

J.S. BACH

**Violin Partita No. 1
in B minor**

BWV 1002

Educational Edition

**With technical indications and
comments by Georges Enescu**

**Collected and edited
by Serge Blanc**

More information at www.sergeblanc.com

J.S. BACH

Sonata & Partita for Solo Violin

With technical indications and comments by Georges Enescu, collected and edited by Serge Blanc.

During the years of instruction he received from Maestro Georges Enescu, Serge Blanc noted and collected technical and interpretive indications for what Enescu called "The Himalayas of violinists": the Sonatas & Partitas for solo violin by Johann Sebastian Bach.

This exceptional document brings together these notes which concern sonority, phrasing, tempo, fingering, and expression. It is the culmination of the life's work of a master considered as one of the greatest interpreters of this work.

After having taught his own students for more than half a century, Serge Blanc wished to pass on to future generations of violinists the valuable guidance of Georges Enescu by collecting and commenting on his notes.

The complete document including Sonatas & Partitas BWV 1001 to BWV 1006, as well as Serge Blanc's recordings with Enescu, are available for free download at www.sergeblanc.com

Preface

It is common knowledge that the **Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin of JS Bach** were the daily bread of George Enescu, as they are for any musician who recognizes their value and necessity to their culture.

He considered these masterpieces as «the Himalayas of violinists» of which he was one of the greatest of the twentieth century!

He studied and taught this music all his life, both as a great performer with his reflection on all the technical problems posed by these particularly difficult works, but especially from the point of view of the brilliant composer that he was, understanding as well what this music expressed from the greatest musician of all time: JS Bach!

It was first and foremost necessary for Georges Enescu to transmit to future generations the wealth of his research, artistic, cultural and technical, that he had carried out and tested through his own magnificent career as a violinist alongside the career which mattered most to him, composer.

Once Georges Enescu returned to France in 1947 and decided to give lessons again, I had the opportunity to take them for five years, after which he offered me the unique opportunity to give a recital of the Sonatas with him at the piano! It was the chance of a lifetime.

During those five years, I had collected an enormous amount of his teachings, especially regarding what he considered the essential of musical culture: JS Bach!

I could not imagine at the time that the treasure he had passed to me, and to all his students (whom he modestly called his «colleagues»!), would serve me all my life as a musician... because it is only through experience that we understand what is contained in these works essential to the culture of any musician who plays a string instrument (violin, viola or cello).

It is no coincidence that all the great artists playing these instruments have spent their lives studying and playing these pieces throughout their careers... indeed reediting them in their own manner. But though Georges Enescu played, taught, and recorded them often... there is unfortunately no edition revealing his precise indications and his abundant comments!

One should be aware of the hardships that faced him at the time; he was over sixty years old and suffered from a serious disease of the spinal column, and he had lost at the same time all his possessions and his beloved homeland: Romania!

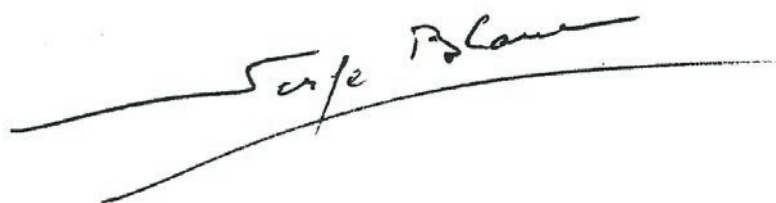
During the 55 years that followed, I continued thinking about the precious fruits of the education that I had received from this great master, learning how to pass on in my turn what I had received, passing on to each of my students the information that he had generously given to me in order to help them understand and interpret these pieces.

Proper tone, phrasing, musicality expressed in an artistic or intimate way, are the results obtained through a strict application of information and commentary gathered by patience and fierce determination!

For example concerning tempi advised by Enescu and shown at the beginning of each piece in this edition, he established these according to the indications given by the hand of JS Bach.

This single indication is essential... but is not in any edition. But when a young student (or teacher!) approaches these works for the first time, they cannot have this knowledge innately... Only later experience will eventually allow them to make their own interpretation and personal changes, having first understood the essential foundation thanks to proven sources.

It is the precious inheritance received by George Enescu that justifies the title **Educational Edition** that I have chosen.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Serge Blanc". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line that spans the width of the signature.

Serge Blanc

Partita I

BWV 1002

This **first Partita**, called the **Suite in B minor**, consists of 5 ancient dances each of which is repeated through a variation of equal proportion in phrasing and tempo.

This is important to take into account when performing the work. That is to say, the « Doubles » are actually a direct variation of each Dance and could be performed as a single piece. They should therefore be conceived and played in the same spirit.

ALLEMANDE

The first Dance is an **Allemande** - of German origin as the name suggests. It is in moderate tempo or even a little slower and its 32nd notes are lightly accented relative to the dotted 16th note.

To establish its rhythm, very accurately notated by JS Bach, it is helpful to begin working at ♩ = 63 which will obviously be «forgotten» during the final interpretation.

Full and sustained tone, calm and steady vibrato on **every** note.

The few trills should be slow and stop at the tip of the bow.

DOUBLE

The **Double** should be played at the same tempo (♩ = 63) calmly using the middle of the bow.

Keep the same tempo until the end despite the flexibility of the phrasing.

Partita I

BWV 1002

ALLEMANDA $\text{♩} = 63$

SOSTENUTO

The musical score for the Allemanda from Partita I, BWV 1002, is presented in a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked $\text{♩} = 63$. The piece begins with a *Sostenuto* marking. The notation includes numerous ornaments, such as mordents and grace notes, and is heavily annotated with fingerings (numbers 1-4) and breath marks (V). The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, and 19 clearly indicated. Dynamic markings include *res.*, *creso.*, *p*, *f*, and *espressivo*. A section starting at measure 11 is marked with first and second endings (1^a and 2^a). The piece concludes with a *Sost.* marking.

21 *sostenuto*

23 *f* *S (12V)* *f* (12V)

P seconda volta

DOUBLE $\text{♩} = 63$

mf

4

7

10 *f*

13 *mf*

16 *f* *espressivo*

19 *f* *p* *f* *p*

22 *f*

Partita I

BWV 1002

COURANTE (Corrente)

A fast Italian or French Dance ♩ = 132, of a bright character, articulated here using martelé bowing, short and strong in the middle of the bow.

Slight vibrato on every note.

Again, ascending and descending motion is accompanied by slight changes of dynamic in the same direction.

DOUBLE (Presto)

♩ = 132

As before, this **Double** is in the same tempo as the dance (♩ = 132) and is played with a quick and short bow using the middle and especially with an extremely flexible wrist.

Follow the markings 「 and  which indicate the interpretation of certain inner phrases that often correspond to repetitive phrases.

Avoid awkward accelerations that are inappropriate to Bach's style.

COURANTE $\text{♩} = 132$

(dolce och gusto)

mf

7

13

19

dimin.

25

31

p *mf*

37

43

49

55

61

f

f

Musical notation for measures 67-74. The key signature is one sharp (F#). Measure 67 starts with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The notation includes various fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4, 5), slurs, and accents. Measure 74 ends with a repeat sign.

DOUBLE
Presto $\frac{7}{4} = 132$
(leggiero)

Musical notation for measures 5-29. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The notation is dense with sixteenth and thirty-second notes, including many slurs and accents. Measure 29 is marked as the start of the "2^e Position".

33
mf

Musical staff 33-36: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). Staff 33 starts with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes with various fingerings (2, 4, 4, 0) and a trill-like figure in measure 34.

37

Musical staff 37-40: Continuation of the piece. Staff 37 has a finger number 3. Staff 38 has a finger number 4. Staff 39 has a finger number 0. Staff 40 has a finger number 4.

41

Musical staff 41-44: Staff 41 has fingerings 2 and 4. Staff 42 has a finger number 1. Staff 43 has a finger number 3. Staff 44 has a finger number 0. A dynamic marking of *p (sp.)* is present.

45

Musical staff 45-48: Staff 45 has fingerings 0, 1, 1, 4. Staff 46 has a finger number 3. Staff 47 has a finger number 1. Staff 48 has a finger number 0. A dynamic marking of *cresc.* is present.

49

Musical staff 49-52: Staff 49 has a finger number 2. Staff 50 has a finger number 4. Staff 51 has a finger number 0. Staff 52 has a finger number 4.

53

Musical staff 53-56: Staff 53 has a finger number 1. Staff 54 has a finger number 2. Staff 55 has a finger number 0. Staff 56 has a finger number 2. A dynamic marking of *p (sp.)* is present.

57

Musical staff 57-60: Staff 57 has fingerings 1, 2. Staff 58 has fingerings 3, 4. Staff 59 has fingerings 1, 4. Staff 60 has a finger number 2.

61

Musical staff 61-64: Staff 61 has a finger number 4. Staff 62 has a finger number 4. Staff 63 has a finger number 4. Staff 64 has fingerings 4, 3, 1, 2, 3, 1.

65

Musical staff 65-68: Staff 65 has fingerings 1, 4. Staff 66 has fingerings 1, 4. Staff 67 has a finger number 1. Staff 68 has a finger number 3.

69

Musical staff 69-72: Staff 69 has a finger number 4. Staff 70 has a finger number 4. Staff 71 has a finger number 4. Staff 72 has a finger number 2.

73

Musical staff 73-76: Staff 73 has a finger number 1. Staff 74 has a finger number 4. Staff 75 has fingerings 1, 3, 4. Staff 76 has fingerings 3, 1, 0, 1, 3.

77

Musical staff 77-80: Staff 77 has fingerings 3, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2. Staff 78 has fingerings 0, 1, 0, 3. Staff 79 has a finger number 2. Staff 80 has a finger number 1. A dynamic marking of *ff* is present.

Partita I

BWV 1002

SARABANDE

♩ = 58

DOUBLE

♩. = 70

A slow and serious dance showing a solemn side of JS Bach: ♩ = 58

This piece should be played using the entire bow with a full sound and slow vibrato on each note.

One should emphasize the phrasing indicated by the signs , just as the inflections of any spoken language.

Just as the **Sarabande** is full and solemn in pace, its **Double** must remain simple and be played entirely détaché using the **middle** of the bow, with only the few nuances indicated, within a rather moderate dynamic: ♩. = 70

SARABANDE $\text{♩} = 58$

Musical score for Sarabande, measures 1-25. The piece is in G major and 3/4 time. It begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and the instruction "TOUT L'ARCHE" (all bow). The score includes various articulations such as accents (*v*) and slurs. A first ending (1^a) and second ending (2^a) are marked between measures 7 and 12. A *rit.* (ritardando) marking is present at measure 12, followed by a *rit. to* (ritardando to) marking at measure 13. The piece concludes with a trill in measure 25.

DOUBLE $\text{♩} = 70$

Musical score for Double, measures 1-29. The piece is in G major and 3/8 time. It begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The score is characterized by rapid sixteenth-note passages and includes various articulations such as accents (*v*) and slurs. A first ending (1^a) and second ending (2^a) are marked between measures 6 and 11. A *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamic is indicated at measure 11, followed by a *p* (piano) dynamic at measure 17. A *cresc.* (crescendo) marking is present at measure 23, and a *dimin.* (diminuendo) marking is present at measure 29. The piece concludes with a trill in measure 29.

Partita I

BWV 1002

BOURRÉE

♩ = 72

This is a very rustic dance of great energy.

Its large opening 4 note chords must be resolved using a wide vibrato on the upper notes.

The response is made with a soft dynamic from the upbeat to the fifth measure, and develops through a crescendo to forté following the rise of the phrase, briefly interrupted by a brief piano nuance, before concluding forté.

The second part, from the double bar, vigorously resumes the development of the previous conclusion and the large chords require a large sound until the upbeat of measure 29, which alternates question/response *mf/f/p* until measure 38 which returns to *f*.

Again a few exchanges piano/forte, and a *fortissimo* conclusion!

This very difficult work requires careful work on the accuracy and sound quality of its chords, which despite their four simultaneous sounds should not appear aggressive or crushed.

Only an attack well controlled by the ear, followed by high bow speed can ensure a proper execution.

The rather lively tempo of this peasant dance in 2/2 (72 to the half note) must be maintained to the end, whatever the difficulties.

It is often required in auditions for major orchestras to test the ear of candidates as well as their steadiness of tempo when performing.

DOUBLE

♩ = 72

Its **Double** is a variation whose energy, which should recall that of the Bourrée, will be expressed through a **strong détaché martelé in the middle of the bow**.

The dynamics indicated should recall those of the **Bourrée**.

BOURRÉE $P = 72$

f con risoluzione

Tempo

adpress.

Sostenuto

f cresc.

DOUBLE $\rho = 72$

f martelé au milieu

7

14

20

26

32

38

44

50

56

62

CodA
ff

RIT 2da Volta

Conclusion in the form of ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I am fully aware of what it means to boldly approach so closely two prestigious personalities like Jean-Sebastian Bach and George Enescu.

The first has been recognized for so long and everywhere as a Demi-God-Creator of music, and the second as the greatest interpreter of the **Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin**.

Having had the exceptional good fortune to work with Enesco for 5 years I always knew that he was offering me such a precious message that I immediately wrote down even the smallest detail with care... and I studied this and passed it to my students for 60 years...

I became aware during my participation of the Symposium of Bucharest for the 50th anniversary of his death that I had a duty to future generations of violinists to share Enescu's guidance, which I had jealously preserved for so long.

Having been unable to do this himself due to circumstances, I understood it was imperative to do so in his place before the information was lost forever.



Serge Blanc and Georges Enescu bowing at the end of their concert (Paris, 1952)
(recording available on www.sergeblanc.com)

A Serge Blane, en souvenir de sa remarquable
exécution de ma Sonate pour violon, très
amicalement

Georges Enesco
1952



For more information :

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