

Viola Repertoire Composed by Mark Frank and Its Teaching Method

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Abstract: Contemporary viola performance is in its heyday of development. Viola has a large number of solo and chamber ensemble works, as evidenced by the superb skills of the performance school represented by Lionel Tertis, William Primrose, Vadim Borisovsky, Yuri Bashmet and many other outstanding violists. But a century or so ago, things were almost entirely different. At that time, the viola, like the double bass, was eclipsed by the brilliance of the violin and cello, and it was difficult to forge its own path. It was not until after World War II that the viola began to gradually appear on the world stage as a solo instrument. The main reason for this process is that the viola-specific repertoire began to be composed. Of course, the production of a large number of repertoire also contributed to the production of systematic viola teaching method. Austrian composer and viola player Mark Frank (1881-1961) played an important role in this process. The innovation of this study is to supplement the data of this almost forgotten musician as much as possible in the existing musicological research and reproduce his life. This paper aims to give a brief introduction to the composer's stage music, symphony, chamber instrumental music and vocal music, and to analyze the teaching methods of viola in his works.

Keywords: Mark Frank; Viola; Composition Legacy; Textbook

1. Introduction

Today, the viola is one of the most popular instruments. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the increase of viola works not only determined the growth of viola performance enthusiasm, but also formed the methodological basis to ensure the development of viola performance skills, which greatly promoted the development of viola. In the preface to the German musicologist Ulrich Drune's "Viola Studies" (*Das Studium der Viola*), he wrote that

by 1920, the number of original viola etudes (rather than viola versions of violin etudes) had reached about 1000. But "none is used as a teaching practice" [1]. Among viola musicians, Mark Frank holds a special place. The author saw the first mention of Frank in the musical literature of De Luner, and he classified Frank as a name that should not be forgotten [1]. Mark Frank's creation is mainly for the development of viola art, which is also reflected in the creation of original viola teaching repertoire. It is well known that until the mid-20th century, viola players practiced with violin teaching reference books and repertoire, which was considered routine 70-80 years ago, but it was absolutely unacceptable from the status of viola performance at that time. Frank took aggressive action to turn things around. At the beginning of this article, we will try to reshape the creative life of this musician.

2. Composer Mark Frank

Austrian violist and composer Mark Frank is one of the musicians who have made great contributions to different music genres such as opera, chamber music and symphony. But after his death, almost no one knew. His name is mentioned only in book indexes, reviews of individual premieres, and correspondence from musicians. Even if the modern Internet is so developed, there is still not much information about the musician. We eventually found only a small amount of information about Mark Frank's life in the *Oesterreichisches Musiklexikon* (Institute for the History of Art and Music of the Austrian Academy of Sciences) [2] and in the *Register of Persecuted Musicians of the Nazi Period* (University of Hamburg).

Mark Frank was born Markus Frankel Latz (Markus Frenkl Ratces) in Vienna on April 24, 1881. Of course there are other spellings such as Marco, Marcus, Frank, Frankl, Frenkl; With Alexander Zemlinsky and Horst Weber, as well as Arnold Schoenberg, Anton Webern, The name was finally changed to Mark Frank in

1917, as evidenced by the correspondence of both Alban Berg and Franz Schreker. Frank is the oldest of ten children. The Family moved to Naples in 1891, and the future composer studied at the Naples Conservatory from 1893 to 1897, where he was taught the viola by Eusebio de Valzac (Eusebio de Walzac, 1850-1905) and the viola by Enrico Bossi. 1861-1925) taught him the piano. The music theory teacher was Paul Serrao (1830-1905) [3]. Some parts of the chamber opera "The Three Musketeers" performed by Mark Frank while he was studying at the Conservatory of Music caught the attention of Jules Massenet. He then invited Mark Frank to continue his studies at the Paris Conservatoire, where he studied orchestration and composition with Claude Debussy for three years, starting in 1898. The influence of Debussy, the author of the opera Pelleas and Melisande, was the starting point for the formation of Frank's compositional style. In which he strove to combine elements of strict musical form with strong expressiveness: his artistic goal was to fuse elements of German musical form and expression with elements of Romanticism. His musical education and life in the South could explain this.

Frank formed a string quartet in Florence in 1900 and was violist for three years, playing his own works in various cities in Italy, Germany, France, England, and the Near East. Frank also served as concertmaster of several Italian theater orchestras until 1934, when he was violist of the Vienna Volksband, before returning to Vienna in 1904. [1]

After the end of World War I, Frank changed his focus from music performance to composition. Three of his most famous operas are "The Hero" (1919), "The Madonna" (1925) and "The Stranger Woman" (1937). In addition, his instrumental works in the 1920s and 1930s are also popular and recognized. Since then, these works have often been performed in regional music festivals, concert halls and even played on the radio.

If "The Three Musketeers" is just a successful attempt by Frank to create stage music works, then "Hero", which has won public praise, is his first real opera. On March 21, 1919, Hero premiered at the People's Opera House in Vienna and received a warm response. The second opera, "The Madonna", although also considered a success, ran into problems at the Vienna State Opera before its premiere in 1925. The opera

was performed by Frank himself, who also conducted it, which kept him active on the Vienna music stage in the 1920s.

From the late '20s to the early '30s, Frank also wrote three works of stage music: the musical comedy "Blessed Augustine" (1933), the musical "Bagno" (1935/6), and the ballet "Mardis Gras," (1934), but neither was widely circulated. In 1936, he began a collaboration with the opera librettist Friedrich Schreifuger, based on Alexander Bisson's "Madame X," (1909) composed the opera Stranger (The Stranger Woman). Following its premiere in Vienna on 17 April 1937 (conducted by Josef Cripps), "The Stranger Woman" was also performed in theatres in Graz, Trieste, Warsaw and Riga. Unfortunately, the political turmoil in Europe in 1939 prevented a planned performance at the Paris Opera House.

Although Frank was already a well-known opera composer, his instrumental works were also frequently performed by the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Vienna Women's Symphony Orchestra, the Vienna Chamber Orchestra and different chamber music ensembles in the 1920s and 1930s. Including Silving and the Wei Wei G Wei Wei G Gärber String Quartet. Works published in the existing concert program include symphonic fragments from "Hero" and "Madonna Image", as well as "Russian Rhapsody" (original works for violin and piano in 1929, arranged for orchestra in 1949). Piano Concerto in E minor (1930), Ancient Divertimento (1931), Prelude, Libyan Suite (1936) and Romantic Suite (1936). Several of Frank's chamber works were featured on Radio Vienna's weekly program, including the Piano Quartet No.1 in A minor (1925), the String Quartet (1929-1931), the Serenade for Violin and Piano (1937), and the Viola Sonata (1936). In radio concerts, Frank's works were performed alongside those of Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, and Bizet, as well as those of his contemporaries Richard Strauss, Marx Reger, and Joseph Marx. Frank's compositional style is briefly described in some articles about him, and his most frequently performed works are listed. Among his many works, the author would like to focus on his viola etudes and viola technique workbooks. In Hugo Liman's "Dictionary of Music" (1959), Frank's stage and symphonic works are "known for their deep meaning and excellent orchestration" [4]. Ferdinand Lettermeier commented that Frank's composing

style "has a full understanding of the inheritance of musical forms and instruments, while maintaining a sense of balance", emphasizing that Frank "is not only an outstanding opera composer, but also an outstanding opera composer. He is also an excellent composer, instrumental performer and creator of vocal works.

Music criticism at that time can confirm that Frank's works were recognized by the public. This is despite the fact that critics such as Heinrich Kralik, Karl Alwin, and George Malignac have found praise for Frank's work to be unreasonable and unfair. [5] The author believes that this is because Frank's compositional style is closer to late Romanticism than to the new exploration of compositional techniques at that time (especially the New Vienna School). According to the commentators of Vienna Radio at that time, Frank's repertoire was "to express himself through fixed formal structure and dramatic effect in as condensed form as possible". Frank may not want to create any basic problems for the audience in his own work, which of course affects his style.

Positive reviews of Frank's work have mainly come from France. French critics believe that Frank has incorporated the typical stylistic trends of Puccini and Charpentier music in his own works. Paul Bichette, for example, has written that "Puccini's power of inspiration and Charpentier's subtlety merge in Frank's music". His operas more or less meet the simple requirements of a large audience. A compelling stage performance, with strong theatrics accompanied by simple and appropriate music, can enchant the audience from the first sound. Having achieved success in operatic composition, based on his mastery of various instruments, Frank has also been called an instrumental composer (piano concertos, violin concertos, chamber music, symphonies) and a vocal composer (Stabat Matt, lieder). These vocal works are also full of beautiful melodies of instrumental music. [6]

Bichette acknowledged the influence of Frank's performance at the Vienna People's Opera House on his compositional style, and compared him with other famous opera creators: "The natural good memory, the reserve of the leader's voice, and the similarity to the dramatic situation can all explain the melodies that often appear in his operas." These melodies are similar to those of Wagner, Strauss, Puccini and even Korngold. On

the contrary, we believe that Frank's use of late Romantic aesthetics and traditional forms in his life is not strong. [7] "Susanna Rode-Breman expressed her opinion:" The image of the Virgin in Frank's opera is not original, and Bagno, though brilliant and melodic, is not. There is fantasy in his music, but there is no personality. [8]

The author considers the Austrian composer Alexander Zemlinsky to be too absolute and accuses Frank of caving in to kitsch in order to maintain the appeal of his music to the masses. "You may accuse me of pedantry," he wrote to Clemens Kraus, director of the State Opera, in 1925, "but I shall begin with a serious cry for life. Summer Money. Everything will be lost quickly, and I will not recover. But when I heard Marser Frikel's operas "The Queen of Sheba" (The Queen of Sheba) and "The Madonna" (The Image of the Virgin), I fell into endless despair. Is this a prank? I know Mr. Fricker, (Zemlinski got Frank's name wrong). A shallow person who produces the most vulgar works, but believe me, if you want to do something new, you should do something that brings new value and meaning to the drama. [9]

Another leading Viennese music critic, Kralik, severely criticized the premiere of "The Madonna", insisting that Frank's work was not worthy of being performed at the State Opera: "The State Opera has abandoned its traditional duties to perform Mark Frank's two-act opera" The Madonna". "The text of Lothair's Ring is a stark imitation of Renaissance opera (Mona Lisa, Violanta); the music comes from Puccini, Dalbert and all the masters of opera, but it's a complete turn-off, and no one can trust Frank's creative talent, and his thoughtless staging of "The Image of the Virgin" is a disgrace to our already saturated theatre. [10]

Between World War I and World War II, Austrian musical culture was heavily divided into traditional and modern compositional styles, and Frank was somewhere in between. On the one hand, the Viennese public appreciated his conservative style, while modernists like Zemlinsky thought he lacked originality, because the use of late Romantic aesthetics was beyond the fashion of modern artists. In addition, Frank's ethnicity was publicly confirmed by the "Alpenl Alpenl Alpenländische Rundschau", and his personal information was added to two documents of the Nazi Party, "Judaism and Music, and a List of Lovers of Jewish and Non-

Aryan Music" (1938) and the "Dictionary". In both documents, reference is made to Frank's Requiem for Taorfius [apparently a reference to Frank's German Ave Maria (Ein Deutsches Stabat Mater, German Eulogy of the Virgin, 1935)], it was created for Engelbert Taurfius after he was persecuted by the Nazis in 1934.

Fine art workers at that time either maintained contacts with the Nazis or opposed Nazi party politics. Frank and his family fell into the second category and were forced to leave Vienna. With the help of the American Friends Service in Vienna, the American Christian Refugee Committee, and some private support, the Franks obtained a residence permit in New York and traveled to New York via Paris in August 1939 [11].

There are few details about Frank's life in New York. Shortly after his return to Vienna, Frank affirmed his musical activities in the United States in an interview with *Neue Wien Zeitung* («*Neue Wiener Tageszeitung*»). According to the interview, Frank taught at the American Conservatory of Music and also worked in music publishing and continued to compose. [12] In New York, he composed the Violin Concerto, the Third Symphony, the Portrait of New York City, and various works for voice and piano. [3] In addition, there is a claim that Frank adapted Walter Damrosch's opera "Opera Cloak" (but this claim has not been confirmed so far). In the interview, Frank also described his view of art in New York: "Europeans have encountered a completely new environment in the United States.". There is only one large opera house, the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, which performs only four and a half months a year. Opera houses in Europe are almost entirely owned by the state, while opera houses in the United States are privately owned, because music services there are only in private hands. The center of the performance is not the ensemble, but the star. That's why there are some traditional works, including some famous Italian operas, performed there. "Der Rosenkavalier" is especially popular in New York. Some of the great conductors were almost entirely European. Conventionally, Italian works are conducted by Italians, French works by French, and German operas by Germans. [12]

After leaving his homeland, Frank founded the Old Austrians Association, whose members were professional musicians who had been expelled from Austria, in order to help them find

suitable jobs. In addition, Frank was involved in organizing music events in Vienna to raise funds for Austria's post-war recovery. Of his life away from Vienna, he once recalled, "I am glad that Vienna, the capital of music, has not lost anything." I am not angry about the fate of being forced to live in a foreign country, because I have learned many new things and gained many new insights. [12]

Frank returned to Vienna in December 1948 and lived to the end of his life. In the last ten years, he has only been invited to write music, so there are not so many works under his pen. These include the Third and Fourth String Quartets, a ballad for singer and piano, a Scherzo Capriccio, three works for chamber orchestra, and a symphony based on Goethe's *Lena Fox*. According to Suzanne Rode Breman, "when Frank returned home, he was no longer primarily a composer, but a viola teacher to maintain his income." He was one of the few Austrian composers to return to Vienna ten years after his expulsion. [8]

Frank was professor of viola at the Vienna Conservatory for three years (1948-1951), and there are no details about Frank's syllabus or his students' recollections of his teaching methods. However, while Frank was teaching at the Conservatory of Music, his *Etudes for Viola* (1950) was published, followed by his *Practical Technical Exercises for Viola*. Although the etudes were published earlier than pedagogical books, the etudes were written as a supplement to the teaching of "technical exercises". Frank dedicated his "Skill Exercises" to Wilhelm Rihm, who founded the music department of the Austrian Federal Publishing House in 1946 and was the editor-in-chief of the magazine "Musikerziehung" until 1961, the music department's main function was to create "new music needed for the development of Austrian music education in a modern context".

Frank's etude was published in *Music Education* as "the best practice learning material for viola players who master the third position of the violin" [13]. Of all Frank's works, his teaching reference books are most often mentioned in the online book index and Frank's creation profile. In addition, more and more of the world's top music schools are now supplementing their libraries with these works, such as WorldCat, which shows that more than 100 institutions around the world use Frank's teaching reference books. Frank's insight into the viola's role in the

ensemble has led him to provide players with appropriate instructional materials written specifically for the viola that are more useful than violin arrangements.

Frank died on April 29, 1961, shortly after his 80th birthday. He is buried in the Vienna Central Cemetery along with other prominent Viennese artistic and cultural activists.

Although Frank's music was played in concert halls and on radio in Vienna before he emigrated, his works were replaced by those of new composers and gradually disappeared from the stage. But this does not mean that Frank's works are not worthy of attention, on the contrary, as Peter Burkholder said, he belongs to those composers who write their own works according to the model of previous music giants (Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, etc.), and may well have current significance throughout the 20th century. [13] In addition, the lack of recordings of Frank's works is also an important reason for hindering the dissemination of his works.

3. Practical Viola Playing Skills Exercises

This paper will analyze Frank's viola teaching book from the following aspects: Speed characteristics; Formation principle of musical form; a clef used by a composer; Changes in the rhythm and movement of the bow; the performance of a pizzicato, chord, accent, etc.

The main purpose of this analysis is to demonstrate that an etude written specifically for the viola is more conducive to the improvement of the viola player's professional level than a work arranged for the violin.

Frank's "Practical Viola Technique Exercises" was published in 1953, three years after "Viola Etudes". This textbook is similar in content and structure to Heinrich Cather's "New Technical Exercises for the Viola" (Op. 54), Hans Hitt's "Technical Exercises for the Viola", and Wim's "Method for the Viola". Among the early viola teaching materials are Frank's books on viola players who have mastered certain violin playing techniques.

In the foreword to "Skill Exercises," the range of the instrument (alto clef) and the empty string configuration are briefly described. This book focuses more on the understanding of the alto clef. Frank briefly describes each diatonic scale in the first position on each string when playing a double octave in C major (and indicates the score and fingering). In practice, the interval range is from 32 to 34 beats, and the range is

from two degrees to ten degrees. Unlike Kaisai, Wim, and Hitt, who focus on practicing purity of tone over a large amount of technical material, Frank suggests practicing with more melodic material, which helps students think about the connections between sounds (i.e., understanding fingering along the strings). After the interval exercises, Frank's book also introduces the scale of the corresponding mode in the first position, first the rising and then the falling.

The structure of the first eight pages of Frank's "Technical Exercises" is the same as that of Hitt's "Violin Technical Exercises": Frank adds a fingering exercise similar to that of Hitt, Schladic, and Shevcik's "Violin Left-Hand Technical Exercises" (Op.1), Book 1. This part of Frank's exercise includes a total of nine examples, each covering all four strings. Includes lengths of quavers and semiquavers, and triplets, but varies in meter and rhythm; the seventh etude includes a change of meter from four (4/4) to five (5/4) beats. The Eighth and Ninth Etudes include chromatic variations played by the first, second, and third fingers; in Schladic's book, only the technique of the third finger is developed, unlike Frank's Ninth Etude, which is supported by the ring finger.

The Beginner's Fingering Etudes and Second Positions textbook also includes a 54-meter etude (speed not indicated), which includes the sound of all strings, simple chromatic modulation of the first, second, and third finger positions, periodic use of the ring finger similar to the previous fingering etudes, and five types of bows. The position change starts at the second position, grows to the seventh position, and ends with a half position.

The major and minor scales are used for the third position, as well as for short exercises that involve moving to the first position. The alto clef is used for learning in the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh positions. In these chapters, Frank included arpeggio exercises for the first time in the viola textbook, which was full of revolutionary initiatives at that time. Arpeggios begin with a minor octave of C, and two repetitions of the tonic and dominant chords, including direct and mixed chords. Frank also added a brief seven-chord arpeggio exercise with an unfixed tempo (3/4 1, 5/4 flat). The chapter ends with a short chromatic scale in the first and third positions and a complete chromatic etude including three octaves, which is also an innovation compared with other teaching

methods of viola performance in the middle of the last century.

The final chapter of Frank's viola practice technique is an etude for vibrato, double notes, and chords. To practice vibrato, Frank uses only the strongest fingers on all strings (except the fourth), first the semiquaver, then the thirtieth. There are five examples of exercises preceding the two short etudes, including tremolo, appoggiatura, and stress in the third position: two in the fourth position, two in the fifth position, and one in the sixth and seventh positions, as high positions were rarely used by viola players of the time in orchestral and chamber music.

For what it's worth, the chords are all practiced slowly (Adagio and Andante), which is great for viola players at the intermediate level. In other words, Frank didn't study the intervals on the C string, which are difficult to play, and didn't use a lot of finger crossing in the chords (that is, there was no recommendation to put the higher fingers on the bottom string). The purpose of the last two note etude is to practice third and sixth level techniques. The final etude of "Practice Technique" is 36 beats on a triad with a note on the play: "Hit the lowest note, then hold the two high notes". [14]

4. Viola Etudes

The etude has historically been used to develop the technique of playing an instrument, but unlike purely technical exercises, the etude has a "musical context" to some extent for learning certain methods. Through the analysis of some viola etudes, we can find that they are all conducive to practice, and they are not special "practice", but the comprehensiveness of teaching reference books is helpful to master the techniques and methods systematically in the appropriate music materials.

Frank's Etudes are suitable for students with intermediate playing skills who can read basic symbols, including clefs, D, G, C, and F strings. This collection of fifty etudes, divided into three volumes, covers all the basic methods needed "to prepare for the performance of Telemann's Viola Concerto in G." [15] The first two volumes generally do not go beyond the first position (except for the first etude which expands to F on the string). The first book develops the technique of playing through a sentence, including the basic types of string crossing through bowing. In addition to the technical approach, the second

book focuses on developing musical taste through more expressive melodies, which are characterized by rhythmic changes and chromatic systems. The third book is to expand the range and learn the third position.

Frank's most common form in etudes is a simple three-movement ABA with a short coda. The 2nd, 24th, 30th, 44th, 46th, 47th and 48th Etudes are used throughout and include some special techniques, which are discussed below. There are several etudes that help students master more complex forms (e.g., 29th and 40th variation themes) and genres, such as Minuet (18th and 29th), Govot (40th), and Scherzo (9th).

The most common tempo symbols in Frank's etudes are allegro (15), meso (14), and allegro meso (9). Before Frank, the tempo notation in the Viola Etudes barely went beyond Allegro and Vigor. Frank uses the more subtle speed notation here in order to focus more on tone and conscious control of the bow.

In the five etudes (No.1, 3, 6, 8, 13), Frank uses different ways of bowing, and the rhythm varies according to the classification of legato lines (No.1), the coordination of strings crossing (No.3, 13), and the stress change of the beat within the beat (No.6, 8). In the first etude, five of the eight ways the bow tilts produce the sound of a quarter note by connecting two eighth notes. This tempo change occurs in the downbeat on beats 24 and 39, and in the syncopated tempo on beat 48.

In Frank's etudes, a high level of bowing technique is not required, but when playing more complex techniques, the control of bowing is very important, which is related to the characteristics of the viola's chamber ensemble repertoire and the orchestra's repertoire arrangement. It is for this reason that meter changes are more frequent in these works than in the viola transcriptions of the violin etudes of Wohlfahrt, Kesser, and Mazas. Out of a total of 50 etudes, Frank uses both meter and mixed meter in 30 pieces. The arrangement of the musical material allows the student to vary the speed within one movement of the bow, which is more reasonable for viola beginners. Unlike Mazas or Kreutzer, Frank did not specify technical goals for learning playing techniques, but he focused on techniques such as pizzicato, vibrato, two-tone, chord and clef changes, which viola professionals need specialized training. At the end of the 1st, 38th and 50th etudes, the use of pizzicato is limited to empty strings. It is

important to emphasize that Kesser uses pizzicato throughout Op. 20, but only for left-hand chords. Wohlfahrt's etude is entirely pizzicato. Trills were added to Frank's 16th, 20th, 29th, 30th, and 38th etudes. Kinetic markers are rarely used, appearing only in the 14th, 38th, and 47th etudes. The author believes that without the strength mark, students can deduce the means of expression more freely.

There are double notes in the first, second, third, sixth, fourteenth, sixteenth, twentieth, thirty-third, thirty-sixth, thirty-eighth, forty-fourth, and fiftieth etudes, as well as chords of three or four notes. Chords are learned from simple to difficult: beginning with a triad and progressing in complexity to a seventh chord, accompanied by crossed fingers (tracks 36 and 38).

The musical language of Frank's etudes tends to be more traditional. As in his earlier works, he also returned to the past in his teaching of the viola. In this collection of fifty etudes, Frank uses some "traditional" stylistic elements (i.e., separate bows, repeated motives, modeling, etc.). At the end of each etude, he marks the ending with a change in the speed of Largo, which is also a mark unique to works from previous eras. The guidance of Frank's etudes is also reflected in the selection of traditional bowing techniques and frequent musical progressions, which are conducive to training violists to play more complex works, strengthening their sense of direction on the fingerboard and cooperating with archers.

5. Conclusion

Today, as an independent instrument, the viola has a unique tone and a rich repertoire. The ornate flannelette that conceals the viola is uncovered, and the foundations of an original viola pedagogy are laid. We no longer rely on transcriptions of violin and cello works to practice. There is no doubt that the era of viola as a solo instrument has passed, influenced by the adaptation of violin works. However, viola players need to expand their instructional materials to include more literature specifically written for the viola.

Frank's contribution to the teaching method of viola is an important supplement to the current

teaching materials of viola learning. In light of this, both viola players and educators need to conduct more research into the pedagogical legacies of practically important but little-known composers and performers.

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