A-Z of STRING PLAYERS
by David Milsom
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I am also grateful to Paul Baily for engineering a number of restorations for inclusion on these CDs, and indeed Klaus Heymann for authorising the project in the first place.

Most particularly, I would like to thank my wife, Ruth. Family members always bear the brunt of the late nights, cancelled social engagements and indeed the whole catalogue of practical inconveniences created when embarking on such a project. Ruth became increasingly important as Research Assistant and Project Manager when I took up a demanding full-time academic post in 2010. I owe her a tremendous debt of gratitude – the project would never have been completed without her dedicated and patient assistance!

David Milsom
Sheffield, 2013
CD TRACK LISTS

* Denotes a newly restored track by Paul Baily.

CD 1

* Willi Boskovsky violin
Schubert: Piano Quintet in A major, D. 667 'Die Forelle'; II. Scherzo – Presto 4:10
Members of the Vienna Octet (Willi Boskovsky, violin; Günther Breitenbach, viola; Nikolaus Hübner, cello; Johann Krump, double-bass); Clifford Curzon, piano
Decca SXL 2110; Matrix ZAL 3836

Pablo Casals cello
J.S. Bach: Solo Cello Suite No. 3 in C major, BWV 1009: VI. Gigue 3:00
Naxos Historical 8.110915–16

* Gaspar Cassadó cello
Schubert (arr. Cassadó): Cello Concerto in A minor 'Arpeggione'; II. Adagio 4:31
Bamberg Symphony Orchestra; Jonel Perlea
Vox PL 10.210; Matrix UPV 10211

Gérard Caussé viola
R. Fumet: Diviptyque Baroque: II. Fuguette 2:25
Gabriel Fumet, flute
Marco Polo 8.223890

Roger Chase viola
Shore: Scherzo 2:31
Michiko Otaki, piano
Naxos 8.572293

CD TRACK LISTS

* Rebecca Clarke viola
Mozart: Trio for Clarinet, Viola and Piano in E flat major, K. 498 'Kegelstatt'; III. Rondeaux: Allegretto
Frederick Thurston, clarinet; Kathleen Long, piano
The National Gramophonic Society: 162; Matrix 5793

* Jelly d'Arányi violin
Brahms/Joachim: Hungarian Dance No. 8 in A minor
Coenraad V. Bos, piano
Columbia 5681; Matrix 145620

Gioconda de Vito violin
Mozart: Violin Concerto No. 3 in G major, K. 216; III. Rondeau: Allegro
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra; Thomas Beecham
Naxos Historical 8.111349

Roberto Diaz viola
Robert Koenig, piano
Naxos 8.557391

Samuel Dushkin violin
Gershwin: Short Story
Max Pirani, piano
Naxos Nostalgia 8.120664

Mischa Elman violin
Dràila: Souvenir
Philip Gordon, piano
Naxos Nostalgia 8.120569
AZ of STRING PLAYERS

* Toshiya Eto violin
- Vivaldi: Violin Sonata in A major, Op. 2 No. 2, RV31: I. Preludio a capriccio 1.31
  Vladimir Sokoloff, piano
  Decca DL 710014, Matrix 7-6806

Maxim Fedotov violin
  Russian Philharmonic Orchestra · Dmitry Yablonsky
  Naxos 8.557689

Emanuel Feuermann cello
- Haydn: Cello Concerto No. 2 in D major, Hob. VIIb/2: III. Rondo: Allegro 5.14
  London Philharmonic Orchestra · Malcolm Sargent
  Naxos Historical 8.110908

Joseph Fuchs violin
  Artur Balsam, piano
  Naxos Historical 8.111252

* Lillian Fuchs viola
- Martinů: 3 Madrigals for Violin and Viola: I. Poco allegro 3.59
  Joseph Fuchs, violin
  Decca DL 8510, Matrix MG 1832

* Maurice Gendron cello
- Boccherini: Cello Concerto No. 9 in B flat major, G. 482: III. Rondo (Allegro) 6.52
  Orchestre des Lamoureux · Pablo Casals
  Philips ABL.3355 / A02067 L, Matrix 02067 2L [?]

Ilya Grubert violin
  Russian Philharmonic Orchestra · Dmitry Yablonsky
  Naxos 8.557194

Total playing time: 76:40

CD 2

* Arthur Grumiaux violin
- J.S. Bach: Double Concerto in D minor, BWV 1043: I. Vivace 4.03
  Jean Pougnet, violin II · Philharmonia String Orchestra · Boris Ord, Harpsichord · Walter Süßkind
  Columbia DX 1276-7; Matrix CAX 9503

Augustin Hadelich violin
- Telemann: Fantasy No. 2 in G major, TWV 40:15 6.02
  Naxos 8.570563

Chloë Hanslip violin
- Bazzini: La Ronde des lutins, Op. 25 4.54
  Caspar Frantz, piano
  Naxos 8.570800

Jascha Heifetz violin
- Franck: Violin Sonata in A major: I. Allegretto ben moderato 5.25
  Arthur Rubinstein, piano
  Naxos Historical 8.110990

Bronisław Huberman violin
  Berlin Staatskapelle · William Steinberg
  Naxos Historical 8.110903
A-Z of STRING PLAYERS

Tim Hugh cello
  Naxos 8.553663
  2:43

Ilya Kaler violin
- Paganini: 24 Caprices, Op. 1: No. 16 in G minor 'Presto'
  Naxos 8.550717
  1:34

Dong-Suk Kang violin
  Pascal Devoyon, piano
  Naxos 8.550906
  6:01

Louis Kaufman violin
- Vivaldi: Violin Concerto in C major, Op. 8 No. 6 RV180 ‘Il piacere’: III. Allegro
  Winterthur Symphony Orchestra · Clemens Dahinden
  Naxos Historical 8.110297–98
  2:55

Maria Kliegel cello
- Brahms: Cello Sonata No. 2 in F major, Op. 99: IV. Allegro molto
  Kristin Mercier, piano
  Naxos 8.550656
  4:35

*Serge Koussevitzky* double-bass
  Pierre Luboshutz, piano
  Victrola 1476-A; Matrix BE-46178
  2:38

Henning Kraggerud violin
  Christian Ihle Hadland, piano
  Naxos 8.572525
  2:46

CD TRACK LISTS

Miriam Kramer violin
- Bloch: Suite hébraique: II. ‘Processional’
  Simon Over, piano
  Naxos 8.554460
  2:10

Fritz Kreisler violin
- J.S. Bach (arr. Wilhelm): Suite No. 3 in D major, BWV 1068: II. ‘Air on a G-string’
  Unknown pianist
  Naxos Historical 8.112053
  2:33

Jan Kubelik violin
- J.S. Bach / Gounod: Ave Maria
  Nellie Melba, soprano · Gabriel Lapiere, piano
  Naxos Historical 8.110336
  4:28

Cho-Liang Lin violin
- Chin: Formosa Seasons: IV. ‘Spring’
  Kansas City Symphony · Michael Stern
  Naxos 8.570221
  3.06

Julian Lloyd Webber cello
- Ireland (arr. Lloyd Webber): Sea Fever
  John Lenahan, piano
  Naxos 8.572902
  3.06

Mark Lubotsky violin
- Schnittke: Fuga for Solo Violin
  Naxos 8.554728
  4:35

Total playing time: 72:57
### CD 3

**Lorraine McAslan** violin
- **Hofmann: Violin Concerto in B flat major, Badley Bb I.** Vivace  
  Northern Chamber Orchestra · Nicholas Ward  
  Naxos 8.554233

**Yehudi Menuhin** violin
- **Enescu: Violin Sonata No. 3 in A minor, Op. 25.** III. Allegro con brio, ma non troppo mossa  
  Hephzibah Menuhin, piano  
  Naxos Historical 8.111127

**Frank Miller** cello
- **Villa-Lobos: Bachianas brasileiras No. 5 for Soprano and Cello Ensemble.** I. Aria. Cantilena  
  Licia Albanese, soprano · studio orchestra · Leopold Stokowski  
  Naxos Historical 8.111103–31

**Nathan Milstein** violin
- **Brahms: Violin Sonata No. 3 in D minor, Op. 108.** III. Un poco presto e con sentimento  
  Vladimir Horowitz, piano  
  Naxos Historical 8.111051

**Zara Nelsova** cello
- **Barber: Cello Concerto, Op. 22.** II. Andante sostenuto  
  New Symphony Orchestra of London · Samuel Barber  
  Naxos Historical 8.1111358

**Paul Neubauer** viola
- **Biscardi: The Viola Had Suddenly Become a Voice**  
  James Goldworthy, piano  
  Naxos 8.559639

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### CD TRACK LISTS

**Takako Nishizaki** violin
- Mozart: Violin Concerto No. 1 in B flat major, K. 207. III. Presto  
  Capella Istropolitana · Johannes Wildner  
  Naxos 8.550414

**David Oistrakh** violin
- J.S. Bach: Violin Concerto in E major, BWV 1042. III. Allegro assai  
  Philadelphia Orchestra · Eugene Ormandy  
  Naxos Historical 8.111246

**Theo Olof** violin
- Mozart: Violin Concerto No. 5 in A major, K. 219. III. Rondo – Tempo di Minuetto  
  Classics Club Symphony Orchestra · Walter Goehr  
  The Classics Club 678; Matrix [not present]

**Aldo Parisot** cello
  Baltimore Conservatory Orchestra · Reginald Stewart  
  Saga XID 5258; Matrix [not present]

**György Pauk** violin
- Bartók: Rhapsody No. 1, Sz86: I. Prima parte ‘lassu’: Moderato  
  Jenő Jandó, piano  
  Naxos 8.550886

**Gregor Piatigorsky** cello
- Beethoven: Cello Sonata No. 2 in G minor, Op. 5 No. 2: I. Adagio sostenuto ed espressivo  
  Artur Schnabel, piano  
  Naxos Historical 8.110640
**AZ of STRING PLAYERS**

**Maud Powell** violin
- Elgar: Salut d'amour, Op. 12
  - George Falkenstein, piano
  - Naxos Historical 8.110961

**William Primrose** viola
  - Naxos Historical 8.111383
  - Dmitry Cogan, piano
  - Naxos 8.570703

**Philippe Quint** violin
  - Dmitriy Cogan, piano
  - Naxos 8.570703

- Total playing time: 76:55

**CD 4**

**Frederick Riddle** viola
- Delius: Hassan Suite: Serenade
  - Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Thomas Beecham
  - Philips GL.5691 / G 03635 L; Matrix 03635 1L

**Alexander Rudin** cello
- Glazunov: Two Pieces for Cello and Orchestra, Op. 20: II. ‘Sérénade espagnole’: Allegretto
  - Moscow Symphony Orchestra, Igor Golovschin
  - Naxos 8.553932

**Albert Sammons** violin
- Elgar: Violin Sonata in E minor, Op. 82: I. Allegro
  - William Murdoch, piano
  - Naxos Historical 8.110957

**CD TRACK LISTS**

- *Wolfgang Schneiderhan* violin
  - Beethoven: String Quartet No. 11 in F minor, Op. 95 ‘Serioso’: I. Allegro con brio
  - Schneiderhan Quartet (Wolfgang Schneiderhan, violin I; Otto Strasser, violin II; Ernst Moravetz, viola; Richard Krotshak, cello)
  - Columbia L.X. 8727; Matrix CHAX 464

- *Albert Spalding* violin
  - Handel: Trio Sonata in E major, Op. 2 No. 9, HWV 394: I. Adagio
  - William Primrose, viola, André Benoist, piano
  - Naxos Historical 8.111383

- *William Henry Squire* cello
  - Wagner (arr. unknown): ‘O Star of Eve’ from Tannhäuser
  - Hamilton Harty, piano
  - Columbia D 1415, Matrix 69735

- *János Starker* cello
  - Hovhaness: Cello Concerto, Op. 17: II. Allegro
  - Seattle Symphony Orchestra, Dennis Russell Davies
  - Naxos 8.559158

- *Isaac Stern* violin
  - Vivaldi: Concerto for Two Violins in G minor, RV517: II. Andante
  - David Oistrakh, violin II; William R. Smith, harpsichord; Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy
  - Fontana CFL.1070 / 699 061 CL; Matrix AA 699 061 2L [?] / Columbia D1415

- *Guilhermina Suggia* cello
  - Haydn: Cello Concerto No. 2 in D major, Hob. VIIb/2: II. Adagio
  - unidentified orchestra, John Barbirolli
  - HMV D1519; Matrix 8-07963
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<td>Raphael Wallfisch cello&lt;br&gt;Rubbra: Cello Sonata in G minor, Op. 60: II. Vivace flessibile&lt;br&gt;John York, piano&lt;br&gt;Marco Polo 8.223718</td>
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<td>* Efrem Zimbalist violin&lt;br&gt;Brahms / Joachim: Hungarian Dance No. 20 in D minor&lt;br&gt;Samuel Chotzinoff, piano&lt;br&gt;Victor DB.462; Matrix 3-07908</td>
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<td><strong>Jacques Thibaud</strong> violin&lt;br&gt;Brahms: Double Concerto for Violin and Cello in A minor, Op. 102: II. Andante</td>
<td><strong>Total playing time: 71:18</strong>&lt;br&gt;For details of the restored tracks, please see the credits page.</td>
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<td>Pablo Casals, cello · Pablo Casals Orchestra of Barcelona · Alfred Cortot&lt;br&gt;Naxos Historical 8.110930</td>
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<td><strong>Lucy van Dael</strong> violin&lt;br&gt;J.S. Bach: Sonata No. 6 in G major for Violin and Harpsichord, BWV 1019: II. Largo</td>
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Access information
www.naxos.com/azstringplayers
ISBN: 978-1-84379-810-1
Password: Plucked
The purpose of this book is to give an overview of solo string players on record, chosen because of their prominence or importance, or because they have recorded prolifically. Here the reader will find some of today’s household names – cellist Yo-Yo Ma or violinist Joshua Bell, for example – as well as lesser-known figures such as the one-time Philharmonia Orchestra leader Hugh Bean and seminal players of the more distant past like cellist Guilhermina Suggia or violinist Maurice Vieux. There are, of course, many more artists who could have been included if space permitted.

I have not attempted here to deliver a full and coherent history of solo string-playing: that would require a more in-depth and conceptual study. What is offered is a wide selection of players from different places and times, each studied from biographical, pedagogical and stylistic points of view. Readers can discover for themselves various fascinating links of pedagogy and, indeed, come to their own judgements as to whether there are clearly-defined ‘schools’ of playing illustrated by the traditional (but often far from straightforward) relationship of teacher and pupil. Sometimes the individualism of an artist stands out, making such considerations less significant; in other cases the influence of a particular institution or teacher is readily apparent. Some very clear and powerful phenomena are evident, such as the extraordinary outpouring of violinists mostly of Jewish descent – who were trained initially by Pyotr Stolyarsky in Odessa (surely making Stolyarsky one of the most prolific producers of world-class twentieth-century violinists), or the sudden emergence of the USA, via The Juilliard School and Curtis Institute, as a pedagogical centre, with string players trained by Ivan Galamian and his one-time assistant and successor Dorothy Delay, as well as Leonard Rose and Felix Salmond. (Stolyarsky, Galamian and DeLay were all primarily teachers, did not record, and thus are not included in this A–Z). But even such apparently clear distinctions of ‘school’ can be both elusive and complex when further scrutinised. Galamian was a pupil of a pupil of the Hungarian violinist Leopold Auer, who had founded the so-called ‘Russian School’ with his activities in St Petersburg from 1868 to 1917. Auer, whose own recordings are included in this book, is best known today as teacher to such luminaries as Efrem Zimbalist, Mischa Elman and Jascha Heifetz, all of whom settled in the USA, as indeed did Auer himself following the Russian Revolution. Auer had been a pupil of Joseph Joachim in the 1860s, and thus we find

the violin-playing centres of Germany, Hungary, Russia and the USA brought together in complex genealogical ties. The legacy of Shin’ichi Suzuki and his famous Suzuki Method in string-playing of the Far East is similar: Suzuki’s teaching (and, as seen in this book, his own playing) was heavily influenced by his formative training in Berlin under Karl Klingler who was himself another Joachim pupil, known for his faithful adherence to Joachim’s example. The Suzuki Method, of course, has extended its influence around the globe. Numerous other examples exist to show the fascinating complexity of this concept of ‘schools’. Where relevant in discussion of recordings I have tried to throw light on some of these matters, but ultimately the book will prompt readers themselves to examine the extent to which such links can be heard in recorded performances.

Although the nationality of musicians can be a misleading area of study (with emigration and re-nationalisation being commonplace), it is readily apparent within the selection here that certain birth-countries emerge as particularly significant: states associated with the Russian empire or Soviet federation account for a significant 16% (Russia alone producing some 7% of our artists), whilst the USA claims 13% and Britain 12%. With the notable exception of Suzuki (1888–1998) the Far East is unrepresented in the pre-World War II years. Amongst artists born after 1925 (and thus completing their training years around the end of World War II), however, we suddenly see a creditable 9% originating from Japan, Taiwan, China and Korea.

Many readers will notice immediately that male artists (82%) overwhelmingly outnumber female ones in this volume, which reflects something approximating reality both on the concert stage and in the recording studio across the period covered. There are no doubt numerous factors that dictate or influence the dominance of men in the history of Western art-music and I shall not attempt to explore this complex subject here. What is apparent, though, is the marked increase in female artists born from 1960 onwards in this selection (30%, rather than the 14–20% born between 1880 and 1959, or – even worse – the 8% born before 1880). It should be noted that these figures swing more in favour of female representation if one eliminates the double-bass (no women artists), cello (only 9% women) and viola (14%), resulting in a 23% female proportion across our selective history of violin-players on record. One reason for this might be the now-outmoded perception that the larger instruments were unsuitable or unseemly for women to play – an issue famously circumvented by the cellist Guilhermina Suggia (1888–1950) by the wearing of voluminous and extremely glamorous gowns.
Music scholars, performers and listeners of the twenty-first century find themselves in a fascinating landscape of recorded sound. The invention of recording technology meant that, for the first time in human history, performances were no longer tied solely to specific times and circumstances, but could be replicated, reflected upon and examined in minute detail. As Timothy Day outlines in *A Century of Recorded Music: Listening to Musical History* (Yale University Press, 2000), it took a considerable period of time after the invention of the phonograph in the late nineteenth century for recordings to exert a powerful cultural influence. Early recordings were expensive, aurally limited and seen by many as an entertainment novelty unlikely to have far-reaching artistic consequences. Indeed, Igor Stravinsky famously considered the piano roll to be the best way of rendering his performances ‘correctly’ and predicted, inaccurately, that the future lay in the advancement of that technology. Yet sound recordings did develop rapidly in influence. The number of important artists making recordings by the old acoustic process grew, including figures of such eminence and august seriousness as Joseph Joachim, heir to the classical German tradition of Brahms, Schumann, Mendelssohn and Spohr, whose artistic credentials were formulated in Leipzig in the 1840s via his contact with Mendelssohn and the first truly prolific editor of violin music, Ferdinand David. Invention of the electric microphone and its rapid adoption after 1925 made recordings much more revealing sonically and by this time the recordings industry was already a major part of the musical world, moulding and shaping careers. As Mark Katz has observed in *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music* (University of California Press, 2004 and 2010) there is even some evidence to suggest that the recording process directly altered some aspects of performance throughout the twentieth century (something he termed ‘the Phonograph Effect’).

What we hear in over a hundred years of string recordings are substantial changes in style and attitude. The earliest documents by players such as cellist Julius Klengel, violist Oskar Nedbal and violinist Joseph Joachim shed light on pre-twentieth-century approaches to performance. Two immediately conspicuous differences compared with modern times are the prolific use of portamento (expressive slides between notes) and modest, selective employment of vibrato. By and large the evidence of recordings shows how the portamento slide became progressively less common (the conductor Adrian Boult recollected that it seemed simply to disappear over time) whilst vibrato became more common, frequent, and aurally dominating. By the 1930s almost all string players used vibrato most of the time – even if in a style rather different from that of more recent years – and by the 1950s portamenti had become extremely rare even in Romantic music. This book and the recordings of players discussed in it illuminate such gradual but persistent trends. They also reveal stylistic variations in performance ideas between individuals and, indeed, different centres of pedagogy. There is a powerful suggestion, for example, that string players trained in the linked institutions of Paris and Brussels (the Franco-Belgian ‘school’) at the start of the recordings era used vibrato rather more than their German and Austro-Hungarian counterparts trained in, say, Leipzig, Berlin or Budapest or, in the case of cellists, taught by associates of the so-called ‘Dresden school’. Charting a chronology of recordings will reveal these changes to us at our twenty-first-century vantage-point, but the extent to which the recordings industry actually impelled such changes needs to be considered as well. Mark Katz’s assertion that the increasing popularity of vibrato had something to do with the peculiarly scratchy sound created by early electric microphones is somewhat undermined by the fact that, in violin playing at least, vibrato was in the ascendency before recordings, being noted in the playing of influential violinist Henryk Wieniawski, for example. It is certainly likely, though, that the commercial success of players associated with this new aesthetic (such as Fritz Kreisler and Lionel Tertis, two early household names of the era of recorded sound and radio) meant that such a style caught on, and players who maintained elements of the older style of playing (see in particular Gaspar Cassadó, Rebecca Clarke, Josef Gingold, Mari Iwamoto, Erica Morini, Gérard Poulet or Tibor Varga) began to sound anachronistic in comparison.

The closing decades of the twentieth century were characterised by a partitioning of style between mainstream performance and what used to be called authentic performance, usually on replica or original instruments set up according to the period of music in question. Whilst the idea of historically-informed performance (HIP) can trace its genesis back to pioneers of the late nineteenth century such as Arnold Dolmetsch, it is not until the period after World War II that we encounter a consistent and widespread manifestation of this idea. Often this has been linked to concentration on particular repertories (such as Reinhardt Goebel’s extensive Biber recordings) and involves the rediscovery of historic instruments (such as the violoncello da spalla performances of Sigiswald Kuijken) or Vadim Borisovsky’s use of the viola d’amore or specific period approaches on modern instruments (such as Nigel Kennedy or Willy Boskovsky directing performances from the violin).

Overlapping with all of this there is an interest in revising forgotten or neglected works, such as Vivaldi’s twelve Op. 8 Violin Concertos (including the now ubiquitous *Four Seasons*) which were...
recorded complete and in their original form for the very first time by Louis Kaufman between 1947 and 1950, or the violin concerti of Louis Spohr, maintained doggedly in concert by Erica Morini throughout her career. The twenty-first century is already seeing some integration of HIP and mainstream performance ideas. Indeed, the vogue for historically-informed performing practices – and the scholarship that provides such information – has risen to such a height since the post-war period that it is nowadays quite rare to hear a new recording of eighteenth-century or earlier repertoire that does not, in some measure, evoke elements of style that we associate with the period. This said, an area of performing practice notable for its extremely scarce representation in recorded string-playing of recent decades is the playing of nineteenth-century repertory in an historically-appropriate manner. Although research findings are nowadays becoming widely published on the subject, their influence has yet to filter down into the recordings industry or concert hall at large. Violist Hartmut Lindemann is a noteworthy exception here. Sonorities and interpretative ideas in the nineteenth century were often vastly different to the modern international sound that prevails today, but with an ever-increasing number of historic recordings being restored and digitised, the gradual transition between the Romantic approach and more modern schools of playing can be charted relatively easily. Perhaps this area of performance presents itself as a future challenge for string players?

Another interesting facet of string-playing in the last century is the emergence of the viola and double-bass as solo instruments. At the dawn of the recording era it was the violin that was the dominant new instrument and the preferred one for recording, perhaps because of its eminently suitable frequency-range. The acoustic recording process simply could not pick up the frequencies of the double-bass (although some extraordinary experiments with giant recording horns were tried by the Edison company!) and in any case domestic gramophones could not reproduce such low sounds. Thus, in terms of recordings the double-bass is absent from our chronology before the advent of electric microphones in the mid-1920s. Its scant pre-modern repertoire suggests that it was not really considered a solo instrument before then either. There were, of course, notable early exceptions: the bassist Domenico Dragonetti (1763–1846), for example, became an international celebrity, was one of the highest-paid musicians in the Philharmonic Society orchestra and persuaded orchestral composers of the virtue of scoring a bass line independent of the cellos. The double-bass as soloist remains somewhat rarefied, with a reliance upon transcriptions to pad out its repertoire, although, as Corrado Canonici or Gary Karr demonstrate, the open boundaries of post-war composition have admitted the instrument as a soloist with some very effective results. Johann Joachim Quantz in his flute treatise of 1752 suggested that ‘The viola is generally considered to be of lesser importance by the music world… often played by people who are either beginners in music or are not talented enough to apply themselves to the violin. Since the instrument does not bring its player any special privileges, skilful musicians are not keen to play it’. The viola, nonetheless, has fared rather better than the bass in becoming a fully-fledged solo instrument, initially through the activities of prolific performers, arrangers and advocates of the instrument such as Lionel Tertis or, later, Watson Forbes, and aided by an increasingly rich twentieth- and twenty-first-century repertory, all of which helped it escape its typecast character as the harbinger of death or doom in orchestral writing! ‘True’ violists (that is, those trained only on that instrument rather than switching from violin) are, however, surprisingly rare. If one includes works for viola da gamba (bass viol) in the repertoire of the cello (in the same way that early keyboard music is adopted into the canon of works for piano) then its history as a major solo instrument parallels that of the violin. It is perhaps odd, then, that its presence both on the concert stage and in the recordings industry has always lagged behind that of its smaller cousin – simply a curious phenomenon, maybe, or a result of market forces. It is also interesting to note a parity between the instruments of the modern string family and solo singers through the ages, with sopranos receiving the most decorative, lyrical and florid arias and being the most widely recorded, closely followed by tenors (a smaller number of whom have achieved household name status), but with contraltos and basses relegated somewhat to the second ranks of celebrity. It is often said that the history of recording reveals a shift from heterogeneity of style with the early pioneers and stars to increasing homogeneity, with all the connotations of stylistic atrophy that this implies. The recordings highlighted in this volume rather qualify this view. Whilst for a period of several decades it seemed unlikely that such unique voices – all instantly recognisable – as are found in recordings of the first third of the twentieth century would ever emerge again, the influence of historical performing practice has, in the last few years, provoked a much wider spectrum of both repertoire and performance style than had latterly been the case. As with all histories it is impossible to tell which future directions will be taken from this position, but the documentation of some 300 figures in this book provides us with a window onto various artistic personalities and approaches, changing tastes and practices, and – hopefully – the possibilities for string-playing in future years.
In terms of selling their artistry in a world market, parameters have shifted enormously for recording performers over the last century. In the early days it was novelty enough to lay down one’s art for posterity; a celebrity culture very soon emerged, however, in which choice of repertoire (and perhaps even the manner of its performance) was dictated more by the record companies and a few influential impresarios who could make or break a player’s career. Since the advent of the LP, then the CD, and more latterly the digital age, performers and record companies have increasingly had to find eye-catching and innovative ways of pushing new recordings in a flooded market. This, rather refreshingly, can result in some genuinely interesting performance ideas (such as Salvatore Accardo’s disc of Paganini works played on the composer’s own Guarneri del Gesù violin, or James Ehnes’s ‘Homage’ album which compares the sound-qualities of various antique instruments), and concept programming (such as Bach coupled with modern works – see Thomas Demenga and Midori – or Irvine Arditti’s pairing of Biber and Berio). Furthermore, historic reissues (including those on the pioneering and prolific Naxos Historical label) may have begun as a specialist sideline but have now moved firmly onto the recording industry’s centre stage.

Each performer’s entry provides the reader with salient biographical information, prefaced by a brief timeline of their career, and a commentary upon a small sample of their recorded repertoire selected on the basis of importance and artistic effectiveness; as appropriate the selections display the performer’s approach either to a variety of material or to a specialised repertory. Of course, all aesthetic viewpoints on both compositions and recordings are inevitably subjective; my remarks are not meant to be necessarily pejorative, but rather offer an honest opinion on what I hear. I have tried, however, to highlight some of the more noteworthy features of the performances, whether or not they agree with my own taste, as a stylistic commentary to guide the reader.

Factual material here is as accurate as is possible. Every effort has been made to reference dates, places, record labels and other details definitively, but at times this has proved challenging or even impossible. As a consequence unimpeachable accuracy is unattainable in this book as much as anywhere else: its contents, however, will provide the reader with a wide-ranging and well-informed view of solo string players on record. Researching this volume has been enormously rewarding, revealing and at times intriguing; it is to be hoped that something of this is communicated to its readers and listeners.
Salvatore Accardo began violin lessons at six and studied with Luigi d’Ambrosio at the Naples Conservatory, working to a strict regime of scales and Ševčik exercises. He undertook additional studies at the Accademia Chigiana, Siena, with Yvonne Astruc (a pupil of Enescu), where he was able to play with the likes of Pablo Casals and Alfred Cortot. He later became a teacher there himself but bemoaned the dearth of chamber music, considering this fundamental to a musician’s experience and development. Throughout his career he has been instrumental in setting up various festivals, academies, master-classes and ensembles designed to encourage the highest levels of achievement amongst string players, and his re-launching of the Orchestra da Camera Italiana in 1996 provided an ensemble specifically for the best graduates from the Walter Stauffer Academy. Accardo and the OCI have made some significant recordings including, in 1999, the complete violin works of Astor Piazzolla (Foné) and the complete Paganini violin concertos (EMI Classics).

Winning the first Paganini Competition in 1958 shot Accardo to stardom and he became known immediately as a Paganini specialist. This reputation was cemented by a complete recording of all six concertos attributed to the violinist–composer (No. 6 is considered spurious) with the London Philharmonic, and Accardo has always disputed the popular view that Paganini was simply a violinistic wizard. Despite this early specialism, his repertoire spans all centuries of violin writing. Accardo represented Italy at the Paganini Bicentenary celebrations in New York and was allowed to use Paganini’s 1742 Guarneri del Gesù ‘Canon’ violin, choosing (perhaps recklessly, given the unpredictability of a museum-piece instrument in foreign climes!) to perform the 24 Capricci. He recorded an album of various works on this instrument in 1992. Aside from this, Accardo plays almost exclusively on the 1727 ‘Hart’ Stradivarius, which he bought from Zino Francescatti; some consider that his sound became akin to that of Francescatti through association with this particular instrument.

Accardo’s discography is broad in scope, ranging from contemporary music (a number of composers have written for him, including Piazzolla, Piston and Xenakis) to Baroque repertoire. It seems appropriate to begin with Paganini, represented here by the concertos recorded in 1998 under his own direction. All of these concerto performances show a lively and committed approach, balancing high spirits with Paganini’s exhibitionist interpretation of the early Romantic violin concerto style inherited from Giovanni Battista Viotti. Accardo’s tone in the Concerto No. 2 is bright and transparent (comparisons with Francescatti being thus well deserved), although there is a tendency to force the tone in high registers making the E-string sound rather metallic, and his accuracy here,
as elsewhere, is not unimpeachable. He uses a continuous vibrato in the modern mould and largely avoids portamenti. The opening of the finale sounds in need of more contact with the string, but his ricochet bowing is beautifully judged here, as it is in his lively 1995 reading of Elgar’s La Capricieuse on Paganini’s 1742 Guarnerius.

Well-balanced and more accurate are Accardo’s 1978 disc of Bruch’s Romance for Violin and Orchestra (Accardo has recorded all of Bruch’s violin music) and the brooding and rather unsettling sound-world of Piazzolla’s Oblivion (2002) with its idiomatic quotation of jazz-like elements, conveyed with sweetness and an appropriate degree of stylistic irony.

Accardo’s Baroque repertoire is praiseworthy, although one might question the aesthetic consistency of a Baroque accompaniment (both in style and instrumentation) alongside his entirely modern sound. There is a strong reading (1982) of Bach’s Double Concerto with the equally assertive Anne Sophie-Mutter. His Vivaldi C minor Sonata (1977) contains some effective ornamentation in the slow movement, although Accardo finds it impossible to resist the modern vibrato!

His playing, then, is not flawless. This said, an infectious enthusiasm imbues Accardo’s performances with a distinctive and powerful voice.

PIERRE AMOYAL Violin

b. 1949, Paris, France

Career
1963 Wins Ginette Neveu Prize
1964 Wins Paganini Competition, Genoa
1966–1971 Studies with Heifetz
1970 Wins Enescu Prize
1971 Debut in Paris (Berg Concerto)
1977–1986 Professor at Paris Conservatoire
1978 Wigmore Hall debut
1985 Carnegie Hall debut

1987– Teaches at Lausanne Conservatoire
1991 Founds Lausanne Summer Music Academy

Selected Recordings
Brahms: Violin Sonata No. 1 in G, Op. 78 (with Pascal Rogé, piano) (Decca)
Chausson: Concerto for Piano, Violin and String Quartet, Op. 21 (with Pascal Rogé, piano) — Quatuor Ysaÿe (Decca)
Fauré: Violin Sonata No. 1 in A, Op. 13 (with Pascal Rogé, piano) (Decca)
Fauré: Violin Sonata No. 2 in E minor, Op. 108 (with Pascal Rogé, piano) (Decca)
Prokofiev: Violin Sonata No. 1 in F minor, Op. 80 (with Frederic Chiu, piano) (Harmonia Mundi USA)
Spohr: Violin Concerto No. 8 in A minor, Op. 47 ‘in Form einer Gesangsszene’ — Lausanne Chamber Orchestra / Armin Jordan (Apex)

Pierre Amoyal’s playing evidences the kind of rich warmth that often characterises violinists trained in the Franco-Belgian tradition. There is a malleability of tone, rhythm and tempo that suits his predominantly Romantic repertoire, although his is not necessarily a consciously period approach. His early training was with Roland Charmy, first privately and then at the Paris Conservatoire where he won a premier prix aged twelve. Heifetz later invited him to America for further study, which perhaps engenders stylistic comparison with Auer’s Russian school, but it is Amoyal’s Frenchness that is most apparent – much more so indeed than with his contemporary Augustin Dumay (also trained by Charmy, then at the Juillard School) who has been dubbed by The Strad as the ‘legitimate heir to […] Ysaÿe, Dubois and Grumiaux’.

This refreshingly idiomatic style naturally shines in certain contexts more than others. His 1991 Brahms sonata recordings (epitomised by Op. 78) are rather ponderous and lacking in energy, although beautifully voiced and thoughtfully constructed. Although his 2004 Spohr Concerto No. 8 conspicuously contradicts (as do all modern performances) Spohr’s strong views upon how his music should be played – the up-bow staccati in the finale, for example, are a rather ragged modern compromise – there is a generosity to Amoyal’s sound here and a soulful bearing that delivers the work with meaning. In the Prokofiev Violin Sonata Op. 80 (1999) his warmly-voiced tone is modified to account for Prokofiev’s lyrical, yet at times stark and brooding, work.
Attention should certainly be paid to Amoyal’s Fauré violin sonatas (1994) – both the well-known No. 1, Op. 13 and the late No. 2, Op. 108, which is comparatively and unjustly neglected. Amoyal’s reading of this music is natural and idiomatic; there is some effective tempo flexibility in the opening movement of Op. 13 and flamboyance in the third movement that readily identifies Amoyal’s French heritage. The virile Sonata No. 2 is performed with drama and an exciting tonal palette. Amoyal’s warm tone, with significant use of quite relaxed vibrato and readiness to employ expressive portamenti, is unquestionably akin to Fauré’s envisaged sound-world for these works. The Chausson Concerto with the Quatuor Ysaïe (all Paris Conservatoire alumni) follows suit.

Irvine Arditti’s specialism in contemporary music is well known and defines his contribution to present-day violin playing. It is often said that, by commissioning such works and presenting them via attractive programming (often setting a new work alongside a Beethoven quartet, for example), his Arditti Quartet saved the string quartet as a compositional medium in the latter half of the twentieth century, it being considered outdated by modernist composers.

Arditti’s training was at London’s Royal Academy of Music and it was there that he established his Quartet. Although he would have been well acquainted with traditional repertoire as a student, Arditti’s musical language has become modernist and experimental to the extent that he looks backwards to the Second Viennese School, whereas the majority of artists would approach serialism and later experimental music in the light of several hundred years of tonal composition.

Thus No. 7 from Berg’s student compositions 9 Short Pieces (2003) evidences the most conventional sound-world of Arditti’s solo recordings. Here he demonstrates a breadth and warmth of tone representative of the mainstream tradition of the second half of the twentieth century. A deeply-coloured sound is heavily reliant upon powerful, wide vibrato, but it is notable that Arditti does not sugar-coat his renditions otherwise. Consequently, Webern’s exquisite 4 Pieces (1994) are delivered with fine control over the myriad subtle manipulations of tone and sound demanded by the composer. The Ferneyhough and Nancarrow examples here have great energy and commitment. The Nancarrow (2007) is dependent upon the super-human piano virtuosity made possible by the player-piano, and Arditti’s (human!) violin playing interweaves with utter technical confidence in an impressive display of virtuosity. The Ferneyhough is a denser and larger-scale work in all ways and here Arditti’s handling of colour, texture and rhetorical declamation is notable. Xenakis’s Mikka (1991) is also a convincing portrayal of the composer’s trademark shapes and gestures. Berio’s Sequenza VIII (2009) is presented in an innovative programme comprising 17th-century sonatas by Biber interspersed with small works by Berio – both composers who were considered avant-garde in their own day.

Arditti’s concentration upon repertory still seen as esoteric and specialised (and likely to remain so) is enough to guarantee inclusion in any list of important musicians, but the aplomb and confidence with which he delivers it also testifies to a powerful musical intelligence and a formidable technical mastery.
LEOPOLD AUER Violin

b. 1845, Veszprém, Hungary  
d. 1930, Loschwitz, nr Dresden, Germany

Career
1853 Begins study at Budapest Conservatory with Ridley Kohné  
1857–1858 Studies at Vienna Conservatory with Jacob Dont  
1863–1864 Studies with Joseph Joachim in Hanover  
1864 Makes debut at Leipzig Gewandhaus  
1864–1866 Becomes orchestral leader in Düsseldorf  
1868 Succeeds Wieniawski as violin professor at St Petersburg Conservatory  
1917 Leaves Russia due to Revolution  
1918 Arrives in New York; teaches there and at Curtis Institute, Philadelphia, until his death  
1920 Makes two private recordings

Selected Recordings
Brahms–Joachim: Hungarian Dance No. 1 (private recording, 1920) (Pavilion)  
Tchaikovsky–Wilhelmj: Mélodie, Op. 42 No. 3 (private recording, 1920) (Pavilion)

Hungarian-born Leopold Auer will always be associated with St Petersburg and the last years of the Tsarist regime in Russia (under which he worked for more than half a century), although he was equally influential upon his arrival in the USA. He is known chiefly as a pedagogue, Elman, Heifetz and Zimbalist heading a long list of eminent and celebrated pupils. His famously flexible attitude to style and the need to adapt this to each individual pupil made him a great teacher and, in this respect perhaps, the obverse of Joachim, who taught mainly by example and instilled a regime at the Berlin Hochschule in which all players and teachers were created in his own aesthetic image – a matter criticised by Carl Flesch.

In teaching, Auer was a paradox. His own views on matters of style were deeply entrenched, as many of his writings display, and incline towards established central-European attitudes very similar to the classical ideals of Spohr, David and Joachim. In his Violin Playing as I Teach It (1921) Auer is particularly outspoken regarding over-use of vibrato at a time when this was becoming all-pervasive. His pupils, however, came to epitomise the modern age and the new twentieth-century sound. Heifetz in particular set new standards of virtuosity and immaculate execution wedded inextricably to this new style: continuous vibrato, economical use of portamento and a general strictness in rhythm and tempo.

The explanation for this apparent conundrum appears to be that most of Auer’s pupils came to him in an already finished technical state, his role being to develop their artistic sensibilities. His apparent inability to create in others a comparable aesthetic to his own was thus a sign of strength: for it is historically self-evident that many of his pupils became very successful and powerful voices in their own right, whilst many of Joachim’s pupils, by contrast, either remained under his shadow (as was the case with Karl Klingler) or failed in other ways to develop into such ‘household names’.

Hearing Auer play is thus tremendously significant for understanding him as a musical figure. His two recordings, made when he was seventy-six years of age, belong to a surprisingly vibrant and productive twilight period of his life. Vacating St Petersburg in emergency circumstances, Auer had left practically everything he owned in a country gripped by revolutionary fervour and to which he never returned. As a result he was forced to teach and perform copiously in old age. He put his name to a long list of editions and publications at the same time, although there is some doubt over the extent to which they reflect his own outlook.

His playing is surprisingly vivid and, given the physical impediment of his quite small and inflexible hands (which caused unfavourable comparison with Wieniawski), he proves an agile player. His performance of the Brahms–Joachim Hungarian Dance No. 1 is taken at a smart tempo and includes improvised rapid ascending arpeggios at the ends of phrases: it shows, as with Joachim’s playing, a familiarity with this ‘gypsy’ material gained, perhaps, in his youth. Auer’s performance of Tchaikovsky’s Mélodie is exquisite and attests to his long experience in Russia and close association with composers such as Taneyev, Arensky and, of course, Tchaikovsky himself. In a sound-world comparable to Joachim’s, with a sparing, narrow vibrato, a flexible attitude to rhythm and tempo
and a discerning but frequent employment of portamento, Auer’s playing of this piece is an essay in phrasing and subtle, fastidious musicianship. No phrase is rendered the same way twice, all admitting minute differences of vibrato and of portamento speed and location. Notwithstanding the primitive acoustic sound, Auer’s playing is truly superb. It is a fitting testimony to one of the most important and enduring of nineteenth-century violinists, who also enabled and encouraged so many who were to mould the course of twentieth-century string playing.

**FELIX AYO** Violin

**Career**

- 1950–1951 Studies at Accademia Musicale Chigiana, Siena with Enescu and Principe
- 1950 Follows Principe to Rome to continue studies
- 1952–1968 Leader of I Musici
- 1970 Forms Quartetto Beethoven di Roma
- 1972 Begins teaching at Rome Conservatory
- 1989 Professor of violin at Rome Conservatory

**Selected Recordings**

- Mendelssohn: Violin Sonata in F minor, Op. 4 (with Bruno Canino, piano) (Dynamic)
- Mendelssohn: Violin Sonata in F (1838) (with Bruno Canino, piano) (Dynamic)
- Tartini: Violin Concerto in E minor, D. 56 — Symphonia Perusina / Felix Ayo (Dynamic)
- Turina: Violin Sonata No. 2, Op. 82 'Spanish' (with Bruno Canino, piano) (Dynamic)
- Viotti: Violin Sonata No. 2 in A, Op. 4 G. 27 (with Corrado de Bernart, piano) (Dynamic)
- Vivaldi: Il cimento dell’armonia e dell’inventione, Op. 8 Nos. 1–4 'Le quattro stagioni' — I Musici / Felix Ayo (Philips / Naxos Classical Archives)

Having graduated with honours at fourteen from the Bilbao Conservatory and performed Beethoven’s Violin Concerto in concert, Spaniard Felix Ayo went on to study with René Benedetti, George Enescu and Rémy Principe, thus benefitting from several national string-playing traditions. Finding himself in Rome, he was ideally placed to join the new ensemble I Musici which he led for over fifteen years, making many concert tours and recordings. Equally successful has been his Quartetto Beethoven di Roma. Like several other artists of his time, Ayo likes to direct from the violin in Baroque and Classical repertoire with orchestra.

His discography shows an interesting tendency to specialise: it includes all twelve of Viotti’s violin sonatas (1997), the early violin works of Mendelssohn (also 1997), all the violin concertos of Tartini (1993), and works for violin and piano by Spanish late-Romantic composer Joaquín Turina (1998–2001). Ayo’s playing is mainstream in the context of his generation, defined by a prominent vibrato and the apparently deliberate pursuit of tonal beauty above all else. This is not to say that he lacks fire and direction. Turina’s Violin Sonata No. 2 is compellingly played with emotive engagement, whilst the Mendelssohn F major Sonata of 1838 delivers an exhilarating finale at a blistering tempo. Mendelssohn’s Op. 4 Sonata is suitably uncluttered, but some of the work’s Classical phrase shapes are overlooked. The Viotti sonatas are blameless renditions, even if more in the way of early Romantic violin style could be conveyed to avoid them sounding washed-out (though this is as much the composer’s responsibility as the performers’!). The Tartini concertos are more varied. Those with the Orchestra Rossini di Pesaro (in D, A and E) take a rather saccharine approach, but those performed with the Symphonia Perusina are brighter and rhythmically incisive; the slow movement of D. 56 is atmospheric and reflective, though bearing little relationship to eighteenth-century performance style.

Perhaps the most outstanding feature of Ayo’s discography is the pioneering 1955 Vivaldi Four Seasons, which was only the third or fourth complete issue of these concertos and furthermore marked I Musici’s recording debut. Today we know their very square phrasing and heavy approach in slow movements to be anachronistic, but they are to be appreciated for their intention to promote music that has, in the half-century since, become a staple part of the repertoire.
RODION AZARKHIN Double-bass

b. 1931, Kharkiv, USSR (now Ukraine)
d. 2007, Moscow, Russia

Career
1954 Graduates from Leningrad Conservatory
1959 Joins USSR State Orchestra
1975–1989 Principal bassist of USSR State Orchestra

Selected Recordings
Rossini (arr. Azarkhin): Figaro’s Cavatina from Il barbiere di Siviglia, Act I (with H. Aleksandrova, piano) (Melodya)
Shostakovich (arr. Azarkhin): Romance from The Gadfly (with H. Aleksandrova, piano) (Melodya)
Tchaikovsky (arr. Azarkhin): Valse Sentimentale, Op. 51 No. 6 (with H. Aleksandrova, piano) (Melodya)

A great believer in the artistic potential of the solo double-bass, Azarkhin had an extraordinary concert repertoire including many of his own transcriptions – no music was safe from his pen! Seeking as colourful an artistic pallet as possible, he adapted his bow with weights taped at the tip and middle, and a thumb-lever mechanism that would change the tension to produce a ‘finger accent’ (although he insisted no adaptation was a substitute for total mastery of technique with a standard bow).

Trained at a Leningrad music school and then the Conservatory, Azarkhin later studied at the Moscow Conservatory and worked with many Soviet ensembles including the Moscow Chamber Orchestra under Rudolf Barshai. In 1959 his first solo bass recital was so successful that it became an annual event until his retirement and was broadcast on Radio Moscow. Claiming never to repeat the same piece in these recitals, by the end of his career Azarkhin had a repertoire of over 500 works. His recordings were made with Melodya (then government-owned) between 1959 and 1973. Some of these were released in 1975 as The Art of Rodion Azarkhin, which has been described as ‘the single most talked-about bass recording of all time’.

The double-bass is not the most obvious of solo instruments and even Azarkhin’s extraordinary virtuosity cannot always make a compelling case for it. His Sarasate Zigeunerweisen suffers from a rather unclear tone and some inevitably imprecise intonation, though it reveals him to be a consummate stylist. There is great humour in some of these virtuoso pieces such as Rossini’s Figaro’s Cavatina, although this includes some slightly unpleasant double-stopping with, again, a lack of clarity and a somewhat ‘buzzy’ tone resulting from a powerful vibrato. Rimsky-Korsakov’s Flight of the Bumble Bee is rendered with great poise and style with appropriate swells and decays in dynamic, whilst in more sustained melodic works Azarkhin proves to be an impassioned interpreter of great artistic cultivation. Après un Rêve is stirring, with impetuous changes of tempo, whilst Tchaikovsky’s Valse Sentimentale uses the full range of the instrument well, liberating the lower end of its compass into a melodic role. The selected Shostakovich item demonstrates Azarkhin’s cultural sympathy with Russian composers, and well displays his tonal aesthetic. Portamenti are controlled and relatively light, and his vibrato, in the most convincing passages in cello register, suggests parity with Rostropovich.

Shostakovich said of Azarkhin: ‘Apart from high technical quality, his artistic performance is distinguished by its grand culture and great expressiveness’, and he was certainly a flamboyant advocate of his instrument. Some recordings are more convincing than others, but his supreme musicianship always shines through.
This is the beginning of *The A–Z of String Players*. The book, containing more than 300 biographies, illustrated with photographs, is available to buy. For more details, please visit www.naxos.com.