

String Intonation

Personal Expression and Pedagogical Challenges

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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION


Doctoral dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at the Faculty of Fine and Performing Arts, Lund University, to be publicly defended on Saturday 17th of May 2025 at 13.00, Nathan Milsteinsalen, the Royal College of Music in Stockholm, Valhallavägen 105, Stockholm

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Organization: LUND UNIVERSITY: Faculty of Fine and Performing Arts, Box 8084 SE-200 41 Malmö & The Royal College of Music in Stockholm, Box 27711 SE-11591 Stockholm	Document name: Doctoral Dissertation	
	Date of public defense: 2025-05-17	
	Sponsoring organization	
Title and subtitle: String Intonation: Personal Expression and Pedagogical Challenges		
Abstract: <p>In string performance of Western classical music, melodic intonation has generally been considered an expressive tool. However, empirical studies investigating performance intonation have often related intonation to different tuning systems, leaving music-contextual aspects of performance intonation rather unexplored. This work aimed to understand string musicians' perceptual intonation preferences and their performance intonation, and how such expert knowledge is pedagogically transferred to future generations of string players.</p> <p>This doctoral dissertation comprises four original publications: (1) a quantitative study on higher-education music students' perceptual preferences regarding melodic intonation, (2) a mixed-methods study about concertmasters' (highly skilled violinists') intonation preferences in perception and in performance, (3) a survey study of string teachers' experiences in teaching intonation at elementary and pre-college levels, and (4) a text study focusing on prominent string musicians' verbal communication surrounding expressive intonation in performance. Hence, each of the studies investigates a different aspect of the main aim.</p> <p>The findings of the first study suggest an expertise-related connection between violinists' intonation preference and meter. The results in the second study indicate that concertmasters' average leading-tone intonation was sharper than in both equal tempered and just intonations, in performance as well as in their perceptual preferences. In the third study, practising string teachers showed a rich variety of creative teaching strategies to make intonation apprehensible and accessible to children. The fourth study demonstrated how string pedagogues seemed to struggle with their verbal communication regarding intonation practice in expressive performance.</p> <p>By shedding light on the application of expressive intonation in successful string musicians' performance, this work discloses parts of musicians' implicit knowledge concerning their contextually based intonation practice. These new insights may have implications for teaching intonation, inspiring to more efficient communication surrounding expressive performance in instrumental music education.</p>		
Key words: expressivity, intonation, leading tone, melodic intonation, music perception, music performance, pedagogical communication, pitch, string instruments, teaching strategies, tuning, violin.		
Classification system and/or index terms (if any)		
Supplementary bibliographical information	Language: English	
ISSN and key title: Studies in Music Education Royal College of Music	ISBN 978-91-88409-44-7 (print) ISBN 978-91-88409-45-4 (digital)	
Recipient's notes	Number of pages: 200	Price
	Security classification	

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