

Notes on Viotti's Violin Concert III by André Robberechts in BBc 61.365

André Robberechts was born in Brussels in 1797 and studied with the first violinist of the city opera before briefly studying at the Paris conservatory in 1814. Two years later the Italian violinist Giovanni Battista Viotti heard him play in Brussels which led to Robberechts following Viotti for the next four years in his travels in Europe, both as his student and as a fellow performer. Robberechts was briefly hired by the Brussels conservatory in 1834 before returning to Paris to continue his performing career. He was an important influence on Charle Auguste de Bériot. The Brussels conservatories library holds five manuscripts (BBc 61.365-61.368 and 61.477) of pieces composed by Robberechts as well as works composed for him by other composers and violinists of the time. These works are for violin solo, violin and piano, chamber ensemble or vocal works with piano or instrumental accompaniment. The most interesting of these works are the series of lessons he followed with Viotti complete with performance notes. What follows is a modern transcription of the first of these lessons on the 3rd violin concerto by Viotti. The original 1732 printed edition is show with the ornamented versions from Robberecht's notes. Robberechts wrote his commentary into the manuscript for this concerto. For subsequent lessons he apparently used a separate notebook for his comments but this has not survived. Below is a transcription of the commentary with the corresponding measures in the modern transcription. These lessons took place on 20 and 24 September 1816. The original text (with spelling mistakes) is in italics followed by a rough translation. The modern edition retains all the indications of the original manuscript, including ornamentation symbols. The only changes that have been made are the use of modern down and up-bow symbols instead of the "l" and "-" used by Robberechts and the finger has been simplified (Robberechts always indicated which string the finger should be placed on, in all cases but one this was obvious to string players, the one exception is indicated with "Sul G" in this edition).

m. 1

Il faut que cette phrase doit rendue bien piano sans autres nuances.

This phrase needs to be played quite softly without other nuances.

m. 9

Cette seconde phrase doit être rendue avec force et majesté. Dans la 1^{re} mesure il faut laisser un petit silence entre le ré et l'ut #.

This second phrase needs to be played with force and majesty. In the first measure a small silence needs to be left between the D and C#.

m. 24

Il faut laisser un petit silence entre les deux si parce que la phrase finit au premier.

A small silence needs to be left between the two Bs because the phrase ends with the first.

m. 28

Il faut rendre ces petits passages piano, légèrement et avec égalité.

These passages need to be played softly, lightly and evenly.

m. 41

Il faut rendre cette phrase pianissimo et laisser un petit silence entre le ré et l'ut #.

This passage needs to be pianissimo and a small silence should be left between the D and C#.

m. 54 (first note)

Ce mi ne doit pas être soutenu jusqu'à la fin mais le son doit être un peut [sic] affaibli a la fin de la note.

This E should not be held until the end [of the note] but should be performed with a decrescendo [litt. weakened at the end of the note].

m. 54 (second note)

Pour faire ces deux notes il faut employer presque tout l'archet. Seulement qu'il en reste assez pour faire l'ut #.

To play these two notes almost all the bow should be used. Only enough should be left to play the C#.

m. 56 (last two notes)

il faut observer la même chose qu'au numero 2 [m. 54 second note]

The same should be observed as in number 2 [m. 54 second note]

m. 62 (first note)

Il faut faire raisonner la double corde autant qu'il est possible c.a.d. [c'est-à-dire] il ne faut pas rendre le son désagréable.

The double-stop should be played as resonate as possible, that is to say the sound should not be disagreeable.

m. 62 (second note)

observez la même chose qu'au N° 2 [m. 54 second note]

Observe the same thing as number 2 [m. 54 second note]

m. 65 (last three notes)

Ces petits points marquent qu'il faut faire sentir ces 3 notes avec l'archet sans faire le staccato.

These small dots mean that these three notes should be "felt" with the bow without playing staccato.

m. 69 (last note)

cette phrase doit être rendue avec fierté et par consequent avec force.

This phrase should be played proudly and as a consequence, strongly.

m. 73 (last note)

cette ph. d. e. [phrase doit être] rendue avec douceur mais largement.

This phrase should be played sweetly but broadly.

m. 77

Il faut que toutes les notes de ce passage soyent [sic] rendues également pour la forme et la mesure.

All the notes of this passage should be played evenly for the form and the measure.

m. 83

Il faut donner de l'élan à ces petites notes.

These notes should be dynamic.

m. 98

On peut rendre cette phrase un octave plus basse.

One can play this passage an octave lower [both the 1732 edition and Robberechts copy suggest performing 8va. Robberechts' fingerings are for 8va. and not loco].

m. 98 (last note)

Il faut monter au mi avec le même doigt, mais sans qu'on sans apperssoive [sic].

This E has to be played with the same finger [i.e. the first finger which was just used for the B], but without being noticeable [i.e. without a glissando].

m. 110

Il faut que ce pass. [passage] soit articulé du côté de l'archet [corrected] pointe de l'archet et largement. Pour avoir le son rond il ne faut pas employer le poignet au contraire il faut le tenir ferme.

This passage should be articulated with the side of the bow [which has been corrected to] the tip of the bow and broadly. In order to have a round sound the wrist should not be used, on the contrary it should be kept stiff.

m. 134

Largement.

Broadly

m. 149

ce passage doit être rendu bien également, et les notes pointillées largement.

This passage should be played very evenly and the dotted notes broadly.

m. 171

Il faut bien accenter [sic] cette phrase.

This phrase should be very accented.