

A Kalmus Classic Edition

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DUPORT

TWENTY-ONE ETUDES

FOR CELLO

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J E A N - L O U I S D U P O R T




The modern method of violoncello playing dates only from about the last third of the eighteenth century. While the great Italian masters had developed the art of the violin before the end of the seventeenth, it remained for the Frenchman Jean-Louis Duport to bring order and system into the method of the violoncello. His "Essay on the Art of Fingering the Violoncello and of Bowing," published about 1770, first corrected the crudities and inefficiencies of his contemporaries and predecessors in both the important elements of which it treats, and cleared the way for the development of modern technique. Duport was the son of a ballet master, and was born in Paris in 1749. He first devoted himself to the violin; but the success of his elder brother Jean-Pierre as a 'cellist stimulated him to emulation. He became his pupil, and soon surpassed him in skill. He made his debut at the Concerts Spirituels in Paris in 1768, the same year in which the gifted Boccherini appeared there; and was famous as a performer before his twentieth year. In 1782 Viotti came to Paris, and the profound impression that he made with his disclosure of an art riper, fuller, and more developed in every way than anything that had before been known in the French capital, was general. It had a marked influence on the young 'cellist, who determined to achieve, on his own instrument, something of the same breadth of style, beauty of tone, elegance and brilliancy. He set to work to accomplish this, and contemporary testimony is abundant as to his success.

In 1789 the outbreak of the French Revolution drove the Duport Brothers out of France, and they betook themselves to Berlin, where they obtained positions in the Royal band. Jean-Louis was received as the first violoncellist of his time, and for seventeen years he maintained that position there. The confusion and disaster of the Napoleonic war were ruinous to the musician, and he returned to Paris in 1806. His long absence had dulled the remembrance of his fame, and he had, at the age of fifty-eight, to make a new reputation for himself. He interested the public, but found all official avenues of artistic advancement

closed to him. Again he had to go forth into the world to find substantial appreciation of his artistic powers. He found it first from the Spanish king, Charles IV., who was then resident at Marseilles, and who took Duport into his service. Those were uncertain times for royalty, however, and before long the movements of his royal patron again threw Duport upon his own resources. He returned to Paris, where he gave several concerts, and astonished the musical public by his youthful vigor and unimpaired technical prowess, though he was then at the age of sixty-five. Napoleon was then occupying the throne, and was ruling his empire with a lavish patronage of art. As a result of this state of affairs Duport was taken into the service of the Empress Marie-Louise, and at last into the Emperor's band, as solo violoncellist; then, into the Conservatoire as professor. It was the period of his most brilliant success, but it was not for long; for in 1819 Duport died, at the age of seventy.

He enriched the literature of his instrument with six concertos, four sonatas, duos, variations and various solo pieces, and, above all, his famous "Essay." The reforms that Duport introduced into the technique of the violoncello, set forth in this noted treatise, consist in the true fingering of the instrument, as practised ever since—that is, by semitones, only the first and second fingers being allowed to stretch a whole tone. Before his time players had attempted to finger, as upon the violin, whole tones with successive fingers. Duport also systematized the positions and adopted a methodical system of shifting. The modern way of bowing, too, owes something to Duport—the practice of an underhand grasp, as in the bow of the double bass, had not in his time been entirely given up. That these various innovations were absolutely essential to any highly developed technical skill upon the 'cello is obvious to any student of the instrument. What Duport did for it, in fact, is indicated in the remark said to have been made to him by Voltaire at Geneva: "Sir, you make me believe in miracles; you know how to turn an ox into a nightingale!"

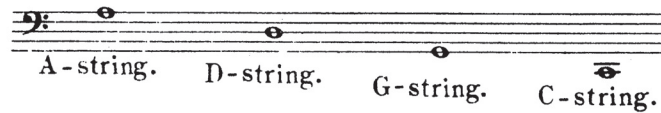
General Explanations.

For the notation of violoncello - music three different clefs are employed, namely, the F-clef or Bass Clef  the C - clef or Tenor Clef  and the G-clef or Treble Clef 

The note middle - C would be written in each of these clefs as follows:



The different strings are marked thus:



The different Positions are indicated by Pos. I, Pos. II, Pos. III, Pos. IV, etc.

A line drawn after "A - string", "D - string", etc., means that the player is to remain on that string until the end of the line.

A line drawn after "Same position" means, that all notes under this line are to be executed in the given position.

When the direction "Same position" occurs after Q (the sign for the thumb) it means that the thumb must remain in the same position.

Q is the sign for the thumb.

O is the sign for the open string.

▣ is the sign for the down-bow.

V is the sign for the up-bow.

The 4 fingers of the left hand are indicated by 1 2 3 4.

