

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

THE INFLUENCE OF THE FRENCH  
CELLO SCHOOL IN NORTH  
AMERICA

By

Marie-Elaine Gagnon

A DOCTORAL ESSAY

Submitted to the Faculty  
of the University of Miami  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

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AMERICA

Marie-Elaine Gagnon

Approved:

---

Ross Harbaugh, Chair  
Professor of Instrumental  
Performance

---

Dr. Steven G. Ullmann  
Dean of the Graduate School

---

Thomas Sleeper  
Professor of Instrumental  
Performance

---

Dr. Dennis Kam  
Professor of Music Theory  
and Composition

---

Scott Flavin  
Adjunct Professor of  
Instrumental Performance

Gagnon, Marie-Elaine  
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In North America

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The purpose of this study is to explore how the French School of Cello technique evolved over two and a half centuries and how it has influenced cello playing and pedagogy in the United States and in Canada, and whether it is still possible to distinguish it from other schools of bow and left hand technique.

The study includes a historical background and overview of the origins of the French cello school: its importance and influence on today's major schools of cello playing, a comparison of the world's five major cello schools, and a proposal of the existence of a Global school of cello playing that has evolved in North America.

A cello family tree in Chapter 4 traces the multiple cello school influences on the author. Interviews of five established cello teachers in North America are discussed in Chapter 5. Appendices include the unabridged interviews of the five cellists and a table of content of Bazelaire's *Méthode*.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The French school of cello playing has a long and significant history. For much of the eighteenth century, the best musicians of Europe, including the pre-eminent cellists of the day congregated at the court of Louis XIV. The famous *Grande Bande*, in residence at Versailles under the baton of Jean-Baptiste Lully, was a focus for innovations in instrumental performance. It could be stated that the Sun King's taste for good music was in part responsible for the French Cello School's influence over the other European schools of playing, including the German and Belgian Schools. In the early history of the cello, perhaps the most significant personage is Martin Berteau.<sup>1</sup> "In his own time he was clearly a figure of a major importance as a performer, teacher and composer of music for the instrument. The authors of the earliest cello methods who were actually cellists...advertised themselves as pupils of "le célèbre Berteau".<sup>2</sup> Although some assert that all cellists are descended from Franciscello, he was actually a gambist, and it was his student, Martin Berteau, who could be described as the grandfather of all cellists. Many essays and treatises have been written on the French cello school describing the

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<sup>1</sup>Adas Jane, "Le célèbre Berteau," *Early Music* 17, 368-380 : August 1989, in *PCI Full Text* [ database on-line]; available from <http://iiiprxy.library.miami.edu/>; Internet (Miami, FL: Oxford University Press, accessed 5 August 2004).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 368.

highlights and assets related to the technique of the violoncello. However, “La Borde, in his *Essai sur la Musique*” (1780) wrote that Berteau had contributed the most to the perfection of the cello.”<sup>3</sup> The early days of the French cello school utilized a violin fingering pattern of half steps and whole steps. Cello players had a very limited knowledge of various fingering option. Often, they would play half steps and whole steps with the same finger. Martin Berteau contributed to changing cello fingering technique to a system in which one finger was designated for each half step.<sup>4</sup> Berteau was also one of the first to integrate the use of natural harmonics in solo literature. The use of natural and artificial harmonics in the performance of solo literature was a practice unique to the French cello school.<sup>5</sup>

Another well-known French cello pedagogue, Jean-Louis Duport, published in 1804 the *Essai sur le doité du violoncelle et la conduite de l’archet*. In the preface of his *Essai*, Jean-Louis Duport hoped to “make easier the immense labor involved in learning to play the cello, and also to establish uniform principles for fingering the cello.”<sup>6</sup> At the end of his preface, Duport said:

“Some things will be met with in the course of this work which will appear difficult, but I have taken care to avoid such as are impracticable. ...This is not a vain theory. Not a scale, a passage, or a piece has been inserted, until I have frequently tried it myself, and until it has been also tried by my brother, (who was, is, and always will be my

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Valerie Walden. “Technique, style and performing practice to c. 1900.” *The Cambridge Companion to the Cello*, edited by Robin Stowell. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 185.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 189.

<sup>6</sup>Sallie Ann Biggar, “The Duport Brother: Their Contributions to the Art of Violoncello Performance.”(M.M. thesis, American University, 1973), 49.



master,) and even by some talented pupils of mine at Berlin and Potsdam. This has fully convinced me that nothing will be found herein which cannot be easily, neatly and accurately executed, for what at first sight may appear impracticable, will become perfectly easy, if the learner have patience to practice it, and also to finger it regularly, as it is marked.”<sup>7</sup>

The influence of Jean-Louis Duport was truly global; he met and taught all the leading exponent of the world’s cello schools including Davidov, Platel, Levasseur and even Romberg. This tendency for schools of thought to influence each other continued into the twentieth century, and indeed accelerated. As air travel and internet brought exponents of modern-day cello schools into contact more easily, the French school influenced cellists all over the world. However, even the French school began to be influenced by other national approaches such as the highly developed Russian and Belgian schools. A universal or “Global” School began to emerge.

The attitude of Canadian and American schools of music toward the globalization of cello playing is positive. In fact, it seems that North America has historically embraced the concept of melting pots, even one for cello technique and pedagogy. The attitude in North America seems to be that cross-pollination can be very healthy for the growth of cello pedagogy. In many instances, having a broader background is considered valuable. Potential faculty members who have studied in only one school may be considered limited in their pedagogical knowledge. In Europe, the tendency is for a school of music to hire their own alumni in order to preserve a musical and technical heritage. In the United States, however, professors from all over the world are invited to take teaching positions in leading universities and conservatories. They may be from a Russian or French school background –the school of origin does not seem to affect the

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 50.

final decision of the hiring committee. New ideas and approaches are welcome. Rather than an American School, North America could be described as the birth place of a Global School.

### **Justification of the Study**

From the mid-eighteenth century to the twentieth century the French cello school has been a leader in the production of virtuosi cellists. The Duport Brothers, Navarra, Gendron, Tortelier, and more recently, Yo-Yo Ma have been unforgettable ambassadors. Since the United States is a new center of cello pedagogy, it is important to learn how the French cello school evolved in North America, who is responsible, and which universities carry the French tradition. As far as it can be determined, no research has been done to trace the influence of the French cello school in North America. An extensive investigation was done by this author and no databases showed similar results in this field. Scholarly research engines such as *Worldcat*, *IIMP* and *PCI Full Text* were employed.

This study will start with an historical review of the French cello school. It will define and explore the positive and negative sides of this teaching technique. It will analyze the geographic “evolution” of the French cello school, and where exactly French pedagogy is located in North America. Five cello teachers from North America will be interviewed. With their knowledge of the French cello school, the author will also try to determine if the French cello technique helped to create an American technique.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore how the French cello technique has evolved over two and a half century, and how it has influenced the United States and Canada, and if it is still distinguishable from other schools in terms of bow and left hand technique.

### **Research Questions**

How has the French cello school influenced the teaching and playing in precise research questions to be addressed by this study are:

- 1) How has the French cello school influenced in the United States and in Canada?
- 2) Who is responsible for founding the French cello school?
- 3) What is the French cello technique? Is it possible to outline it in a formal text? What are its assets and weaknesses?
- 4) Does it have a geographical evolution in the United States and in Canada? In the case of such evolution, which schools seem to carry it?
- 5) Has the French cello technique contributed to the creation of an “American technique”?

### **Delimitations**

This study will focus on the French influence on cello playing and teaching in the United States and Canada. The goals of the author are to clarify and promote a higher standard of violoncello teaching in the United States through a more complete understanding of historical and global influences. The following comparison of the major cello schools was created to clarify the discussion of the schools and to compare their primary characteristics. The author chose the French, German, Russian, Belgian and

Hungarian schools as the most influential. The comparison was compiled by Ross Harbaugh, Jeffrey Solow and the author with the seven following criteria: *founder, bow arm, left hand, études, bow changes at the tip, aesthetic ideal* and *greatest exponent*.

### **A Comparison of the major cello schools**

#### **FRENCH:**

- 1. Founder:** Martin Berteau; Duport brothers
- 2. Bow arm:** Extreme suppleness of the wrist and fingers; comprehensive catalog of every bow stroke and articulation; organized use of all portions of the bow.
- 3. Left hand:** Very specific scale and arpeggios patterns; emphasis on extension; shifts on new finger.
- 4. Études:** Duport, Franchomme, Piatti.
- 5. Bow change at the tip:** Horizontal clockwise. ( Navarra)
- 6. Aesthetic ideal:** Long lines; pure lyricism; extreme legato.
- 7. Greatest exponent:** Fournier, Navarra, Gendron

#### **GERMAN:**

- 1. Founder:** Romberg
- 2. Bow arm:** Bow arm historically close to trunk. Active wrist, but tend not to be flexible.
- 3. Left hand:** Shifting on the old finger. Emphasis on staying in same position and crossing strings.
- 4. Études:** Grützmacher, Dotzauer, Cossman, Klengel; emphasis on systematic finger drilling; narrow vibrato, almost non-vibrato.
- 5. Bow change at the tip:** Not known.

**6. Aesthetic ideal:** Emphasis on importance of serious, and emphasis on the player as a serious artist rather than explorer of new ways to play.

**7. Greatest exponent:** Becker, Mainardi, Feuermann.

#### **RUSSIAN:**

**1. Founder:** Davidov

**2. Bow arm:** Hand fulcrum. Flatter wrist, sometimes rigid. Rapid bow speed.

**3. Left arm:** Wide vibrato. Not much finger percussion in articulation; not position-oriented; beauty of tone is paramount. New finger shifts.

**4. Études:** Lyrical pieces such as Tchaïkovsky, Glazunov, Rachmaninoff instead of études.

**5. Bow change at the tip:** Horizontal counterclockwise (Rostropovich). More fingers than wrist in bow changes.

**6. Aesthetic ideal:** Emotional expression through vocal articulation, *parlando*. Beauty of tone is paramount. Expression precedes and leads to “discovering” technique.

**7. Greatest exponent:** Piatigorsky, Rostropovich.

#### **BELGIAN:**

**1. Founder:** Platel

**2. Bow arm:** *Collé* finger usage.

**3. Left hand:** Continuous vibrato. Percussion in finger articulation. Playing in one position and crossing strings.

**4. Études:** Servais.

**5. Bow change at the tip:** Vertical clockwise (Rose).

**6. Aesthetic Ideal:** “Fantasy with order” (Casals).

**7. Greatest exponent:** Servais, Casals, Rose.

**HUNGARIAN:**

**1. Founder:** David Popper

**2. Bow arm: Generalized principles.** Basic legato motion from which all other strokes derive. Continuous descending line from shoulder to bow hand.

**3. Left hand:** Minimize extensions. Hand patterns for cello geography.

**4. Études:** Popper

**5. Bow change at the tip:** Vertical counterclockwise.

**6. Aesthetic ideal:** Music should speak for itself without excessive body motion or theatrics.

**7. Greatest exponent:** Janos Starker.

## CHAPTER 2

### FATHERS OF THE FRENCH SCHOOL

It is fundamental to understand the birth of the French cello school. Since the purpose of this doctoral essay is to track the influence of the French cello school in North America, the author has an obligation to explain where the roots of her study lie. Martin Berteau and the Duport Brothers, three famous French cellists, have been credited with the founding of the French cello school. This chapter will explore their contributions.

In the early eighteenth century, the cello was gaining in popularity in France. The rich tone and the wide range interested both performers and composers, and by demonstrating its possibilities, resulted in a fast-growing repertoire for the instrument. The French had a tradition of excellent gambists, which contributed to the French suspicion of the cello. In addition, they had a well-known antipathy for Italian culture. This changed in the 1730s, when many Italian string musicians performed in Paris and affected the French style. Jean Barrière (c. 1705-1745) was one of the first French gambists to convert to the cello.

However, the father of the French cello school, the one who seems to have taught an entire generation of accomplished violoncellists in the early 1700s, was Martin Berteau. Jean-Louis Duport wrote that: “the celebrated Berteau, who formed an epoch in

the art, and whose reputation still subsists, may be considered as the creator of the violoncello.”<sup>8</sup>

Berteau is a rather mysterious figure. No written records of his successful teaching method are left and his compositions seem to have all but disappeared as well. Biographies of his life are unreliable and are little more than extravagant stories. Berteau was born late in 1708 or, in the first weeks of 1709. He probably studied viola da gamba in Germany with a Bohemian, named Kozecz. J.-F. Fétis, wrote a *Biographie universelle des musiciens* (1835-1844), wrote that Berteau made his debut on the violoncello in 1739 at the *Concert Spirituel*, playing his own concerto. However, his name is not mentioned in any of the newspapers or programs of this epoch, and neither his concerto nor sketches of it have been found. However, the writer Jean-Jacques Rousseau mentioned having heard him in Paris in 1753.

Martin Berteau probably published a set of six sonatas in 1748 under the pseudonym of Martino Bertau or Sigr. Martino in Italy. Why would he have published under a pseudonym? Perhaps he could not afford or did not get the right (*privilege*) to publish music at this time in France. It was expensive and the composer needed good recommendations to submit works for publication. In this set of sonatas, the entire range of the violoncello was explored. Thumb position was required, showing the virtuosity of the performer. Berteau utilized four clefs: bass, alto, tenor and soprano. Double stops were used like an independent line, or chorale to add a rich harmonic melody on the cello line.

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<sup>8</sup>Adas, Jane. “Le Célèbre Berteau’, *Early Music* 17,( 1989): p.368.



For many decades, Berteau's third sonata in G major was credited to the Italian composer Sammartini.<sup>9</sup> This sonata is familiar to many generations of violoncellists. It is a work studied for its virtuosity and its lovely singing line. Today, it is generally credited to Berteau himself. Alfred Moffat discovered this sonata on 1911.<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, Moffat "revamped" the work, adding slurs and changing notes at the bass line and omitting double stops in the second movement. The sonatas of Berteau demonstrate clearly that it was possible, in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, to play more than a bass line on the violoncello.

Berteau taught every important violoncellist in the mid-eighteenth century. He probably taught at the *Collège des Quatres Nations* and his students included Jean-Pierre Duport, Janson, Cupis, Tillière and perhaps Bréval.<sup>11</sup>

### **The Duport Brothers**

As mentioned above, Berteau taught Jean-Pierre Duport who in turn taught his young brother Jean-Louis. The two brothers had a tremendous impact on the French cello school, as players or teachers. The father of Jean-Pierre and Jean-Louis Duport was a talented amateur musician who worked at the court of King Louis XV of France. He was bailiff of the king's chamber and director of the dance at the opera. The elder Duport had many talents, playing the violoncello and harpsichord. He performed on both

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p.372.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p.374.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p.369.

instruments in the private theater of the king, and was a favorite of Madame de Pompadour.<sup>12</sup>

The brothers came from a family of twenty one children: -Nineteen girls and two boys: Jean-Pierre and Jean-Louis. Only five children survived to adulthood. It's interesting to note that one of the Duport's sisters married a publisher named Landrin who published six sonatas for violoncello by Jean-Pierre Duport before 1769.<sup>13</sup>

### **Jean-Pierre Duport**

Jean-Pierre was born in Paris on November 27<sup>th</sup>, 1741. As mentioned above, he was a student of the "célèbre Berteau". He made his debut at the *Concerts Spirituels* in 1761. It was a huge success and he was hired to work for the Prince de Conti. He became very popular in Paris and performed frequently at the *Concerts Spirituels*.

Those concerts were founded by Anne Danictan Philidor in 1725. They were held for the most part at the Palais des Tuileries. The concerts became extremely famous, and soloists from everywhere in Europe came to perform. In 1727, the concert organization expanded to two concerts per week in the winter, and one during the summer. The bourgeoisie attended these famous concerts until 1791. The French Revolution ended the *Concerts Spirituels* in 1789, where secular and sacred music was performed. In 1805, a similar series was established and had the same name.

In 1769, Jean-Pierre left Paris and his orchestra position to travel. He performed in London with famous musicians such as Lahoussaye, Johann Christian Bach, and Karl Friedrich Abel. He moved to Marseille, France, in 1771 and went to Spain to hear the

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<sup>12</sup>Biggar, Sallie Ann., "The Duport Brothers: Their Contributions to the Art of Violoncello Performance." M.M. Thesis, American University, 1973.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

famous Italian violoncellist, Franciscello. Apparently, Franciscello played for him for an entire evening and Duport was deeply impressed by the Italian master.<sup>14</sup>

In 1773 he left for Berlin, Germany. He went to the Postdam Court, at the invitation of King Frederick the Great.<sup>15</sup> He never played again in Paris, having performed his last concert April 1773 at the *Concerts Spirituels*. At the Postdam Court, Jean-Pierre was musician for the Royal Chapel, solo violoncellist for the Royal Opera, and the private teacher of the Crown Prince. Another famous Italian violoncellist was working at the Postdam Court at the same time: Luigi Boccherini. He wrote many sonatas, concertos and quintets for two cellos. It is probable that Jean-Pierre performed with Boccherini. He worked for the Court of Prussia until 1806. He retired in a house given to him by Friedrich Wilhelm II, and died in 1818 in Germany.<sup>16</sup>

“He plays the cello with a magical touch, so that his equal is scarcely to be found anywhere in Europe. His bowing is like a storm, from which the notes cascade down. He soars to the dizziest heights of the fingerboard, and finally vanishes in the most delicacies.”<sup>17</sup> This is what Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubert, poet and composer, said of Jean-Pierre’s playing. It seems that he had a big sound and an accomplished technique at the time. Vigor seems to describe his lively playing. Schubert later wrote: “The unanimous view is that he draws the most beautiful tone from his instrument in its

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p.8.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p.8.

<sup>17</sup>Sieghard Brandenburg, “Violin Sonatas-Cello Sonatas and Variations, “in Ludwig van Beethoven., edited by Joseph Schmidt Gorg and Hans Schmidt (Hamburg: DeutscheGrammophon Gesellschaft mbh.,) 1970) , p.148.

highest the most difficult passages like clockwork.”<sup>18</sup> It seems that he was particularly good with double stops or playing pizzicatos while executing a melody with the bow. Despite of his agility, Duport had apparently a sensible musicality and possessed a touching sense of phrasing.

### **Jean-Louis Duport**

The younger brother Duport was born in 1749. He was a gifted child for the arts. At an early age, he played the violin and violoncello, and studied ballet. His violoncello teacher was his older brother, Jean-Pierre. In 1768, Jean-Pierre made his debut at the famous series *Concerts Spirituels* and had an instant success. The new paper *Mercure de France*, wrote a descriptive note about his playing: “M. Duport, the youngest, a pupil of his brother, played a sonata, which the latter accompanied. His execution is brilliant and amazing, his tone full and of great sweetness. Boldness and great certainty characterize his playing, and predict the greatest talent.”<sup>19</sup> So in a short time, Jean-Louis was performing in all the major series in France, such as the *Société Olympique* and the *Concerts Spirituels*. Jean-Louis perhaps, counted as friends the most popular artists of the time. He wrote for the encyclopedia compiled by the famous French writer Jean-Jacques Rousseau and his colleagues.

He went with his brother to Berlin in 1789, when he left his position at the *Opéra de Paris* because of the ravages of the French Revolution. He joined the Royal Orchestra of Friedrich Wilhelm II and taught private lessons. Then, he met and married the

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>*Mercure de France*, ( Paris) February 1768.

ballerina, Marie-Margarethe Desplaces of the Royal Opera, who died giving birth on January 1791.

While in Berlin, Jean-Louis wrote his most important work that would change forever the pedagogy of violoncello playing: his essays on violoncello technique, *Essai sur le doigté du violoncelle et sur la conduite de l'archet*. The most important part of it is probably a chart for the fingering system on the violoncello. In Duport's childhood, everyone fingered notes on the cello very differently. There was no uniform method of fingering sufficiently developed to work in all situations.<sup>20</sup>

Prussia was defeated by the Emperor Napoleon and all musicians attached to the Prussian Court were now without employment. Jean-Louis returned to France but had difficulty reconnecting with the French audiences and the concert series. After months of financial struggling, he finally obtained a position at the court of the empress Marie-Louise. A few months later, he became the violoncello soloist of the Emperor, Napoleon. "He had an amusing encounter with Napoleon, who insisted on trying out Duport's Stradivarius cello, exclaiming, "How the devil do you hold this thing, Monsieur Duport?" Duport was so obviously afraid that Napoleon would damage it, that Napoleon laughingly returned it to the cellist's more careful hands. Actually, Napoleon had made a small dent in the ribs of the cello, which may still be seen in the "Duport Strad" today. (The instrument was later owned by Franchomme, then Servais, and is now in the capable hands of Mstislav Rostropovich.)<sup>21</sup> It was during this period that Beethoven wrote his opus 5 sonatas for Duport. Up to the end, Jean-Louis seems to have been in excellent

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<sup>20</sup>Adas, Jane., "The Duport Brother: Their Contributions to the Art of Violoncello Performance." M.M. thesis, American University, M.A., 1973.

<sup>21</sup>"The Duport Brothers". (<http://www.cello.org/cnc/duport.htm>).

physical condition even in his seventies. He died in his home in Paris, in 1819, from a liver disease.

### **Review of the literature**

One book in particular which was helpful in the first step of this research is *One Hundred Years of Violoncello: a History of Technique and Performance Practice*, written by Valerie Walden.<sup>22</sup> The book is divided in sections which trace the development of playing techniques and different styles through a comparison of Italian, French, German, English and East European schools.<sup>23</sup> Walden provides a cohesive view on the development of the violoncello in Europe. The first chapter is an overview of violoncellists and school performance. The second chapter is about the development of the violoncello, the bow, and notation. Between the years 1740 to 1840, music making was directly connected with innovations in instrument and bow design.<sup>24</sup> Instrument makers were trying to improve the violoncello, changing the size of the instrument or experiencing with height of the strings on the fingerboard, for example. The bow grip and instrument hold is covered in the third chapter. It is an overview on how to hold the bow and produce a decent sound. Walden explores various technique from the early players: Cupis, Duport, Baudiot, Vaslin, Romberg and Dotzauer.

“The end to be answered, in holding the instrument is, that it shall be steady, and admit of the action of the bow without being impeded by the left knee or the right thigh. The first of these purposes is best

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<sup>22</sup> Valerie Walden, *One Hundred Years of Violoncello: a History of Technique and Performance Practice, 1740-1840* ( Cambridge: University Press, 1998), i.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 49.

answered, by pressing the upper edge or rim of the violoncello against the side of the calf, or thickest part, of the right leg...”<sup>25</sup>

Chapter four and five are about the development of fingering techniques and bow strokes and their execution. The author cites various theories on where in the bow to produce a particular gesture or sound effects. She illustrates as well many parts of the Duport’s *Essai*, which deals with how to use position and finger them. Special effects are covered in chapter six, while chapter seven deals with the rules of ornamentation. Chapter eight is about the art of the accompaniment. The violoncello was predominantly an instrument made to accompany and Walden traces an overview of different point of view about the role of the violoncello in orchestra works made by leaders such as Romberg and Quantz. Finally, the last chapter discusses the elements of aesthetics and style. The author explores various views among the different cello schools cited in the first chapter. “For French violoncellists at least, conflicts of taste began early in the eighteenth century, when it was unclear whether the violoncello was even an acceptable instrument in polite society.”<sup>26</sup>

The book *Scientific Instruction in the Violoncello* written by Paul Bazelaire was an important source of information for this study. Paul Bazelaire, the author was professor at the Conservatoire National de Musique de Paris. Born in Ardennes, France in 1886, he died in Paris in 1958. He was named professor at the Conservatoire National

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<sup>25</sup>J.J.F. Dotzauer, “Violonzell-Schule,” (Mainz: B. Schott, [1832]): 7. quoted in Valerie Walden, *One Hundred Years of Violoncello* (Cambridge: University Press, 1998), 93.

<sup>26</sup>Valerie Walden, *One Hundred Years of Violoncello: a History of Technique and Performance Practice, 1740-1840* (Cambridge: University Press, 1998), 270.

de Paris in 1918 and created a pedagogy class which became famous a few years later. Mr. Bazelaire was connected directly to teaching and his book was acclaimed by many virtuoso and teachers such as Pablo Casals who quoted in Bazelaire 's *Méthode*: "Dear friend, I received the copy of your *Plan de Pédagogie*; I am delighted with it. I have for some time entertained the idea of doing just that; presenting as complete as possible a view of technique, aiming always at artistic application. I can dismiss it from my mind now that you have accomplished so well what my laziness prevented me from doing."<sup>27</sup> This book was written after the creation of his pedagogy class in Paris. The world famous school did not have a department of pedagogy and Bazelaire filled the gap. His work is a summation of the experience gained while teaching the violoncello pedagogy class.

In effect, the book written by Bazelaire is almost dazzling by its compactness and amount of information. This book was the first reference for the author about French cello technique. Another book written by the same author is *L'enseignement du Violoncelle en France*.<sup>28</sup> This book contains the same content as the one cited above. The pocket size volume describes the pedagogy of the violoncello in a practical style. Mr. Bazelaire wrote the text like a novel, so it is pleasant and easy to follow.

### **Dissertations**

The dissertation of Valerie Walden; *An Investigation an comparison of the French and Austro-German schools of bowing techniques*, is a prelude of her book *One*

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<sup>27</sup>Paul Bazelaire, *Scientific Instruction in the Violoncello*( Paris:Durand et cie, Editeurs,1960), iii.

<sup>28</sup>Paul Bazelaire, *Pédagogie du Violoncelle dans le cadre d'un Plan Général de Pédagogie Instrumental: Technique et Interprétation*. Paris: Durand, 1952.



*Hundred years of Violoncello.*<sup>29</sup> The study traced the development of the violoncello bowing technique in France, Austria and Germany. It is not a study about a direct evolution but unlikely about the manner in which the bow and instruments were held and how which each nationality executed it. Walden also executed an important historical research about the political climate in France starting in 1750.

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<sup>29</sup>Valerie Walden, *One hundred years of violoncello: a history of technique and performance practice, 1740-1840* ( Cambridge: University Press, 1998).

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHOD**

The main question addressed in this study is how the French cello school has influenced the United States and Canada. Chapter four focuses where and who seems to carry the French tradition in North America. To delimit this investigation, the author primarily focuses on large schools of music or departments of music such as Cleveland Institute of Music, Curtis, Julliard, New England Conservatory, Peabody, Northwestern, Indiana, USC, Rice, The Frost school of Music, University of Miami and Cincinnati College-Conservatory. In Canada, the study focuses on the provinces of Quebec and Ontario, with the music conservatories, McGill University, Université de Montréal, Glenn Gould Conservatory and University of Toronto. Observations attempt to illustrate a geographical evolution with a “genealogical tree”, starting with Martin Berteau and ending with this author, Marie-Élaine Gagnon. The purpose of this tree is to trace the influence of the French tradition in North America and visually help illustrate the pathway taken over the last three centuries.

#### **Description of the investigation**

#### **Procedure by question**

*How has the French cello school influenced cello playing and teaching in the United State and in Canada?* To find out how the French cello school influenced in North America, the author used the internet for research purposes. *Google* served as the

primarily research engine to find information on French cellists from the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. Terms such as *French cellist*, *French cello school*, were employed to start the internet investigation. *Digital dissertations online*, *Worldcat*, *IIMP*, *RILM*, and *PCL Full Text*, were used to find primary resources such as books, dissertation and articles. The article of Jane Adas, “*Le célèbre Berteau*” written in 1989 and found in *PCI Full Text*, was a valuable source of information to introduce the founder of the French cello school, Martin Berteau.<sup>30</sup> The most useful website was [www.cellist.nl](http://www.cellist.nl) . Another website that had substantial material is [www.paul.bazelaire.free.fr](http://www.paul.bazelaire.free.fr). This website was particularly helpful to retrace students whom he taught during his years at the Conservatory. The link found on *Google.ca*: [www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com) was utilized to find biographic information on predecessor cello teachers in the province of Québec, Canada.

The investigation goes back as far as the beginning of the eighteenth century with Martin Berteau, proclaimed by musicologist as the founder of the French cello school.<sup>31</sup> Tracing the major French cellists from the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a list of French cello teachers was created to establish who was taught until today. This list provided a clear lineage to create the genealogical tree of the French cello school in North America.

*Who is responsible for founding the French cello school?* Chapter two treats the founders of the French cello school, Martin Berteau and the Duport Brothers. The

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 368.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

historical information was based on an article written by Jane Adas, *Le célèbre Berteau*, which was published in *Early Music* in 1989. "...the celebrated Berteau, who formed an epoch in the art, and whose reputation still subsists, may be considered as the creator of the violoncello."<sup>32</sup> This second chapter outlines the development of the violoncello as not only a robust instrument to play the bass line but also as a fine solo instrument. The Duport brothers have been included in this chapter because of their invaluable contribution to cello pedagogy. The younger brother, Jean-Louis Duport wrote an essay on cello technique which has influenced generations of young musician. *Essai sur le doigté du violoncelle et sur la conduite de l'archet* has been newly translated and republished. The text is available on *Worldcat*. This author paraphrased key issues from the body of the work and traced their influences to the modern days.

*What is the French cello technique? Is it possible to outline in a formal text?*

*What are the assets and weaknesses of it?* This series of questions served to describe the French cello school in a detailed way. Left hand, bow arm, musicality, phrasing, and repertoire were discussed. The author added her experience based on a French oriented pedagogy learned in Québec, Canada. The French cellist and teacher Paul Bazelaire who wrote the manual *Pédagogie de Violoncelle dans le Cadre d'un Plan Général de Pédagogie Instrumental : Technique et Interprétation*, was used as a primary source of information to discuss the basics of the French cello technique. The third question was oriented to the author drawing on her learning experience spent in American colleges since 2000.

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

*Did it have a geographical evolution in the United States and in Canada? In the case of such an evolution, which colleges or conservatories utilize it?* This question was directly related to question number one, “*How has the French cello school influenced the playing and teaching in the United States and in Canada?*”, and was answered after it is determined which major teachers in the United States and Canada have studied in, or were influenced by the French school. This research included several short interviews with knowledgeable cellists who have an interest in the French cello technique. They all studied at some point with a French cellist, perfecting their technique, or exploring new avenues. These interviews offered several opinions about the French cello school and shed light on its geographic evolution.

The interviews were done by email or by phone, according to the preferences of the participants. Five short questions were asked:

*Did you study with a French cellist? Who was the teacher?*

*Would you describe this teacher as an exponent of the French cello school?*

*How would you describe the French cello school?*

*How did it influence your teaching?*

*Do you think there is an American school of playing and teaching? How do you think the French School has influenced it?*

The answers to these questions helped this author to determine where the French cello technique is most influential, and indeed helped the author to define what the French cello technique is. The unabridged interview of the participants is included at the end of this doctoral essay.

*Is the French cello technique responsible for a new sound such as the “American technique”?*

After the author conducted the interviews described above and researched the faculty lists of North America’s major music school, she was able to draw some conclusions about the existence of an American School and to explore the idea of a Global School.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **INFLUENCE**

This chapter is an examination of the conservatories and universities with large schools of music or departments of music where the French cello tradition exists in North America. In the United States, the following schools were explored: Cleveland Institute of Music, Curtis, Juilliard, New England Conservatory, Peabody, Northwestern, Indiana, USC, Rice, Cincinnati-College-Conservatory, Oberlin, and University of Miami. In Canada, the author investigated the music conservatories of Québec City and Montréal, McGill University, Université de Montréal, Glenn Gould Conservatory and University of Toronto.

The internet was the initial tool to conduct this basic research. This computer research was done in the spring of 2005 and led to the following findings. Besides the Université de Montréal and Glenn Gould Conservatory in Canada, all schools and conservatories had well-developed websites with biographical information. At the Cleveland Institute of Music, University of Miami, and University of Texas in Austin, Richard Aaron, Ross Harbaugh and Phyllis Young have studied with Andrée Navarra, a famous French pedagogue. At Curtis, Juilliard, New England Conservatory, Northwestern, Indiana University, USC, Rice Shepherd School of Music, and College-Conservatory of Cincinnati, none of the faculty have studied with an exponent of the French school. With whom then did they study? Many of the oldest generation studied

with Aldo Parisot, Leonard Rose, Diran Alexanian, Pablo Casals, Emanuel Feuermann , Felix Salmond or Gregor Piatigorsky. The younger cello teachers have studied with David Soyer, Laurence Lesser, Timothy Eddy, Lynn Harrell, or Janos Starker.

In Canada, at the University of Toronto, one cello teacher, Simon Fryer, studied with the Israeli “right hand” man of Paul Tortelier, Rafael Sommer.<sup>33</sup> At Glenn Gould Conservatory, no one studied with a French cello teacher, excepted Simon Fryers who is on both faculties. In the province of Québec, databases look different. At McGill, Marcel Saint-Cyr studied with André Navarra and Paul Tortelier. At Université de Montréal, Elizabeth Dolin studied with Paul Tortelier, and Guy Fouquet with André Navarra. At the Conservatoire de Musique de Montréal, Denis Brott studied with Maurice Gendron and André Navarra during summer masterclasses. The most interesting hub in the province of Québec is the Conservatoire de Musique de Québec. Pierre Morin, who taught at the conservatory for three decades, who studied in Paris with André Navarra and Jean Francais. Morin taught generations of cellist, notably Leslie Snider, who was the primary teacher of the author during her studies in Canada in 1998 to 1999.

At first glance, results for the American side look thin. A much more extensive study revealed a completely different picture. The research started with Martin Berteau who taught his first generation of pupils: Duport the older, Janson, and Tillière. Jean-Pierre Duport taught his younger brother, Jean-Louis Duport, and Franchomme. Duport the younger taught Levasseur, Kriegck, and Platel. It is here that the results get interesting. These three pupils of Duport took three different paths which made significant divisions in the French cello pedagogy.

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<sup>33</sup>Email by Simon Fryer on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 20, 2005.



Levasseur, the first pupil, taught Norblin who taught Hecking and Chevillard. Hecking taught the world famous cellist Tortelier, and Chevillard taught Loeb, who was the primary cello teacher of Navarra at the Paris Conservatory. Continuing this progression, Tortelier was the teacher of Sommer who taught Simon Fryer from University of Toronto, and Marcel Saint-Cyr and Elizabeth Dolin who are on faculty at McGill. André Navarra taught dozens of cellists around the world and notably Guy Fouquet, Marcel Saint-Cyr and Pierre Morin from Canada. Ross Harbaugh, professor at the Frost School of Music studied a year at the Paris Conservatory with Navarra. Fouquet and Harbaugh taught the author of this research, Marie-Elaine Gagnon. The author seems to be another product of this first line of French cello technique.

The second pupil of Duport, Kriegck, promoted the French school of cello playing in Germany. Kriegck taught Dotzauer who taught Diechsler who had, as a star pupil, Grützmacher. Grützmacher taught Alexanian, who taught the famous Feuermann and the still active, David Soyer. Mr. Soyer has been teaching at Curtis for decades and has shaped many generations of cellists, such as Keith Robinson. Keith Robinson taught Marie-Elaine Gagnon for a period of two years and had a great influence on her technique. This author could then be described as having one quarter German/French cello technique in her lineage. It is important to keep in mind that this German/French school is the French cello technique taught in Germany. This should be seen as separate from the pure German school of cello playing. This author will show this separation more specifically as she traces the influence of the third pupil of Duport, Nicholas-Joseph Platel.

“The Belgian violoncello school was founded by the famous French violoncellist Nicholas-Joseph Platel, the pupil of Jean-Louis Duport and Jacques-Michel Lamare. Professor at the Royal music school in Brussels from 1824, Platel taught many violoncellists, the most prominent of them being Adrien-Francois Servais, whose significance goes far beyond Belgium.”<sup>34</sup> In other words, Platel taught Servais who taught Jacobs. The best pupil of Jacobs was Felix Salmond who taught Leonard Rose, who taught at Julliard for years. Rose taught an impressive number of brilliant cellists including Yo Yo Ma, Lynn Harrell, Fred Sherry, Ardyth Alton, Hans Jørgen Jensen, Ronald Leonard, Desmond Hoebig and Yehuda Hanani. Desmond Hoebig taught the author for a few summers in Canada. Would this mean that Marie-Elaine Gagnon is one quarter Belgian school? See Figure 1, page 29.

The last branch of the tree of significant interest to this author is the French/German school, which gave birth to the Russian cello school. Authors such as Dimitry Markevitch and Joseph Youngblood, published respectively in 1984 and 1966, outline family trees representing the development of the French cello school starting with Martin Berteau. Both authors seem to have made a mistake with the German cellist J.F. Dotzauer. Both stipulated that he studied with Kriegck, although various databases of today, such as [www.celloheaven.com](http://www.celloheaven.com) and the author Valerie Walden who recently published *One Hundred Years of Violoncello: A History of Technique and*

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<sup>34</sup>Ginsburg, Lev. (1983). *Adrien Francois Servais, Cellist*. Retrieved March 27, 2005, from <http://www.cello.org/heaven/bios/servais/serv01.htm>



*Performance Practice, 1740-1840*, confirm that Dotzauer studied with the German cellist Bernhard Romberg. It is here that the branch gets thinner, because Romberg studied with his step-father Johann Konrad Schlick for a short time only. Diverse biographies suggest that Romberg was self-taught like Aldo Parisot, who is currently teaching at Yale University. There is a possibility that Romberg studied with only one famous cellist, Jean-Louis Duport, when he was sixteen. “French musician Francois Philidor was very impressed: he introduced them [Romberg et al] to Jean-Baptist Viotti, thus enabling them [Romberg et al] to listen to this outstanding violinist. The 16-year old Romberg was impressed by the art of Duport and other French virtuosi. French influences later manifested themselves in Romberg’s work.”<sup>34</sup>

In other words, Romberg could have been the actual founder of the German cello school (instead of Dotzauer) with the help and influence of Jean-Louis Duport, just as Nicholas Platel, with the influence of Duport, founded the Belgian school. The descendants of Romberg are: J. F. Dotzauer, Karl Shuberth, Friedrich-August Kummer, Julius Goltermann, David Popper, Schiffer, the famous Janos Starker, and the rising star Matt Haimovitz. As mentioned earlier, this branch of the tree tends to be very flexible, including the Russian Cello School with Karl Davidov and the Hungarian/Czech Cello School with the famous technician David Popper. At the University of Miami, Ross Harbaugh studied with Janos Starker and was strongly influenced by Starker’s style of teaching. But at the same time, Mr. Harbaugh defines himself as a strong advocate of the French cello school, having studied with André Navarra in Paris.

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<sup>34</sup>Leonid. (2000). *Romberg & The History of The Violoncello*. Retrieved March 28, 2005 from [http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~leonid/romberg\\_history.htm](http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~leonid/romberg_history.htm)

Thus, the French cello school could be said to have made its way into virtually every studio in North America with all the generations of Martin Berteau's descendants. Jean-Louis Duport influenced the birth of the Belgian, German, and French cello schools and, quite probably, the Russian School as well.

This evolution of influence indicates a tendency that has not changed for almost three hundred years. We take for granted the fact that today's cello students travel the world to find new approaches and cultural enhancement. However, in the eighteenth century, the hunger for better technology and more advanced solutions from school was intense. Jean-Louis Duport was born in 1749 and died in 1819. He was directly involved in the last part of the Enlightenment period and the beginning of Romanticism in Germany. The intellectual movement called "The Enlightenment" believed that human reason could be used to combat ignorance, superstition, and the tyranny of unexamined obedience in order to build a better world. Throughout the eighteenth century, the Enlightenment's encouragement and recognition of the arts inspired artists such as J.L. Duport to create pedagogical works for the public. His *Essai sur le doigté du violoncelle et sur la conduite de l'archet*, was scientific and revolutionary in the field of violoncello technology. No doubt Duport was inspired by the current of technological advances and original thinking of this period by such giants as Isaac Newton, perhaps the greatest figure of the Enlightenment who gave to the world scientific theories on gravitation, light and color. Both men gave us new ways to understand the world.

Today, in the United States today, the German, Russian, and Belgian schools predominate, but they all originate from the same master: the French cellist Jean-Louis Duport. So it would not be false to say that the French cello school has evolved in such

way as to influence virtually every major cellist in United States. In the province of Québec, the legacy is even more direct, through generations of French pedagogues teaching at the Paris Conservatory. Perhaps the common language and the limited number of schools in Québec would explain this musical phenomenon. The province of Québec has two major Universities with important music faculty and one system of conservatories throughout the major cities of the province. The French-Canadian cello community is limited in North America, so the exchange between students and tutorial ideas seems to have followed the lines of the French language.

### **The Technique of the French Cello School.**

European cellists of the early eighteenth century gradually extended their range beyond first position. One system adapted violin fingerings to the larger instrument, with intervals of both semitones and wholes tones being executed with the same finger.<sup>35</sup> Later, violoncellists started to designate a specific finger for each semitone in half, first and second position. Cellists of this time were making extensions, but it was not customary to assign a specific finger to a scale degree, even though the middle finger was commonly used for extensions. Martin Berteau decided it was more idiomatic to the instrument, to finger each semitone with a separate digit throughout the first position, with no compression of the third and fourth position.<sup>36</sup> The pitches played above the fourth position, where the neck is, were fingered with first, second, third and fourth finger in semitones. This system was the signature of Martin Berteau, and later, Jean-Louis

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<sup>35</sup>Walden, V., Technique, style and performing practice to c. 1900. from *The Cambridge Companion to the Cello*, edited by Robin Stowell, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1999. p.185.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

Duport. The key point of Duport's treatise was to organize shifting into a method that did not interrupt phrasing. Duport achieved this by using sequential fingerings, (finger groupings) the shift always being performed from one finger to another.<sup>37</sup> In his words he said:

“...everyone knows that the delicacy of touch of the fingers is what makes a pearl, and for certain, one does not have this touch when one slides one finger from semitone to another, because of the timing of the bow has not caught the moment when the finger slides to attack the string, a disagreeable sound follows.”<sup>38</sup>

Duport even wrote about the concept of thumb position. This advanced technique is found in his *Essai* and later, was illustrated by cellists Sebastien Lee and Karl Davidov. It means that early generations of French cellists could play in thumb position. Thumb position is achieved by placing the thumb perpendicular to the strings forming an artificial nut. The other fingers are free to move within this position.

The use of varied bowings as a virtuoso device became especially attractive to French performers who, at least from the time of Lully, were indoctrinated with a national sense of bowing uniformity and precision structured in accordance with the rule of down-bow.<sup>39</sup> Duport wrote specific instruction about string-crossings patterns starting in reverse, which was to start with an up-bow at the tip rather than a down-bow at the frog like Lully requested from his musicians at the French Court. The French schools of violin and cello, integrated, as early as Martin Berteau, the artificial harmonics into their

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p.186.

<sup>38</sup>Duport, *Essai*, p. 17.

<sup>39</sup>V. Walden., Technique, style and performing practice to c. 1900. from *The Cambridge companion to the Cello*, edited by Robin Stowell, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1999. p189.

teaching and solo works. Apparently, Duport even developed a third species of harmonics which was something between a firm note and a harmonic.<sup>40</sup> This effect was produced by bending the strings with the finger sideways.<sup>41</sup>

The French cello school became known for a highly developed, carefully defined lexicon of bow strokes, such as *détaché*, *martelé* and *piqué*, which are universally recognized by every cellists in the world. Their bowings were well- organized in exercises, and harmonics were regularly used in concerto performance. Curiously, it was not until the beginning of the nineteenth century that the French fully used the C string to perform virtuoso passages from concertos. Germans were leading in this task, perhaps because Haydn had written an extremely difficult concerto in D major, with many difficult passages on the C string. Apparently, the sound of German cellists was darker and they commonly used the *Sul ponticello* technique in concertos. The French were using this technique uniquely for accompanying figures, and their variations in bowing remained the focal point of their school.

A leading modern exponent of the French school was André Navarra. He studied with Jules-Leopold Loeb at the Paris Conservatory, taught many famous cellists, and was considered an important soloist in the nineteen-thirties. On a video recording no longer for sale, the famous French master shares his pedagogy of the cello. The master explained that “the bow should be like the human voice” and each individual should have their own sound. He believed that the sound should come from the weight of the shoulder with a low elbow. For him, the way to hold the bow was crucial. The fingers had to be

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 189.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 189.



flexible but at the same time firmly placed on the wood of the bow at the frog. In his teaching, he stressed the fact that the wrist should lead the movement just before changing direction at the frog. He asked all of his students to do scales very slowly in four beats on each string of the instrument. Then, he would give them an etude in G minor written by the famous Jean-Louis Duport. The students would have to do it in four different ways: in the middle, at the frog with the arm, at the frog exclusively with the fingers and finally, at the tip. This series of exercise was meant to develop and maintain the student's bowing strength, ability and versatility.

Within this study, two top French cellists have been mentioned many times for their great teaching and performing skills: Pierre Fournier and André Navarra. One other great French master who should not be forgotten is Maurice Gendron. "As early as the 1950s, Maurice Gendron was already working on a plan to publish his insights into the art of playing the cello in the form of a practical manual."<sup>42</sup> His book explores all aspects of cello performance, from "choosing the right chair" to "choosing the right fingering."<sup>43</sup> The general tone of Gendron's book resembles a memoir. He wrote dozen of fingerings in examples of music scores, with nurturing advice for each of them. Many pages are devoted to the art of the bow with many helpful pictures for the beginner or young teacher. One of the most useful parts of the volume is the chapter devoted to personnel practice. He advocates devoting two hours and an half uniquely to the cello technique. This significant amount of time given to scales, arpeggios and studies seems to be typically French. During this author's studies at the Conservatory, half of the work was

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<sup>42</sup>Maurice Gendron, *L'Art du Violoncelle*, ed. Walter Grimmer, trans. J.S. Rushworth ( Mainz, Tokyo : Schott, 2001), 4.

<sup>43</sup>Ibis.p.4.

on technique which would take as much as half the lesson time. The rest was for the repertoire, including sonatas and concerti. For many years, this author had to perform two studies at mid-term and final term. Maurice Gendron said: “Scales should be practiced every day in all keys, and in third and sixths as well.”<sup>44</sup> A musician who was not very familiar with the French cello school might be repulsed at first, but Mr. Gendron strongly felt that this was the way to succeed in the musical world. “As in any profession, the basic principle applies: determination leads to success, while laziness leads to failure: hard work will bring its own rewards.”<sup>45</sup>

In conclusion, this study has led to many surprising details about the evolution of the French cello school. It is clear that the United States was indeed influenced by the founder of the French cello school, Martin Berteau and the Duport Brothers but often in a secondary or tertiary way. Most of the music schools of this country have been influenced by the branches of the French cello school, namely French, German, Russian or Belgian. In Canada, the province of Québec boasts the most intense concentration of pure French influence in North America, with McGill University, Conservatoire de Montréal and Conservatoire de Québec.

It would be fair enough to say that the province of Québec is still the primary host for the French cello legacy in North America. In the United States, the study’s results suggest a case by case approach, depending on the teaching influence of the student’s private teacher. However, it would be wrong to say that the United States does not have French teaching influences.

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid, p. 11.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p.11.

Martin Berteau was the first to teach to his pupils a fixed fingering pattern in first position on the fingerboard of the violoncello. Later on, Jean-Louis Duport wrote a treatise including numerous examples of sequential fingering patterns in many positions. Others gifted pupils of Martin Berteau traveled through Europe, showing and teaching their colleagues the science of the left hand and the bow. This resulted in the French cello school influencing the birth of other cello schools in Belgium and Germany. In the next chapter the author will discuss and compare five interviews conducted with North American cellists who have been influenced by the French cello school to varying degrees.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE AMERICAN SCHOOL?

This author interviewed five cello pedagogues in Canada and in the United States. The goal of these interviews was to find out first hand about the personal ideas and knowledge of the French cello school in North America through discussions with cello teachers who studied with a French cello teacher in Europe. In the previous chapters, this author asserted that a significant amount of information has been shared about the geographical evolution and the lineage of the French cello school. For the interview, consisting of five questions, some participants thought that the questions were too simplistic. Others embraced the subject with curiosity and excitement. The five questions targeting the French cello school were:

1. *Did you study with a French cellist? Who was the teacher?*
2. *Would you describe this teacher as an exponent of the French cello school?*
3. *How would you describe the French cello school?*
4. *Do you think there is American school of playing and teaching? How do you think the French School has influenced it?*

These interviews about the French cello school were designed to find out if North American cellists believe in the presence of an American School of cello playing, or in other words, an “American sound”. The five pedagogues who participated to the interviews were: Richard Aaron, Leslie Snider, Peter Howard, Ross Harbaugh and

Joanne Perron. The author will outline the differences of opinion between the participants and will conclude this chapter with an attempt to answer if the French Cello technique is responsible for an “American Technique.”

The requirement to participate in this interview was to have studied for a certain period of time with a French pedagogue. André Navarra and Pierre Fournier seemed to be the most popular French cello pedagogues. Aaron, Snider, Howard and Harbaugh studied with them either in Paris or in Sienna during the summer. Mrs. Perron studied with Pierre Morin in Québec City. Morin himself, studied with André Navarra. Snider also studied with Charles Renaud, who was an important cello teacher in the South of France. “...My teacher, Charles Renaud, was a pupil of Bazelaire at the Paris Conservatory and graduated around 1943.”<sup>46</sup> “And of course, Bazelaire was one of the most important teachers at the beginning of the century. If you look at the lineage of Bazelaire backward, it goes right to Martin Berteau, the founder of the French School.”<sup>47</sup> The second question asked was if they thought that their French teacher was an exponent of the French cello school. Aaron, Snider, Harbaugh and Perron, strongly agreed with this author. “Yes, absolutely...No excessive motions, no excessive motions with the left hand. Everything was just a minimum amount of efforts to do everything.”<sup>48</sup> The third question asked the interviewees to describe the French cello school. Aaron, Snider, Howard, Harbaugh and Perron all agreed on one fact: the suppleness of the right arm.

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<sup>46</sup> Leslie Snider, professor of violoncello, interview by author, 18 March 2005, Miami, tape recording, University of Miami, Coral Gables.

<sup>47</sup> Richard Aaron, professor of violoncello, interview by author, 29 March 2005, Miami, tape recording, University of Miami, Coral Gables.

<sup>48</sup> Richard Aaron, professor of violoncello, interview by author, 29 March 2005, Miami, tape recording, University of Miami, Coral Gables.

Leslie Snider described the technique of the French school as “a strong focus on keeping the elbow more or less the same height as the wrist, emphasis on the flexibility of the bow changes and finger motion.”<sup>49</sup> According to Snider the varieties of different bowings and the distribution of the bow used by the French cellists in their playing are paramount. In other words, the bow technique is the primary focus of the French cello school. Ross Harbaugh also emphasized in his interview that the four octaves scales were a centerpiece of André Navarra’s pedagogy.<sup>50</sup>

“...for intonation, Navarra had all his students play scales in fingered thirds and sixths, as well as octaves, always starting with elided bowing, i.e. playing each note twice with the shift occurring during the bow stroke, not at the bow change. Arpeggios major and minor only, but with legato and spiccato bowings, four octaves, ultimately very fast.”<sup>51</sup>

The fourth question addressed if they had been influenced in their playing and teaching by their respective French cello mentor. Aaron, Snider, Harbaugh, Howard and Perron all confirmed having been influenced either by their respective French pedagogue’s exercises or by the rigorous discipline learned through their lessons with the great French masters. Mrs. Perron raised an interesting point of view about her teaching in the United States. “...I still find the students not very knowledgeable on the bow and its extraordinary possibilities of full spectrum of colors, subtleties, discipline, variations of speed and pressure. I also find the public not sensitive to this kind of playing.”<sup>52</sup> Mrs.

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<sup>49</sup> Leslie Snider, professor of violoncello, interview by author, 18 March 2005, Miami, tape recording, University of Miami, Coral Gables.

<sup>50</sup> Ross Habaugh professor of violoncello, interview by author, 19 March 2005, Miami, tape recording, University of Miami, Coral Gables

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Johanne Perron, [celloboreal@hotmail.com](mailto:celloboreal@hotmail.com), “DMA essay”, e-mail to Marie-Elaine Gagnon, [cellomeg@hotmail.com](mailto:cellomeg@hotmail.com), 16 December 2004.

Perron believes that the French public is more sensitive to artists who possess these refined colors in their playing.<sup>53</sup> In an interview published in the French magazine *Le Monde de la musique* in June 2004, the world class diva Renée Fleming stated her impressions about the differences between the European and the American publics. She thought that in Europe, the public had more knowledge about what she was singing, because of the omni-present cultural life in the every day living. She feels that when she sings in the United States, the cultural life is perhaps too vast and diffuse. She thinks that the American public accepts more easily what it is offered in contrast to the European public which tends to be more demanding.<sup>54</sup> In a different concept, Richard Aaron emphasized the *solfège* concept. He asserted in his interview that his French pupils heard music in a very musical way, with a deep approach to the music, always very aware of the musical line, as opposed to his American pupils who focused more on the harmony and the notes themselves.<sup>55</sup>

The last question of the interview inquired about the existence of an American cello school. Richard Aaron answered briefly: “No, there is not such a thing. In this country, there is the Russian, the French and the Belgian. Here, it is a kind of mishmash and there is really no American school.”<sup>56</sup> Peter Howard claimed that Leonard Rose would be the first half of the American cello school. The second half would be the

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>Renée Fleming, “Renée Fleming, La voix au zénith,” interview by Georges Gad. *Le Monde de la Musique*, nos. 288 (June 2004) : 31.

<sup>55</sup>Richard Aaron, professor of violoncello, interview by author, 29 March 2005, Miami, tape recording, University of Miami, Coral Gables.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

famous Hungarian Janos Starker. Johanne Perron and Ross Harbaugh agreed on one concept described as “cosmopolitan”<sup>57</sup> or “global”.<sup>58</sup> The most surprising answer for the author was perhaps from Leslie Snider. The Canadian pedagogue focused more on the American classical musical activities since the beginning of the twentieth century. He highlighted the fact that the major American orchestras such as Boston and Detroit had French conductors: Pierre Monteux and Charles Munch in Boston and Paul Paray in Detroit.<sup>59</sup> This fact confirmed for him the strong French influence in the United States. For him, their influence transformed the sound of these American orchestras to have a greater preoccupation with color and texture, rather than a more Germanic approach which favored accentuations and rhythmical structure. The cello, with an impressive spectrum of colors, would have been greatly influenced by the French conductors, focusing on the range of color that an orchestra could deliver. This interpretation of the French conductors in United States would have been transmitted to all instruments, including, of course the cello. Peter Howard reinforced Snider’s opinion by saying that the French school devotes 80% of its energy and focus to the bow. And referring to the Russian school, Howard mentioned that the Russians rely more on a greater movement of the arm with a rigid wrist, as opposed to their French neighbors who focus on the suppleness of the wrist. Although, for Leslie Snider, the greatest influence on the American school was Félix Salmond who taught Leonard Rose, Frank Miller, Orlando

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<sup>57</sup>Johanne Perron, [celloboreal@hotmail.com](mailto:celloboreal@hotmail.com), “DMA essay”, e-mail to Marie-Elaine Gagnon, [cellomeg@hotmail.com](mailto:cellomeg@hotmail.com), 16 December 2004.

<sup>58</sup>Ross Harbaugh, professor of violoncello, interview by author, 19 March 2005, Miami, tape recording, University of Miami, Coral Gables.

<sup>59</sup>Leslie Snider, professor of violoncello, interview by author, 18 March 2005, Miami, tape recording, University of Miami, Coral Gables.



Cole and Bernard Greehouse at Curtis.<sup>60</sup> Mr. Salmond premiered the Elgar cello concerto in 1919 with the composer himself conducting the London Symphony at the Queen's Hall, in London.

As mentioned above, Mrs. Perron doubted the existence of an American cello school because of its cosmopolitan nature. "I have witnessed a lot of American teaching where they use a lot more tricks and games and imagery of all sorts to reach the children better."<sup>61</sup> Perhaps, Mrs. Perron is referring to the Suzuki Method filtered into America around 1960.<sup>62</sup> In comparison with the French approach, which tends to teach music reading, *solfège*, and focusing on the sound quality, at the first lesson. No games, tricks or nurturing parental supervision like the Suzuki Method is employed to make the apprenticeship easier. Mr. Perron refers to the American school as part of the commercial approach of the well-known Suzuki Method. Phyllis Young, the brilliant pedagogue from University of Texas in Austin also uses many games in her teaching.

The most contradictory results from the interviews were from the last question related to the existence of an American school of cello playing.

Richard Aaron emphatically stated that there was no such thing. Ross Harbaugh thought that the American School should be seen as a Global School, with a hint of the French, Russian and Hungarian schools mixed together and represented by cellists such as Leonard Rose and Yo-Yo Ma. Johanne Perron focused more on the commercial

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>Joanne Perron, [celloboreal@hotmail.com](mailto:celloboreal@hotmail.com), "DMA essay", e-mail to Marie-Elaine Gagnon, [cellomeg@hotmail.com](mailto:cellomeg@hotmail.com), 16 December 2004.

<sup>62</sup>Edith Eisler, "The Suzuki Method, Pro and Con," *Strings*, November/December 1993, 22.

approach frequently used to teach stringed instruments to young pupils. She doubted the existence of a firm American School due to this cosmopolitan country's nature. Leslie Snider thought that if there is an American School, it would have been greatly influenced by the French conductors of the twentieth century. Felix Salmond and Janos Staker would be the backbone of the American School of today. Finally Peter Howard strongly agreed with the idea of an American School of cello playing divided between Leonard Rose and Janos Starker. Perhaps it will take another century to really grasp the emerging ideas about the existence of an American School of cello playing or not.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

The French cello school was established by Martin Berteau who has been proclaimed the founder of the French cello school by numerous scholars. Jane Adas's *Early Magazine* article shed some light on his mysterious life. Berteau had many pupils who spread his knowledge throughout Europe. Among his pupils, was the French cellist Jean-Pierre Duport. As mentioned in chapter 2, Jean-Pierre Duport taught his young brother Jean-Louis who wrote the extremely influential and important essay: *Essai sur le doigté du violoncelle et sur la conduite de l'archet*. With this publication, he established the science of cello playing and set the cellistic world on the road of modern playing. He codified cello fingering and bowing and synthesized the work of Martin Berteau and his brother Jean-Pierre. The young Duport created and catalogued a method of fingering to work in all situations, for solo and orchestral repertoire. His essay ultimately changed the face of cello instruction and performance forever. Every cello school in the world has been influenced by his pedagogy.

As a result, Duport's pedagogy also influenced the cello teaching of North America. The author conducted an extensive examination of various conservatories and universities in North America to find out how the French cello school had evolved in the United States and Canada. The results were surprising. This author's research proved that the United States has felt the influence of many school of teachings: German, Russian,

and Belgian, for example. But where was the French cello school? As it turned out, everywhere. Through interviews and biography searches, the author discovered that virtually every cellists teaching in America today had some French school influences.

The French cello school in North America is the most intact in the province of Québec, which shares a common language and a similar system of conservatories. The author created a cellistic family tree to trace her lineage and came to the conclusion that her playing was not 100% French, because of her studies in United States. She had “spoiled” her French lineage! Now she must consider herself one half French, one quarter Belgian and one quarter German. Because of this, her playing is quite different from her colleagues who chose to stay in Québec. However her situation is not unique. The eclectic nature of her music education does seem a reality in the United States. This country, more than any other, has attracted and welcomed great teachers from around the globe. What seems to have emerged in the United States is a phenomenon that might be described as a Global School, a school built on the best elements of each of the cello schools of the world. Could this term best describe the American phenomenon?

In a recent cello conference under the direction of Janos Starker, numerous cellists agreed with Professor Harbaugh that there is no American School of cello performance and pedagogy per se, but instead a “mish-mash”, a melting pot, or a global school of cello playing. Starker himself has contributed to this new school. He has taught an enormous number of influential cellists who carry his Organized Method (series of etudes) into their studios. The genesis of this global school was no doubt stimulated by many great musicians who came to the United States during World War II, escaping racial genocide and war atrocities. Pierre Fournier came across the Atlantic to

add his influence to the American School, both north and south of the Canadian border. At the same time, Rostropovich escaped to the United States, and became a hero of the cold war at Carnegie Hall...by performing virtually all the major concertos. His wide vibrato and intensely personal style of music-making left an indelible mark on all that heard him perform. Rostropovich expanded the interpretational boundaries of each violoncello concerto he performed. Janos Starker and Mstislav Rostropovich are very different. Yet, both of these men were escaping Soviet repression, both of these men embraced the Americans as their own, and both changed the way Americans thought about cello playing and teaching.

The last chapter of this human research was a series of interviews with cellists who studied with a French pedagogue. The goal of these interviews was to find out if they were advocates of the French cello technique in their pedagogy and if they believed that an American school existed. The answers revealed a variety of opinions. This could be due to the comparative youth of the American school and its eclectic nature, more evidence for an emerging global school. As a result of her accumulated research, with the consensus of interviewed cellists, the author has concluded that a school of cello playing was founded in America through the efforts of a handful of great masters representing all the major cello schools, all influenced to a greater or lesser extent by the French Cello School, forging a Global School of cello playing.

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#### **E-mail Communications**

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## **Appendix A**

### **IRB exemption approval**



April 19, 2005

Ross Harbaugh, Professor  
Department of Frost School of Music  
240 Greene Win  
Locator Code: 7610

**Protocol Number: 20050015**

**Title: "The Evaluation of the French Cello in North America"**

Dear Professor Harbaugh:

On **April 18, 2005** a designee of the **Social and Behavioral Sciences** IRB Committee determined that the above-referenced protocol meets the IRB guidelines for exemption from review by the University of Miami's **Social and Behavioral Science** Committee IRB, under **category number 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2)**.

The IRB request that you notify the IRB of any changes to the study that may affect the exempt status.

If you have any questions, please call the Human Subjects Research Office at (305) 243-3195.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dena McCarthy".

Dena McCarthy  
IRB Acting Coordinator for SBSC  
On behalf of the IRB

IRB/dm

cc: IRB File

Human Subjects Office (M-809)  
P.O. Box 016960 Tel: 305-243-3195  
Miami, Florida 33101  
Fax: 305-243-3328

## **Appendix B**

### **Bazelaire's *Method***

**BAZELAIRE'S METHODE**

I.-INTELLIGENT PRACTICE

II.-THE FIRST LESSON

III.-INTERVIEWING THE NEW STUDENT

IV.-THREE GREAT PRINCIPLES

V.-BREADTH OF TONE ENCHAINEMENT BREATH AT THE TIP OF THE BOW

VI.-LEFT HAND POSITION

VII.-BEAUTY OF TONE EXPRESSIVE TONE

VIII.-PRECISION OF PLAY

X.-INTONATION

XI.-DOUBLE STOPS

XIII.-SHIFTS

XIV.-EXTENTION SUPEREXTENSION

XV.-VIBRATO

XVI.-SPEED

XVII.-THE BOW

XVIII.-BOW TENSION BOW POSITION THE TIP OF THE BOW

XIX.-THE CHORD

XX.-DÉTACHÉ

XXI.-FROTTÉ SAUTILLÉ

XXII.-JETÉ

- XXIII.-SLUR-WITHIN-A-SLUR
- XXIV.-FLYING STACCATO
- XXV.-THE MORDENT
- XXVI.-THE EXPRESSIVE INFLECTION
- XXVII.-CLARITY
- XXVIII.-EVENESS
- XXIX.-DYNAMICS
- XXX.-ACCENTUATION
- XXXI.-THE METRIC ACCENT
- XXXII.-GLISSANDO
- XXXIII.-PIZZICATO
- XXXIV.-MOVEMENT INTERPRETATION
- XXXV.-THE REST
- XXXVI.-THE ACCROC
- XXXVII.-THE TRILL
- XXXVIII.-THE MEMORY
- XXXIX.-FINGERING
- XL.-THE BOW STROKE
- XLI.-RUBATO
- XLII.-THE BACH SUITE
- XLIII.-THE LITERATURE OF THE VIOLONCELLO

## **Appendix C**

### **Interview with Richard Aaron**

**Marie-Elaine Gagnon:** Did you study with a French teacher and who was this cellist?

**Richard Aaron:** Yes. I studied with Pierre Fournier and André Navarra.

**MEG:** Would you describe these teachers as exponents of the French cello school?

**RA:** Yes, absolutely...No excessive motions, no excessive motions with the left hand. Everything was just a minimum amount of effort to do everything.

**MEG:** That's interesting!

**RA:** Yes, that was quiet remarkable.

**MEG:** Ok. And how would you describe the French cello school?

**RA:** Well, they are many different schools. Pierre Fournier was a more an artist teacher. He worked on really artistic lines, and phrasings technique and wasn't that interested in technique. Navarra, ( I worked with Navarra in Sienna, Italy), and he was a great deal into technique with a lot of Duport's etudes and scales. He was very involved in the technical aspect of the playing. He really wouldn't let somebody plays unless he was happy with their technique. He had a very tough teacher! He was a totally different approach to cello playing. Even though they are both in the French school, they both are very different. They were very different people but both in their own way quite profound. Navarra was an older man. I didn't really hear him play He didn't play very much. Both men taught in master class, I never had a private lesson. I would play in a group of 8 or 10 people, sometime I would go and wouldn't play and other time, I would be my turn to play. They would turn to me and say now its your turn to play.

**MEG:** Of course.

**RA:** It was a very different kind of thing. Navarra was very tough!

**MEG:** Yes, that's what I heard! And how did Pierre Fournier influenced your teaching and playing?

**RA:** How he affected my playing?

**MEG:** umm, influenced!

**RA:** I will tell you, Navarra influenced me more. He taught me to have more discipline!

**MEG:** I see.

**RA:** Fournier was really an artist, you learned from him trough his artistic responses. Because I consider myself a teacher now, Navarra really inspired me to become more disciplined in my playing, more aware of how to approach problems. He felt if you have

a problem, don't try to be fancy. Approach it in the basics of your playing. If you have a problem with shifting; then work on it with arpeggios and scales. You are constantly trying to solve physical and dexterity problems. They were two different people, even though Navarra was an artist, so called a great cellist, he was not the same kind of artist as Fournier. Fournier was like every ounce, every bone in his body was music.

**MEG:** Yes, I think Navarra was a technician, like a surgeon!

**RA:** Navarra still had an amazing concept of the sound, his students were so terrific! The French schooling is fantastic.

**MEG:** I know, I'm a big fan of the French school.

**RA:** The reason is because their understanding of *solfège*, hear music in a very musical way. When I was teaching at the Paris Conservatory, last year, even kids that weren't that talented, every cellist, not even the biggest talents; they still had a really musical insight into playing, very deep approach to the music. And very singing-oriented, very aware of musical line, and more so than in this country. This country is more interested in the notes. They're more interested in the harmony

**MEG:** Ah, that's interesting! Do you think there is an American school of playing and teaching?

**RA:** I don't think there's much of an American School. No, there is no such a thing. In this country, there is the Russian, the French and the Belgian influences. Here, it is kind of a mishmash and there is really no American school.

**MEG:** Thank you very much for your time!



## **Appendix D**

### **Interview with Leslie Snider**

**Marie-Elaine Gagnon:** Did you study with a French cellist? Who was the teacher?

**Leslie Snider:** Well, I studied with two French cellists, Charles Renaud in Nice and André Navarra for a summer in Sienna, Italy. Both of them were major exponent of the French school. My teacher Charles Renaud was a pupil of Bazelaire at the Paris Conservatory and graduated in 1943 or something like that. And of course, Bazelaire was one of the most important teachers at the beginning of the century. If you look at the lineage of Bazelaire backward, it goes right to Martin Berteau, the founder of the French school.

**MEG:** So, you would describe Bazelaire as an exponent of the French cello school?

**LS:** Absolutely.

**MEG:** That was my second question!

**LS:** One of the most important.

**MEG:** And, how would you describe the French cello school?

**LS:** Well, primarily, if you talk about bow technique, it involves the suppleness of the wrist and the continuous contact of the string as opposed to the Russian school which is very, very fast bow and not as flexible.

**MEG:** High elbow?

**LS:** Not really, it is lower elbow, where the French is more or less the same height of the wrist and the flexibility of the changes and lots of finger motion. It is a very mobile type of technique. Also a lot of emphasis is put on different bow techniques. Bow distribution is very important. I think it has to do with the requirement of the repertoire. If you look at the great French concertos and sonatas of the late nineteenth century, early twentieth century, required extremely flexible bow technique, so that required quiet complex sense of division and articulation. That is the primary quality or characteristic of the French school. Where the left hand is concerned in terms of vibrato, the great French cellists of the twentieth century -not all- but a lot of them used constant vibrato, either very fast like Tortelier or much more supple like Gendron, but a continuous vibrato, with one vibrato being an integral part of the sound, as opposed to an embellishment or decoration.

**MEG:** So how did it influence your teaching and playing?

**LS:** I must admit that when I first went to France, way back in the 1970's...I was amazed at the analytical skills of my teacher. Being able to verbalize and characterize virtually every aspect of the cello technique and approaches to the interpretation. Whereas the teaching I had in Canada before going to France was like "do it like that

because that is the way I do it!” It was just based on nothing more than personal preferences rather than a kind of structural orientation.

**MEG:** Do you think there is an American school of playing and teaching? How do you think the French school has influenced it?

**LS:** Your question is a difficult one...First of all; I don't think that there is one American School, but rather a series of different schools and approaches that have evolved from various sources. The great French cellists of the past probably influenced this, but more indirectly than directly. Certainly in the early years and more so in recent times. If you look at the evolution of American classical music activities in general since the beginning of the twentieth century, the French influence has always been present. Just look at some of the conductors of major American orchestras over the years. Pierre Monteux and Charles Munch in Boston, Paul Paray in Detroit. On an interpretative level, this translates into a preoccupation with color and texture rather than the more Germanic concerns of accentuation and rhythmic structure. This has been transmitted to many specific instrumental schools and the cello is perhaps one of the most notable, being an instrument whose color spectrum is impressive. Felix Salmond who taught at Curtis was arguably the most important influence on the American school. His students included, Leonard Rose, Frank Miller, Orlando Cole and Bernard Greenhouse. Most of whom became important teachers themselves. Were these people eventually influenced by the great French cellists of the time? You will have to determine by their playing. Later, you had a major Hungarian influence. Starker who studied with one of Popper's student. It is obvious that later, any American cellists went to study in France and what they learned with Maréchal, Bazelaire, Navarra, Fournier, Tortellier, Gendron, Muller, Pidoux and others became integrated in their pedagogical approaches but I will leave it to you to determine the extent.

**MEG:** Thank you so much!

## **Appendix E**

### **Interview with Peter Howard**

**MEG:** Did you study with a French cellist? Who was the teacher?

**PH:** Who were the teachers; plural. Maurice Gendron, Pierre Fournier, André Navarra.

**MEG:** Would you describe those teachers as exponent of the French cello school?

**PH:** Yes and no, your questions require very simplistic answers and there is no simplistic way to answer it. You will have to define for me what the French school means is and then I will tell you rather or not they mean that.

**MEG:** Well, I imply French school as a school who uses various bow techniques such as sautillé, a very precise way to divide to bow.

**PH:** That does describe every methods of teaching. Rather French, Russian, African or Australian. You see what I mean? What was the first word you used?

**MEG:** Excuse me?

**PH:** Silky you said? What was the first word you used to define the French school? As what?

**MEG:** A precise way to use the bow but the thing is, I am going to ask you this question.

**PH:** The way the question is asked there is no answer. Your definition of the French school could suit any schools. It is not specific.

**MEG:** Well can I ask you how you would define the French cello school?

**PH:** How I would describe the French cello school?

**MEG:** Yes!

**PH:** As with the Russian school, the French school devotes I would say, 80% of its energy, 80% of its focus in the bow, the right arm and the right hand. The French school uses much more suppleness and flexibility in the bow hand. The Russian school relies more on the arm and often the hand is less mobile to the point of being rigid.

**MEG:** While you were studying with those great teachers, do you think it influenced you way plying and teaching?

**PH:** Without question, absolutely.

**MEG:** Great! Do you think there is an American school of playing and teaching?

**PH:** Leonard Rose, kind of a compact sound. Something accuracy ahead of expression. I don't know how to describe it. It is kind of general. This is the way of the American school appeals to me. There are two elements here. Kapuchinsky was a teacher at Oberlin, is a pretty good teacher. He believed in using a very large number of consonants among vowel sound when he bowed. It was very much of a *parlando* style of playing, lot's of speaking, inflections using consonants, whereas as the French, and especially Navarra was absolute pure lyricism. You could hardly hear a bow change let alone, any separations whatever between notes, in the legato phrases. As example, listen to Navarra's recording of the *Arpeggione*. It's amazing in its lyricism and its pure *sostenuto legato*, approach to every phrase. Quiet amazing! When you hear somebody like Kapuchinsky, or a disciple, a student of Kapuchinsky, Liz Lumpkin on the one hand, Steven Doan on the other hand, there were a lot of articulations. Which is kind of stop and go, or weight and release. Both the stopping and the changing of the bow speed with spacies in between and the pressure release in and out in the strings. No, well, what I would call it? No continuous engagement of the bow in the string. This is a part of the American school. The other part would be Starker. Quiet fortunately, most part of his students, with a few exceptions doesn't play like Starker. The one, who does, Tsutsumi, is a great guy, a lovely man, lovely teacher, but it's affected, or as you would say in French, *manière*.

**MEG:** *Maniéré. Oui c'est ca.*

**PH:** It is a mannered. It is not like a vocalist, it is not like a singer, I play for my students recordings of Pinzel, the great bass singing Boris Goudonov, I am talking about a singing sound, the style of the sound, the c string. I used Gerard Suzet, perhaps you remember him baritone, that's the g string and I use singer, as illustration, as we as cellist, try to, achieve the same lyricism as they achieve it themselves.

**MEG:** That's a great idea! Then do you think the French cello school has influenced the American cello school?

**PH:** Here and there to generalize all of that. This is eh, ok.

**MEG:** Great, I guess we are done! Thank you very much.

## **Appendix F**

### **Interview with Ross Harbaugh**

**Marie-Elaine Gagnon:** Did you study with a French cellist? Who was the teacher?

**Ross Harbaugh:** Yes. I studied with André Navarra for a year in Paris, and a summer in Siena, Italy. I also worked for years with a student of Navarra named Peter Howard, currently Principal Cellist of the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra.

**MEG:** Would you describe this teacher as an exponent of the French School?

**RH:** Yes. Navarra was the primary teacher at the Paris Conservatory for years.

**MEG:** How would you describe the French cello school?

**RH:** The French School as I know it is very involved with the production of big continuous sound. Navarra spent the vast majority of his teaching time on tone and sound production. He used a various exercises, many of them revolving around Duport Etude #7 to gain control over the right hand finger flexibility and control. He preached the exercise of the dead hand, (*La Main Morte*) as the ideal bow hand. Totally non-active, only reactive. The bow hand hangs from the wrist, which in turn hangs from the shoulder. Because the elbow is close to the waist when the bow is at the frog, the wrist is predominant and seems a bit high by modern standards. Navarra also made the study and execution of four octave scales a center-piece of his pedagogy. Scales were his way of teaching vibrato, shifting, evenness of tone, fluidity, consistency, and speed. The scales began as whole notes, four beats to a note, one note to a bow, and ended with four octaves in one bow, both up and down bow. For intonation, Navarra had all his students play scales in fingered thirds and sixths, as well as octaves, always starting with elided bowing, i.e.: playing each note twice with the shift occurring during the bow stroke, not at the bow change. Arpeggios, Major and Minor only, but with legato and spiccato bowings, four octaves, ultimately very fast. Navarra taught the concept of singing in all the interpretations I studied. As a result, his interpretations of Bach were somewhat dated and square. His fingerings and bowings for the suites were designed to highlight sound production, and to eliminate audible slides. His Beethoven sonatas were very expressive, but overly concerned with eliminating audible slides of any kind. The year I studied with him, many of his students were studying the Elgar Concerto. Vibrato and *sautillé* in this concerto were never explained, but instead only demonstrated. The idea was to simply observe and imitate what he did so well. Navarra taught by relying in the inspiration of his exciting and expressive playing. Master classes were often show places for him to play brilliantly. I should say that I was also exposed to the teaching of Pierre Fournier, another great exponent of the French school. Many of the bowing exercises that Peter Howard taught came from Fournier. The tube exercise involved a short up-bow followed by a quick down-bow in the air. Then, the process is reversed with a short down-bow followed by a quick up-bow in the air. This exercise develops arm-tracking parallel to the bridge, and bow and arm control. Another bow exercise is the *archet fouet*, which begins with a small up bow at the tip, followed by a quick motion with the bow rotating out from the string, turning the bow over so the hair is toward the ceiling, and then



whipping the bow back to the starting position at the tip. This exercise strengthens the right wrist and digits.

**MEG:** How did it influence your teaching and playing?

**RH:** I was exposed to the French school through Peter Howard at Oberlin Conservatory, who had studied with Navarra. I began studying with Howard at the age of 14, and thus was very influenced by the French school. I went through all 24 scales using the regimen outlined above. Many of the bowings and fingerings that were given to me came from either Navarra or Fournier. I have all my students play scales and arpeggios with the same sequence and format as Navarra. However, I have found that the intense finger exercises at the frog, favored by Navarra, tend to cause trauma to the wrist, so I have modified this exercise. I feel it's obviously important to develop flexibility in the hand and fingers, but there are other ways to do this. I use all of the Fournier's exercises in my teaching.

**MEG:** Do you think there is an American school of playing and teaching? Who did you think the French school has influenced it?

**RH:** In general, the American school of playing is loud and fast, epitomized by Leonard Rose and Steven Kates, both deceased. Yo-Yo Ma was trained in Paris before coming to study with Rose, and already had some of the French concept internalized. Gary Hoffman studied with Janos Starker, but is now leaving in Paris. It is probably more likely instead of an American school, there is more and more a global school, heavily influenced by the French and Russian schools. The American school of teaching is nurturing and somewhat sports-oriented. The French was very scale oriented and exercises-oriented, with heavy emphasis on solfege. The American school emphasizes repertoire. However, the Curtis school is very dedicated to the study of Sevcik. The Northwestern cello class under the guidance of Hans Jørgen Jensen, studies all Popper etudes, as do Starker's cello classes at Indiana University. All the schools use Duport. Once again, there is a tendency to take the best form each of the schools around the world, and to in effect form a Global School.

**MEG:** Thank you, it was very impressive!

## **Appendix G**

### **Interview with Johanne Perron**

**Marie-Elaine Gagnon:** Did you study with a French cellist? Who was the teacher?

**Johanne Perron:** My first teachers were a married couple who had just finished their studies at the Paris Conservatory with André Navarra. The lady was French and her husband French Canadian. He met her in Paris obviously. Their name is Huguette Morin and Pierre Morin. They were both my teachers because I started a first lesson with him, then I went with her for a few lessons then it was him again for quite a while after that. So I will speak mostly of him since he was my main teacher for about 4-5 years.

**MEG:** Would you describe this teacher as an exponent of the French cello school?

**JP:** His teaching was definitely very French. The repertoire, the method used and emphasis on the bow more than the left hand.

**MEG:** How would you describe the French cello school?

**JP:** The cello school focused a lot on the right hand as I said before. There is a lot of focus on musicality and the approach to teaching the technique is based on the musical idea. Always. We do a lot of open strings to develop the good quality of sound as well as scales where the bow is always very well divided. The left hand uses a lot of extension as opposed to what I learned later on with Janos Starker. I learned with all literature involving French composers and methods such as Feuillard. The Feuillard is to my opinion still (after reviewing many others) the best because of the qualities it develops and how gradual it is done.

**MEG:** How did it influence your teaching and playing?

**JP:** It influenced my teaching enormously as well as my playing. To this day, after teaching so many years here in United States, I still find the students not very knowledgeable on the bow and its extraordinary spectrum of colors, subtleties, discipline, and variations of speed of pressure. I also find the public not sensitive to this kind of playing but on this, I might be wrong. It is just that when I play for a mostly French audience, they are completely different listeners and they are sensitive to these refined colors and here I feel they are not. They are also much more inclined towards a musical player rather than a technical one. I teach these things but it is not always very well understood.

**MEG:** Do you think there is an American school of playing and teaching? How do you think the French School has influenced it?

**JP:** It is hard for me to say if there is an American way of teaching because this country is so cosmopolitan. However, in the early education of music, I have witnessed a lot of American ways of teaching where they use a lot more tricks and games and imagery of all sorts to reach the children better. However, I have not seen this disease reach Canada yet. I called it disease but I do not condemn it at the same time. It is just that I find it

takes away the simplicity and core of the music itself. It creates a sort of mentality that is a bit more commercial rather than individual. In the French approach, the way I was taught anyway, right away, the music, the expression of the music is taught at the first lesson, using solfege and focusing on asking the child to immediately take charge of his or her sound quality, tone, control. The position is very important as well but it is not taught in a mold. It is explained then the individuality of the child emerges. However, I have seen also excellent ideas on the American way of teaching children that I taught that were very fun and creative. And if the French school is influencing any of the American one, I would say that more and more, being such a cosmopolitan country, solfege is taught quite a lot in this country, there is also a blend of cello schools happening where the best of those different methods are taught. I would also say that in this country, there is a lot of Suzuki influence and in the French approach, there is no commercial approach like that. The teaching is done like “this is the way is done, place your hand like that, finger there, bow there and...let’s go!” In the higher education, that is where the blend I am talking about happen the most. Eventually, there is not that many ways of playing an instrument. You have to develop the technique and express the music the most beautiful way possible! One summer, I had an incredible experience. I went to Banff centre to study with Janos Starker. It was really a big shock to me. The approach of teaching was extremely different then what I was used to. He was focusing on technique so much, as if he could take apart all aspect of technique and asking us to know them very well, control them very well then maybe play after that. My whole playing collapsed. I was rearranging my playing for more relaxation, more control, and better technical ability. Then I went to Geneva for special interpretation classes with Pierre Fournier. He was telling me the same things Starker had talked about but only from the musical point of view. He did not talk necessarily about technique but more about the musical idea and how to do it from there. This was the greatest influence to how I teach today. After so many years now, I am careful not to teach from only a technical approach, because my feelings then were that with Starker I was losing my individuality and with Fournier I was regaining it back. On the other hand, when I went to study with Leonard Rose, It was very well blended. His way of teaching was perfection, style, good solid standard musicality. In that sense, his way was much closer to the French school. Today I teach a bit both though I teach more from the French approach, I think. I can teach differently depending on the student. Also, sometimes it is important to explain the technique very well. But still, there are things the French school will talk about more and there in United States I would never hear about it. Also, one of my most influential learning experiences with French school was that I heard so much more French music when I was going to concerts. I teach in a music festival in the summer in Québec where it is mostly only French musicians coming from Europe and when I come back in September, my mind is filled with this approach, this sound, this depth, timing, refinement and it enhances a lot my teaching here.

**MEG:** Mrs. Perron, thank you so much for your precious collaboration!

## VITA

Marie-Elaine Gagnon was born in Jonquière, Canada, in the province of Québec. In 1986, she is invited by the board of the Conservatoire de Musique de Chicoutimi to join a preparatory program in violoncello. In 1997, she won the second prize at the Festival de Musique du Royaume, and a year later, she won the first grand prize in the solo and chamber music categories. She has performed standard violoncello concertos, such as Vivaldi, Saint-Saëns, Schumann and Dvorak. In 2000, she performed the Britten's *Sonata in c* and *Pampaéna* from Ginastera, for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in a series called "Jeunes Artistes".

Marie-Elaine Gagnon is a member of the *Ibis Camerata*, based in Miami. They have toured in Europe and won a residency at the Music Festival of Hamden-Sydney in Virginia in the summer of 2004. Gagnon has been awarded the very first award given by the Foundation Dorothy Robinson and studied with the Miami Strings Quartet.

In 1997 and 1998, she was admitted to the National Youth Orchestra of Canada. She went also many summers to the *Domaine Forget*, a string academy in Canada. She studied with many well known teachers acclaimed around the world, such as Paul Watkins from London, Desmond Heobig, principal violoncello at the Cleveland Symphony, and Roland Pidoux, professor at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris. To perfect her teaching, she did an internship as professor of violoncello at Barry University, in North Miami during the spring of 2004. During her doctorate, she was the teaching assistant of Ross Harbaugh's cello studio.