. Dodd's brand appears on both stick and frog, as is often the case for English bows of the period.



Workshop & Masterclasses • 27–29 October

Tuesday 27 October

Pavlo Beznosiuk & Academy of Ancient Music

Workshop: *The Concertmaster and Orchestra in the 18th century* • 10am–1pm

How does the evolution of bow making relate to and inform our understanding of musical history? Why is a ‘Corelli’ bow unsuitable for playing a Beethoven symphony or a Schubert quartet? What range of sounds would the early classical bows have made available to the players in 18th-century Mannheim? What role did changing musical tastes play in the evolution of the bow? In this workshop these and many other questions will be tackled through ensemble and orchestral music from Corelli to Beethoven.

Wednesday 28 October

Chiaroscuro Quartet

Masterclass: *Chamber Music and the Classical Quartet* • 10am–1pm

The Chiaroscuro Quartet will explore the extensive range of articulations and gestures possible on Baroque, Classical and Transitional bows. Combining different bowing techniques with the selective use of vibrato on gut strings, and balancing tension and release, this masterclass will focus on creating the specific sound palette that defines the classical quartet.

Thursday 29 October

Alexander Janiczek

Masterclass: *Mozart on Original Bows* • 10am–1pm

There are many angles from which we can view the works of Mozart. One of the doors to making his music sound and speak are the bows that were played in his time. This masterclass will concentrate on bow technique as seen through contemporary sources – including methods, treatises and books by Leopold Mozart – and focus on transferring this written application into practice, looking at how to play on the bows, and how the bows themselves influenced the music.

Lectures & Performances • Friday 30 October

Friday 30 October

Jean-François Raffin

The Tourte Family of the 18th century • 2–3pm

The recent discovery of different bow models by the Tourte family sheds new light on their work. Tracing the evolution of bows by Nicolas Pierre, Nicolas Léonard and François Xavier Tourte, leading bow expert Jean-François Raffin will analyse their different models using branded examples, and will present new research on the epoch’s most influential makers.

Constance Frei

Bowed Instruments in Paintings; 16th–early-18th century • 3.15–4.15pm

The abundance of bowed instruments in paintings from the 16th to early 18th centuries provides many clues to contemporary performance practice. Dressed in luxurious outfits or modest clothing, and often transformed into angel musicians, these violinists hold their instruments and bows in a variety of ways, each suggesting their own sound, articulation and gesture. Examining these paintings against scores from the same period sheds will shed light on Baroque bow techniques.

Bernard Gaudfroy

Life and Work for 18th-century Parisian Bow Makers • 4.30–5.15pm

Powerful guilds controlled the working conditions of violin and bow makers in 18th-century Paris. Bow makers were not permitted to become members of the luthiers’ guild, and many, including the Tourte family, were forced to work in the so-called *lieux privilégiés*, which allowed craftsmen to work free of the guild restrictions in return for a fee. Bernard Gaudfroy will discuss the difficulties this created for bow makers and how the Tourtes managed to establish themselves in Paris before the guild system was abolished in 1793.

Kai Koepp

French or German Bows for Beethoven; A Political Choice • 5.15–6pm

During Beethoven’s lifetime, the Tourte bow enjoyed growing acceptance, but there was a resistance to its use that is intrinsically tied up in the politics of the time. New studies reveal that outside the realm of French musical influence, string players continued to use their traditional bows and playing

styles, particularly in countries that were at war with Napoleon. Native Viennese musicians of Beethoven’s day refused to use a ‘modern’ Tourte bow and bows identified today as Cramer models continued to be in use. For musicians in Beethoven’s time, the choice of bow was a matter of politics into which the concept of sound and articulation were intertwined.

Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment & Claire Holden

Music in the Salon • 7.30–8.30pm

What range of music was played in the salon and who were the performers? From visiting virtuosi to unaccomplished amateurs, which styles of bows might have been used by which groups, and how might the choice of bows have affected artistic decision making? Moving away from the public concert hall to domestic settings, where the majority of musical performances took place, this lecture–recital will examine the variety of bows and strokes that might have been used in string chamber music at the turn of the 19th century.

Lectures & Performances • Saturday 31 October

Saturday 31 October

*The Art of Bow Making in the 18th century;
Evolution or Revolution?* • 12.30–2pm

Round table discussion including:

**Jean-François Raffin, Christophe Coin,
Bernard Millant, Kai Koepp,
Constance Frei, Bernard Gaudfroy,
Pavlo Beznosiuk, Jérôme Akoka
• Moderated by Jason Price**

With participants including experts, bow makers, musicologists and musicians, this round table discussion will examine the links between the workmanship and music, as well as contemporary playing techniques and the revolutionary politics of the time. Many questions relating to 18th-century bow making remain unanswered and the discussion will suggest new areas for future research and development.

*From the Baroque to the Romantic;
Playing on Original Bows* • 2.30–4.30pm

Concert-conference with:

**Christophe Coin, Alexander Janiczek,
Chouchane Siranossian,
Yoko Kaneko, Claire Thirion,
Nicolas Mazzoleni**

Performing with bows that span the stylistic developments of the 18th century, this concert-conference will explore the sound production, articulation and performance considerations for repertoire from the second half of the 18th century. Excerpts of chamber music by Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven will be featured, as well as solo works by great violinist-composers including Viotti, Baillot and Rode. Works accompanied by pianoforte will be used to explore the nuances of voicing and balance.



All events will take place at: Hinde Street Methodist Church, 19 Thayer Street, London W1U 2QJ

