



Artistic Research Report

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Artistic Research Question: How can I improve my playing and develop my interpretation of Gaspar Cassadó's music by incorporating Pau Casals' playing style into my own?

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1 Abstract

The aim of my research is to understand how to improve my playing and develop my interpretation of Gaspar Cassadó's music by incorporating Pau Casals' playing style into my own. My goal is not to emulate Casals but to grasp the spirit of his playing, understanding the key concepts, technical and interpretative, of his performing style, and to apply and adapt them to my playing to develop my performance of some compositions by Cassadó. To accomplish this goal, I will firstly go through an extended data collection, listening to and analyzing many Casals' recordings, watching his recorded masterclasses on YouTube, and reading articles, theses, books, and treatises about his playing. I will interview, get feedback, and have lessons with some experts on my topic. I will work on the embodiment of my discoveries through a self-critical practice and through my re-enactment of Casals' recording of *Requiebros*. I will then apply my discoveries and experiment with them in my performances of *Requiebros* and in the first movement of the *Preludio-Fantasia* of his Suite for Solo Cello, which I will then record to show the outcomes of my research. My research has improved my performances of those pieces and my playing in general because of a fuller and more radiant sound, improved articulation and clarity, better phrasing direction, enhanced unity within the pieces, and richer expressivity through the use of Casals-inspired expressive intonation, rubato, vibrato, and portamento. This study is aimed for people who are curious about Casals' approach to music and his performing style, as well as how I was inspired by it and how I used and experimented with my findings to improve my playing and particularly to interpret some of Cassadó's compositions.

2 Introduction

2.1 Motivation and goal

I chose this subject inspired by Casals' recording of the arrangement for cello and piano of the "Intermezzo" from Granados' opera *Goyescas*, which is one of my favourite recordings ever.¹ I've always been very fascinated by Pau Casals' playing, and on the other hand I very much appreciate Gaspar Cassadó as a composer. Cellist and composer Gaspar Cassadó was born in Barcelona in 1897 and died in Madrid in 1966. He began playing the cello as a young child, and Pau Casals, one of the most renowned cellists of the last century, noticed his aptitude, and he brought him to Paris to learn with him. In Paris, Cassadó also studied composition under Manuel de Falla and Maurice Ravel.

This research gave me the opportunity of deepening my understanding of Casals' playing, incorporating in my playing some of his technical and interpretative elements that I found particularly interesting, and deepening and improving my interpretation of some Cassadó's compositions. In order to have more opportunities and a greater consciousness to develop and improve my performance of Cassadó's music, I've researched, experimented, and incorporated in my performances some principles of Pau Casals' playing, such as percussive left hand technique, vibrato, rubato, portamento, and expressive intonation, since I find him very interesting and inspiring as a musician, and I think his playing style suits very well Cassadó's music.² I've also analyzed some of Cassadó's compositions and listened to the testimony of Antonio Mosca, Cassadó's student, to better understand the spirit of his music.

2.2 Contextualization

My research focuses on and combines the music of Gaspar Cassadó and the performing style of Pau Casals. The most specific and in-depth studies on Cassadó are the writings of Gabrielle Kaufman: her PhD dissertation "Gaspar Cassadó: A Study of Catalan Cello Arrangements and Cello Performance Style" and her book *Gaspar Cassadó: Cellist, Composer and Transcriber*.³ The amount of sources and studies on Casals' performing style, on the other hand, is broader. First of all, there are a lot of Casals' recordings. Casals also recorded two pieces by Cassadó: *Requiebros*, and Cassadó's arrangement for cello and piano of the "Intermezzo" from Granados' opera *Goyescas*.⁴ Some masterclasses given by

¹ Enric Granados, *Intermezzo*, performed by Pau Casals (cello) and Nikolai Mednikoff (piano), rec. February 28, 1927, in *Casals: Encores and Transcriptions vol. 1*, CD, Biddulph LAB 017, 2007.

² In the context of this research, the term rubato is used for a subtle rhythmic manipulation and nuance in performance that works like a give and take of time values: time lost on expressive accents is to be regained by the intervening notes, or vice versa.

³ Gabrielle Kaufman, "Gaspar Cassadó: A Study of Catalan Cello Arrangements and Cello Performance Style" (PhD diss., Birmingham City University, 2013).

Gabrielle Kaufman, *Gaspar Cassadó: Cellist, Composer and Transcriber*, (Routledge, 2018)

⁴ Pau Casals, Blai Net (piano), *Gaspar Cassadó Requiebros*, recorded June 15, 1929, in *Casals – Encore and Transcriptions 2*, Naxos Historical HMV DB 1391 (2004).

Enric Granados, *Intermezzo*, performed by Pau Casals (cello) and Nikolai Mednikoff (piano), rec. February 28, 1927, in *Casals: Encores and Transcriptions vol. 1*, CD, Biddulph LAB 017, 2007.

Casals at Berkeley are also available on Youtube.⁵ Many articles, books, and treatises have been written on his performing style. I found the following to be the most interesting:

- "Casals's Teaching of the Cello", a brief but accurate article by David Cherniavsky in the *Musical Times* that outlines some basic principles of Pablo Casals' playing.⁶
- "Lesson with Pablo Casals" and "Right is might", two articles in *The Strad* on Casals' teachings by Bonnie Hampton, who was a student of Casals.⁷
- David Blum's *Casals and the art of interpretation*, a book that explores different facets of Casals' playing providing many practical examples with score annotations to clarify Casals' interventions.⁸
- The chapter "On Interpretation" from Josep Maria Corredor's book *Conversation with Casals*, an interview/discussion about Casals's approach to music and the cello.⁹
- Maurice Eisenberg's *Cello Playing of Today*, a cello treatise based on Casals' technique and performance style.¹⁰

In order to improve and enrich my performance of Gaspar Cassadó's music, my research aims are to identify and record my own method of choosing, analyzing, applying, and adapting to my playing certain elements of Casals' performing style as well as other elements derived from my understanding of Cassadó's music.

2.3 Research question

How can I improve my playing and develop my interpretation of Gaspar Cassadó's music by incorporating Pau Casals' playing style into my own?

2.4 Specific audiences and readers addressed

My study is aimed at anyone who is curious about Pau Casals' technical and interpretive style and wants to discover what and how I've incorporated into my playing, inspired by that, to interpret some pieces by Gaspar Cassadó.

⁵ CelloBello, "[Pau \(Pablo\) Casals Master Class: Haydn D Major Concerto 1st Movement](#)," 2013.

99arts.org, [Casals Master class Dvorak a 1of3](#), 2016.

99arts.org, [Casals Master class Dvorak a 2of3](#), 2016.

99arts.org, [Casals Master class Dvorak a 3of3](#), 2016.

Violinkan, [Pau \(Pablo\) Casals Master Class: Brahms Sonata No.1 in E minor op. 38. 1st Mvmt.](#), 2023.

Johann Auens Weltanschauung, [Casals: Meisterklasse ~ Saint-Saëns. Cellokonzert Nr. 1](#), 2021.

Violinkan, [Pau \(Pablo\) Casals Master Class: Boccherini Bb Major Concerto 1st movement](#), 2022.

⁶ David Cherniavsky, "Casal's Teaching of the Cello," *The Musical Times* 93, no. 1315 (September 1952): 398-400.

⁷ Bonnie Hampton, "Lesson with Pablo Casals," *The Strad*, October 2013, 80-84.

Bonnie Hampton, "Right is Might," *The Strad*, June 2005, 46-47.

⁸ David Blum, *Casals and the Art of Interpretation* (University of California Press, 1980).

⁹ J. Ma. Corredor, *Conversation with Casals* (London: Hutchinson, 1956).

¹⁰ Maurice Eisenberg, "Cello Playing of Today," *The Strad* (1957).

3 Research Process

3.1 First research cycle

3.1.1 Overview of first research cycle

Many aspects of the interpretative and technical style of Casals are examined in this first research cycle, such as rubato, portamento, and the percussive technique. Vibrato and expressive intonation will be discussed in the second and third research cycles. I began my research with some of the information I learned from listening to Casals' recordings, interviewing people and reading specialized media throughout the development of my artistic study proposal. These sources not only provided me with some knowledge, but they also helped me locate further relevant sources. Thus, through an in-depth analysis of some media (books, articles, masterclasses, recordings, interviews, conferences, etc.), an interview with Aldo Mata, self-critical practice, and a re-enactment of Casals' recording of Cassadó's *Requiebros*, I was able to learn some fascinating aspects of his playing that I'm incorporating into my own playing and I will pay particular attention to when I study and perform Cassadó's works.

3.1.2 Reference recording

[01 Reference Recording 01 Clara Piccoli Requiebros](#)

Gaspar Cassadó, *Requiebros* (1929), for cello and piano.

Cello part recorded by Clara Piccoli on 13/10/2023 at Codarts Rotterdam. Duration of the recording 05:00. Although it is a piece for cello and piano, I've decided to record just the cello part for now. I chose to work on this piece for two main reasons: *Requiebros* has been recorded by Casals, and there a substantial amount of distinctive Cassadó's musical components present in this composition as well as a wide range of colors, timbres, articulations, ornamentations, rhythms, and tempos variations. I believe it is very suitable to work on percussive technique, bow articulation, ornamentations, irregular rhythms, portamento, and phrasing.

3.1.3 Feedback and reflection

I identified and summarized some aspects to work on in *Requiebros*, through feedback from Aldo Mata, Joachim Eijlander, and some of my classmates in the artistic research classes, and my own reflection:

- **General approach:** The recording is too "usual". Be more eccentric, more personal, and less mechanical, make your own interpretation with a more creative participation; be more intense, more dramatic: sometimes you could be more aggressive, and less "kind". In the recordings that you will analyze, try to look for what is not written (agogic, irregular rhythms, portamenti, tempo modifications), and to do your own with these resources.
- **Phrasing:** Breathe more, especially from phrase to phrase; enjoy top notes more in your melody, give them a bit more time; take a closer look at where there is resistance/release in the musical phrase.
- **Tempo:** Don't rush uncontrollably and unconsciously; try some internal rubato, to be freer in the tempo.

- **Articulation:** Some of the articulations written on the score, particularly the dots, are a bit dull, and soft, in both the left hand and the right hand; take care of the articulation, and bite the beginning of the notes.
- **Vibrato:** Find a more vital vibrato, and increase it with the time when there is a crescendo, or when the level of intensity rises.
- **Intonation:** Intonation is not always precise. Start with obtaining a better intonation and then, when you will have a solid base to work on, try to experiment with expressive intonation to have a more colorful melodic line.
- **Ornamentations:** Be more progressive (with the colors and with the tempo) in the ornamentations, and articulate them well.
- **Other technical aspects:** Play more with bounce and release in both hands and elbows and their coordination. Emphasize in different ways a note or a group of notes, by varying the bow speed, resistance, and pressure.

3.1.4 Data collection & data analysis: my findings

Data collection

I choose the following data collection techniques during this first research cycle:

1) Media Research

The documentation on Casals is vast, but I have tried to stick to the sources that I considered most relevant, most interesting, and most reliable for my research.

Masterclasses

The masterclasses given by Casals at Berkeley, which I found on YouTube, have been very valuable and inspiring sources for my research.¹¹ I watched them carefully and annotated the scores of the corresponding pieces.

Recordings

As for Casals' own recordings, I have listened to many of them freely, without analyzing them, and some more extensively, noting their scores. Casals' recording of *Requiebros* has been the most relevant during this cycle, since I listened and analyzed it deeply and I did a re-enactment of that.¹²

Interviews

I also found interesting some interviews on the YouTube channel "CelloBello" to Bernard Greenhouse, Paul Katz, and Janos Starker, which gave me a chance to reflect about Casals general approach to the playing (for instance, on how the choice of bowings and fingerings has to come from a musical need) and about some specific performing aspects (like continuous vibrato).¹³

¹¹ CelloBello, "[Pau \(Pablo\) Casals Master Class: Haydn D Major Concerto 1st Movement](#)," 2013.

99arts.org, [Casals Master class Dvorak a 1of3](#), 2016.

99arts.org, [Casals Master class Dvorak a 2of3](#), 2016.

99arts.org, [Casals Master class Dvorak a 3of3](#), 2016.

Violinkan, [Pau \(Pablo\) Casals Master Class: Brahms Sonata No.1 in E minor op. 38. 1st Mvmt.](#), 2023.

Johann Auens Weltanschauung, [Casals: Meisterklasse ~ Saint-Saëns. Cellokonzert Nr. 1](#), 2021.

Violinkan, [Pau \(Pablo\) Casals Master Class: Boccherini Bb Major Concerto 1st movement](#), 2022.

¹² Pau Casals, Blai Net (piano), *Gaspar Cassadó Requiebros*, recorded June 15, 1929, in Casals – Encore and Transcriptions 2, Naxos Historical HMV DB 1391 (2004).

¹³ CelloBello, [Greenhouse Meets Casals-Part 1](#), 2011.

Conferences

I further watched on YouTube some lectures and lessons given during the Casals symposium on October 23-24, 2023, entitled "Casals50: Modern or Romantic":

- Job ter Haar's presentation, "Differences in fingering strategy between 19th century cellists like Alfredo Piatti and 'modernized' players, inspired or taught by Casals," discusses eliminating slides as a modernist practice and the ways of getting rid of unwanted shifts.¹⁴
- Alfia Nakipbekova's presentation, "Reflecting on Casals' interpretative space: approaches to David Popper's High School of Cello Playing, op.73," goes through the elements of Casals's interpretative and technical style that influenced her approach to performing Popper's pieces.¹⁵
- Laura Granero and Aldo Mata's concert and presentation "Casals et Fanny: L'influence allemande" and Aldo Mata's re-enactment lesson (with Martin Barré on the cello and Sebastian Bausch at the piano), in which I paid particular attention to Aldo Mata's playing, since in both presentations he re-enacted some of Casals' recordings.¹⁶

Kauffman's Phd dissertation and Cherniavsky's article

"Casals's Teaching of the Cello", an article in the Musical Times written by David Cherniavsky, and Gabrielle Kauffman's PhD dissertation "Gaspar Cassadó: A Study of Catalan Cello Arrangements and Cello Performance Style", which I've chosen for the Critical Media Review in my Research Proposal (reported in the Appendix), have been the two starting points for my research.¹⁷

Books

Another key source for my research, recommended to me during my interview with Joachim Eijlander, was David Blum's *Casals and the art of interpretation*, of which I read the first five chapters.¹⁸ Each chapter delves into a different aspect of Casals' playing and provides many practical examples with annotated scores to explain Casals' interventions in his own playing or while giving master classes or while conducting. Then I read the chapter "On Interpretation" in Josep Maria Corredor's book *Conversation with Casals*, a beautiful and articulate interview/conversation between the book's author and Casals on the latter's approach to music and the cello.¹⁹

CelloBello, [Greenhouse Meets Casals-Part 2](#), 2014.

CelloBello, [Bernard Greenhouse on Finding Your Voice](#), 2015.

CelloBello, [Bernard Greenhouse on Maintaining Vibrato](#), 2015.

CelloBello, [Bernard Greenhouse: Playing/Talking at 92](#), 2015,.

CelloBello, [Bernard Greenhouse on the Language of Emotion](#), 2015.

CelloBello, [Right Hand Expression](#), 2011.

CelloBello, [Softness is Strength](#), 2011.

CelloBello, [Janos Starker on Releasing Tension](#), 2015.

CelloBello, [Janos Starker on Rhythmic Freedom](#), 2015.

¹⁴ La Nouvelle Athènes Centre des Pianos Romantiques, [CASALS 50: Modern or Romantic - Session 1/4](#), 2023.

¹⁵ La Nouvelle Athènes Centre des Pianos Romantiques, [17 Alfia Nakipbekova](#), 2023.

¹⁶ La Nouvelle Athènes Centre des Pianos Romantiques, [20 CASALS50 Laura Granero Aldo Mata](#), 2023.

La Nouvelle Athènes Centre des Pianos Romantiques, [11 CASALS50 Re-enactment Aldo Mata Martin Barré Sebastian Bausch](#), 2023.

¹⁷ David Cherniavsky, "Casal's Teaching of the Cello," *The Musical Times* 93, no. 1315 (September 1952): 398-400.

Gabrielle Kaufman, "Gaspar Cassadó: A Study of Catalan Cello Arrangements and Cello Performance Style" (PhD diss., Birmingham City University, 2013).

¹⁸ David Blum, *Casals and the Art of Interpretation* (University of California Press, 1980).

¹⁹ J. Ma. Corredor, *Conversation with Casals* (London: Hutchinson, 1956).

Casals' legacy: Bonnie Hampton and Margaret Rowell

I also read two articles in *The Strad* by Bonnie Hampton, a cellist who was a student of Casals. In the first article, "Lesson with Pablo Casals", Bonnie Hampton talks about what she learned from Casals, including notes from his lessons on Bach's C minor Cello Suite and Dvorak's Cello Concerto.²⁰ In the other article, "Right is might", she explains how to produce a good, strong sound, and quotes Margaret Rowell (cellist and music instructor) for her analogy of birds' wings opening for flight as she talks about open feelings in the chest.²¹ I also read part of "Margaret Rowell: Pedagogical Approach and Teaching Style", by Robert-Christian Sanchez, in which I recognized some aspects close to Casals' teachings, particularly concerning playing openly and less tensely, and in tune with nature as well.²²

Treatises

Maurice Eisenberg's *Cello Playing of Today* is "the nearest and most complete record available of Casals's teaching principles," according to Oskar Falta's thesis "A Great Wave in the Evolution of the Modern Cellist: Diran Alexanian and Maurice Eisenberg, Two Master Cello Pedagogues from the Legacy of Pablo Casals".²³ I've therefore consulted it whenever I had specific questions.

Study on Rubato

Finally, to explore the concept of Rubato and the different ways of using it, I read "The Case of Compensating Rubato", by Sarah Martin.²⁴

Technique books

I took some exercises from *Cello ergonomics: a handbook to help develop freedom of movement, balance and fluency at the cello*, by Steven Doane, and from *La tecnica del violoncello*, by Aldo Pais, to develop some relevant skills inspired by Casals' playing.²⁵

2) Interview

My interviews with Joachim Eijlander and Antonio Mosca, which I discussed in depth in my Research Proposal, have both been very useful so far. At the beginning of the first cycle I've also interviewed Aldo Mata about how to make a re-enactment.

3) Self-critical practice

I applied in my everyday playing some of my new discoveries, adding them to my "toolbox". I did it either by applying them directly in the study of the pieces I am playing, or by studying some technique exercises aimed at achieving certain results, such as strengthening the left hand and achieving greater articulation of it.

²⁰ Bonnie Hampton, "Lesson with Pablo Casals," *The Strad*, October 2013, 80–84.

²¹ Bonnie Hampton, "Right is Might," *The Strad*, June 2005, 46–47.

²² Robert-Christian Sanchez, "Margaret Rowell: Pedagogical Approach and Teaching Style," Theses and Dissertations, University of South Carolina, 2022.

²³ Maurice Eisenberg, "Cello Playing of Today," *The Strad* (1957).

Oskar Falta, "A Great Wave in the Evolution of the Modern Cellist: Diran Alexanian and Maurice Eisenberg, Two Master Cello Pedagogues from the Legacy of Pablo Casals" (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, November 2019).

²⁴ Sarah Martin, "The Case of Compensating Rubato," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 127, no. 1 (2002): 95–129.

²⁵ Steven Doane, *Cello ergonomics: a handbook to help develop freedom of movement, balance and fluency at the cello*, (Bartholomew Music Publications, 2006).

Aldo Pais, *La tecnica del violoncello (mano sinistra)*, (Universal Music Publishing Ricordi S.r.l., 1943).

4) Re-enactment

I re-enacted the recording of *Requiebros* (a work by Gaspar Cassadó) by Pau Casals and Blai Net to investigate Casals' interpretative and technical style in a direct, performative, and personal way.²⁶

Data analysis

I will report here my findings about Casals' interpretative and technical style, describing different aspects that influence each other frequently.

General approach

To understand Pau Casals' view of music, one must start with the idea of music as a vital creation. Casals' approach has a natural foundation: nature is a great counselor because of its beauty, its balance and harmony, its constant change, and its simplicity (in the sense of its inability to be what it is not, as the opposite of artificial). Playing can be traced back to singing, since the natural origin of melody was vocal; in Casals words: "It is a guide - a wonderful guide - the voice!".²⁷ Casals' lyricism goes hand in hand with his playing with directness, with a convincing and clear style, and with a very speaking quality, made possible by his articulation of both the left hand and the bow arm, as I will explain in more detail below.

According to Casals, a musician's goal should be to carry out the composer's will, to communicate the composer's language to the world. However, he points out that many musicians mistakenly think that music is only what is written on the printed score. Instead, the core of it is something else: composers write guided by their own life experience, their own emotions, dreams, and feelings, which cannot always be noted on the score. The score is always something reductive, that cannot be taken into account alone, and a musician should not be obsessed with it. Dealing with a piece of music must therefore be a process in which one must have a balance between being devoted to what the composer has written and not being afraid to apply ourselves to it to understand it and interpret it to communicate it to the audience. "Each one of us is different, and must apply to this work all the drive and deep impulse of his nature," Casals tells J. Ma. Corredor during their conversation about interpretation.²⁸ During his masterclasses he always communicated his dedication in giving life to each note and each phrase written on the score; for instance, he corrected his student who was playing, in his opinion, too mechanically a passage at the end of the first movement of Haydn's Cello Concerto in D, explaining to her that she was playing it in a way that made it sound like a passage, and not a melody.²⁹ This reminded me of my conversation with Antonio Mosca, Cassadó's student, who advised me to "play imaginatively, not mathematically."



Haydn, Cello Concerto in D major, first movement, bar 173.

²⁶ Pau Casals, Blai Net (piano), recorded June 15, 1929, in Casals – Encore and Transcriptions 2, Naxos Historical HMV DB 1391 (2004).

²⁷ David Blum, Casals and the Art of Interpretation (University of California Press, 1980).

²⁸ J. Ma. Corredor, *Conversation with Casals* (London: Hutchinson, 1956).

²⁹ CelloBello, [Pau \(Pablo\) Casals Master Class: Haydn D Major Concerto 1st Movement](#), YouTube video, 2013.

For Casals, interpretation must be guided by instinct, by one's inner voice. Interpreting a piece to communicate it to the world transforms a score, something seemingly inanimate, into a human experience, and allows you to create something organic, vital. Audiences therefore can be touched by music in that they recognize vital, human elements in it, which they can understand and with which they can be moved. The words of Marina Abramovich, Serbian conceptual and performance artist, in her "An artist's life manifesto" come to mind:³⁰

An artist's relation to inspiration

- An artist should look deep inside themselves for inspiration
- The deeper they look inside themselves, the more universal they become
- The artist is universe
- The artist in universe
- The artist is universe

On the other hand, Casals was fully analytical in his works: instinct must go hand in hand with intelligence and "good taste".³¹ The idea of "good taste" takes me back to my years in the orchestra at the Suzuki academy I attended as a child: the director, Antonio Mosca, Cassadó's student, used this term very often as a criteria for letting us discern what was right and what was wrong in playing a piece.

In the preface to Eisenberg's *Cello Playing of Today*, Casals writes that he appreciates that in this text technique is considered in relationship with interpretation.³² Indeed Casals' sees technique not as an end, but as a means to serve musicality. Bowings and fingerings should come from a musical need, as well as portamento and vibrato. Casals, to study a new piece, would first read it carefully, then play it on the piano, and only finally study it on the cello. In this way he avoided falling into the "temptation" of using expressive instruments from the very beginning to facilitate technique, losing sight of the true direction, the true meaning of the piece. Technical mastery should allow the instinct to take center stage, free from technical obstacles that could force us to employ interpretive elements as technical ones that serve solely to make performing easier. Therefore, having a good technical base, having mastered one's instrument (as Casals makes possible, as I will explain later, for example with his percussive technique of the left hand) should be an indispensable basis for interpreting as freely and independently as possible.

Another aspect of Casals' approach is pragmatism, the concept of constant evolution and change based on performance conditions. Casals' interpretations were never rigid and fixed, which is probably why he never wanted to publish his edited edition of Bach Suites, even though many people asked him to. Moreover, the interpretation of a piece is also influenced by one's own experience, musical and non-musical. And we are the product of many ideas, of many people, we are not isolated individuals: *no man is an island*.³³ Artist's goal, however, must always be to develop one's own playing, to certify one's individuality. Music, like life, must be a continuous discovery. Casals' editing through interpretation is an example of his pragmatism; in his performances, he frequently makes alterations to the original music printed on the score.

³⁰ Marina Abramovich, "An artist's life manifesto", 2011.

³¹ J. Ma. Corredor, *Conversation with Casals* (London: Hutchinson, 1956).

³² Maurice Eisenberg, "Cello Playing of Today," *The Strad* (1957).

³³ John Donne, "No Man is an island", 1623.

His recording of *Requiebro*, in which he inserts some extra bars, cuts others, and edits entire sections, demonstrates this. I report below Casals' intervention on the last two bars of *Requiebro*.³⁴

This musical score shows the original notation for the final three bars of *Requiebro*. It is written for voice and piano. The voice part begins with a melodic line in 3/8 time, marked *molto rit.* and *ten.* (tension). The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, also marked *molto rit.* and *ten.*. The tempo changes to *a tempo* in the final bar, which is marked *fff* (fortississimo) and *pizz.* (pizzicato). The score includes various performance instructions such as *colla parte* and *a tempo animato*.

Cassadó, *Requiebro*, last three bars of the original score.

This musical score shows the final three bars of Casals' version of *Requiebro*. It follows the same notation as the original score but includes specific editorial changes. The voice part is marked *molto rit.* and *ten.*, while the piano part is marked *molto rit.* and *ten.*. The tempo changes to *a tempo* in the final bar, which is marked *fff* and *pizz.*. The score includes various performance instructions such as *colla parte* and *a tempo animato*.

Cassadó, *Requiebro*, last three bars of Casals' version.

³⁴ Pau Casals, Blai Net (piano), *Gaspar Cassadó Requiebro*, recorded June 15, 1929, in Casals – Encore and Transcriptions 2, Naxos Historical HMV DB 1391 (2004).

Bow technique and release of tension

The left hand is your thought, the right is your tongue. Communication goes through the right hand. Spend brain connection to the right, to make music.³⁵

Paul Katz

The articulated and varied way in which Casals employs the bow creates the "speaking quality," as Joachim Eijlander describes it, that leads to the "communication" that Paul Katz speaks of. His clarity and articulation come from the freedom of his right arm (especially from the way it unlocks the upper arm, which becomes less rigid and flexible) and the "strong suppleness" (as Bonnie Hampton describes it) of his bow.³⁶ His free but powerful bow arm and hand enable him to have a more focused contact with the strings and to allow for continuous finger pressure changes on the bow. In his master class on the Brahms Sonata at Berkeley, Casals clearly explains many of his principles regarding the bow hand.³⁷ He instructs his student to be expressive with the right hand from the very first bar, "speaking" and maintaining the tension without letting up on the sound after each note.

Allegro non troppo



Brahms, Cello Sonata in E minor, first two bars.

According to Casals, the source of energy required to play the cello comes from the back of the body rather than the extremities. He tells Corredor that flexible movements can be performed with greater efficiency and reduced tiredness when the impulse originates from the center of the body.³⁸ I saw that by focusing on my back as the support and source of energy for all movements, I feel more stable, more solid, and I struggle less and am less tense because my back gives me more support than many other disconnected parts can give me. Because I feel that all of my motions originate there and are therefore connected to one another by sharing a common source of energy and control, this also gives me a greater sense of control over my movements. All this has a very positive influence on the sound. In Casals' opinion we also need to learn how to relax whole new sections of our bodies since, even when we think we are perfectly calm, there is usually some portion of our bodies that we can relax more in. In light of this, I make an effort to relax and sense the weight in various body areas, such as my belly and my legs, during my practice. The significance that Casals places on letting go of tension brings to mind Paul Katz's speech on "soft power": "tightness is weakness, whereas softness is strength", flexibility allows us to be more agile, create more beautiful sounds, play more nuances, and move our bodies with more fluency.³⁹ Another idea near to Casals' teachings that helped me to unlock my body and to release more the tension is discussed by Bonnie Hampton, cellist and Casals' student, in her article "Right is might", in which she talks about the importance of feeling tall and open in the chest, freeing joints and shoulders, mentioning Margaret Rowell's analogy of birds' wings spreading for flight.⁴⁰

³⁵ CelloBello, "Right Hand Expression," 2011, <https://youtu.be/XLKwdDzCeaU?feature=shared>.

³⁶ Bonnie Hampton, "Right is Might," *The Strad*, June 2005, 46–47.

³⁷ Violinkan, "Pau (Pablo) Casals Master Class: Brahms Sonata No.1 in E minor op. 38, 1st Mvmt.," YouTube video, 2023, <https://youtu.be/GoB8WA682pE?feature=shared>.

³⁸ J. Ma. Corredor, *Conversation with Casals* (London: Hutchinson, 1956).

³⁹ CelloBello, *Softness is Strength*, 2011.

⁴⁰ Bonnie Hampton, "Right is Might," *The Strad*, June 2005, 46–47.

Casals' versatility with the bow, using it at various speeds and amounts and determining which section is most appropriate, is another crucial component of his technique. Casals also utilized the upper portion of the bow to great effect, elevating the arm and gradually pronating it in place of lowering the wrist. Regarding this topic, Antonio Mosca taught me that to reinforce the sound the elbow generally should not be held high and that it may be helpful to raise the arm a little when you are toward the tip. Casals used to perform the section of the Saint-Saëns Cello Concerto that is shown in brackets below at the tip, as can be seen in the video of him performing during a masterclass.⁴¹



Saint-Saëns, Cello Concerto in A minor, first movement, bars 14-21.

In order to explore the different sections of the bow and to always find good adherence with the string, I looked at two exercises included in the chapter "Developing a Well Balanced Bowing Action: the Three Regions of the Bow" in "*Cello ergonomic*".⁴² These exercises are based on the information provided in this [chart](#).

- [Exercise on mixed bowing patterns](#): it must be practiced first in the lower third of the bow, then in the middle, and finally in the upper third (without overdoing repetitions here). It can be practiced with different articulations: legato, with stopped bows and staccato. Video-demonstrations: [02 Exercise on the lower third of the bow](#), [03 Exercise on the middle third of the bow](#), [04 Exercise on the upper third of the bow](#).
- [Exercise "Casals' Crawl"](#): it works progressively in the three regions of the bow and activates different combinations of motion in the forearm and the upper arm, the hand and the finger. It can be practised with different amounts of bow and in more bars. Video-demonstration: [05 Exercise "Casals' Crawl"](#).

⁴¹ Johann Auens Weltanschauung, [Casals: Meisterklasse ~ Saint-Saëns. Cellokonzert Nr. 1](#), 2021.

⁴² Steven Doane, *Cello ergonomics: a handbook to help develop freedom of movement, balance and fluency at the cello*, (Bartholomew Music Publications, 2006).

Percussive technique and living left hand

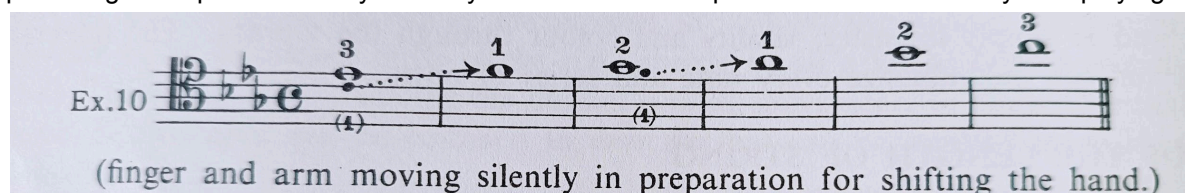
A fundamental principle of Casals' playing is his percussive technique: fingers of the left hand should be thrown and allowed to relax immediately upon striking the string.⁴³ This method improves the sound's resonance, clarity, and purity of intonation. It also provides a strong foundation over which he has total control, allowing him to add any necessary ornamentation. He frequently reminded his students to have good articulation throughout his masterclasses. For instance, he stated that articulation is crucial since the cello must be audible during the orchestral tremolo at the beginning of Saint-Saëns Cello Concerto.⁴⁴



Saint-Saëns, Cello Concerto in A minor, first movement, first two bars.

Several of Casals' recordings demonstrate this. Occasionally, it can also be beneficial to pluck the string with the free finger of the left hand in order to allow for good articulation, particularly of the open string. In order to develop the percussive technique I'm practicing the following exercises from *La tecnica del violoncello (mano sinistra)* by Aldo Pais: [Exercise 4 and 5](#).⁴⁵ Video-demonstration: [06 Pais exercise 4 a.b page 8](#), [07 Pais exercise 4 c.d.e.f page 9](#), [08 Pais exercise 5 page 9](#).

The concept of suppleness, which refers to being both strong and flexible at the same time, is highly relevant to the left hand as well as the bow hand and arm. In his book *Cello playing of today*, Maurice Eisenberg describes the "living left hand" as a vital and flexible hand in which the preparation for the next note begins as soon as a finger hits its note, allowing one to approach the new note in a continuous movement.⁴⁶ In order to allow for note preparation and anticipation, the hand must stay flexible. As Casals put it, it's like "*playing the piano on the cello*", requiring you to release one finger when the next is put down.⁴⁷ This example, taken from *Cello playing of today*, shows how to begin building a "living hand" by practicing scale portions slowly so that you are able to anticipate the next note while you're playing.⁴⁸



Example from *Cello playing of today* by Maurice Eisenberg, p.12.

⁴³ David Cherniavsky, "Casal's Teaching of the Cello," *The Musical Times* 93, no. 1315 (September 1952): 398-400.

⁴⁴ Johann Auens Weltanschauung, [Casals: Meisterklasse ~ Saint-Saëns, Cellokonzert Nr. 1](#), 2021.

⁴⁵ Aldo Pais, *La tecnica del violoncello (mano sinistra)*, (Universal Music Publishing Ricordi S.r.l., 1943).

⁴⁶ Maurice Eisenberg, "Cello Playing of Today," *The Strad* (1957).

⁴⁷ David Blum, *Casals and the Art of Interpretation* (University of California Press, 1980).

⁴⁸ Maurice Eisenberg, "Cello Playing of Today," *The Strad* (1957).

Portamento and extensions of the fingers

Bernard Greenhouse, Casals' student, in one of his recorded conversations with Paul Katz explains the importance of perceiving the space between notes, as the expression stays in the middle, and he tells that shifting must reflect the level of tension present and communicate the mood you intended to communicate.⁴⁹ Portamento, which Casals refers to as glissando, is a smooth sliding between two pitches, or in other terms an expressive shift. In his talk at the "Casals50" conference Job ter Haar described how the use of portamento evolved with Casals.⁵⁰ He explained that portamento served as the foundation for shifting and singing at the beginning of the 20th century. Casals, however, corrected this tendency by using it as an artistic characteristic and stylistic decision rather than a technical one to make shifts easier. Consequently, Casals used a variety of techniques to get rid of undesirable shifts, including recurred extensions (using sometimes the third finger instead of the fourth), lowering the volume of the bow during the shift, creating gaps, stretching while sliding, contracting the hand, and increasing the use of small slides. On the other hand, Casals considered portamento as something natural, and he was not afraid to use it as an expressive tool. There are differences in timing, speed, direction, distance, intensity, and color in Casals' use of portamento. His role is to shape the melodic line's progression; he can do this by underlining a note, linking notes, or showing variety (when a phrase is repeated, for example). For my reenactment, I have marked every portamento in Casals' recording of *Requiebros*.⁵¹ Some examples:

- He plays bars 30-31 without portamento and bars 38-39 with a portamento between A# and B (the highest note) in order to distinguish the repetition and highlight the two distinct written characters of the second theme, which appears for the first time at bar 30, where Cassadó wrote "con dolcezza," and then returns at bar 38, marked as "più sonoro."



Cassadó, *Requiebros*, bars 30-31 (top) and 38-39 (bottom).

- Between bars 13-14 Casals performs a portamento, emphasizing the A#'s repetition on the first beat of bar 14.



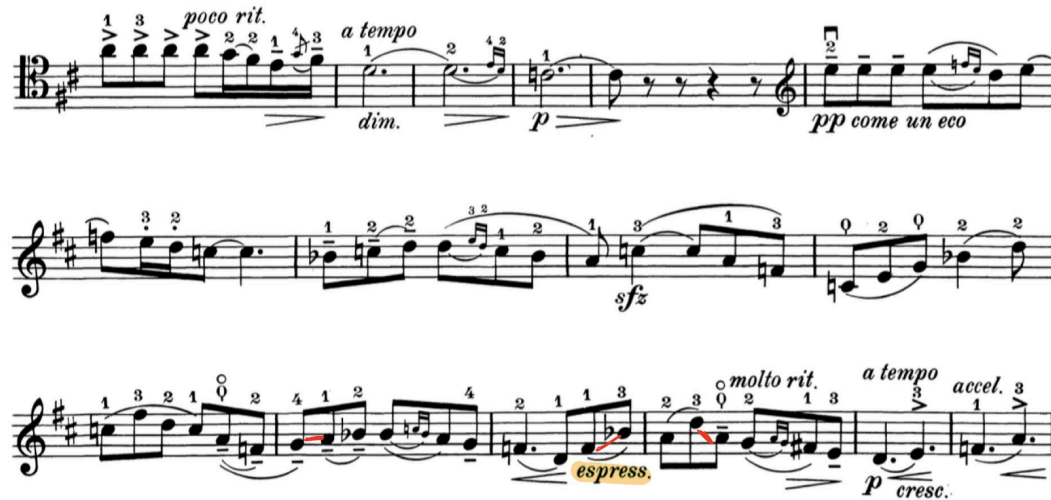
Cassadó, *Requiebros*, bars 13-14.

⁴⁹ CelloBello, [Bernard Greenhouse: Playing/Talking at 92](#), 2015.

⁵⁰ La Nouvelle Athènes Centre des Pianos Romantiques, [CASALS 50: Modern or Romantic - Session 1/4](#), 2023.

⁵¹ Pau Casals, Blai Net (piano), *Gaspar Cassadó Requiebros*, recorded June 15, 1929, in Casals – Encore and Transcriptions 2, Naxos Historical HMV DB 1391 (2004).

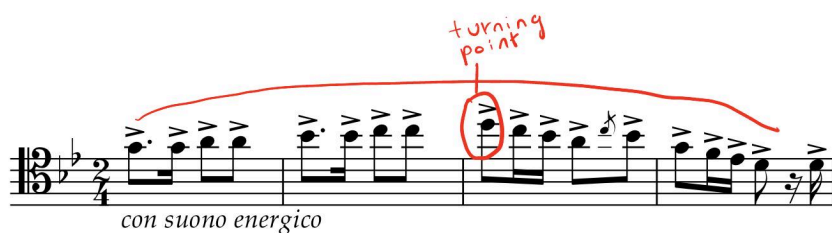
- In the coda's melody, Casals never employs portamento from bar 109 to bar 114, which is marked as *pp come un eco*. By doing this, he keeps the melody dreamy and delicate until bar 115, when he employs portamento and begins to shift into a different character to move to the following bar, which is marked with a crescendo and a "espressivo," which Casals emphasizes with two more portamentos, one ascending and the other descendent.



Cassadó, *Requiebro*, bars 83-98 of Casals' version.

Phrasing

"Although only P is written, we must follow the line of the music; we must find the design!" stated Casals in the middle of a rehearsal.⁵² There are several basic ideas in his phrasing. The first is the proportion and ebb and flow principle: According to Casals, music is a "*succession of rainbows*," with each phrase and rainbow according to the ebb and flow principle.⁵³ Afterwards, the intensity of each phrase rises, adding to the overall development. In our cello lessons, Joachim Eijlander frequently reminds me to look for a turning point in the phrase, in the "rainbow".



Cassadó, *Requiebro*, bars 51-54 of Casals' version.

⁵² Blum, Casals and the Art of Interpretation.

⁵³ Blum, Casals and the Art of Interpretation.

Casals' dedication to connecting notes and never leaving anything isolated is another quality of his playing. "Each note is like a link in a chain, important in itself and also as a connection between what has been and what will be" stated Casals.⁵⁴ In Casals' recording, notes are frequently pulled to the following one, as I noted in this section of *Requiebros*.



Cassadó, *Requiebros*, bars 11-21.

During his lesson on the *Preludio-Fantasia* of Cassadó Cello Suite, Antonio Mosca discussed it. He suggested that instead of focusing on a note or a group of notes individually, one should constantly be aware of what follows next, advancing the melody. For instance, he instructed me to move the final note of each embellishment to the following note in the section below.



Cassadó, *Cello solo Suite*, I movement, bar 24.

Another Casals' phrasing principle is variation. Nothing monotonous could ever move us, therefore in order to create difference in sound and color, especially during recurring sequences, light and shadow must always be altered. We never have to perform a repeating section precisely the same way twice. For instance, Casals advises playing the second theme of the Dvorak Cello Concerto applying greater emphasis to the repeated passage below.⁵⁵



Dvorak, *Cello Concerto in B minor*, first movement, bars 149-153.

⁵⁴ Blum, Casals and the Art of Interpretation.

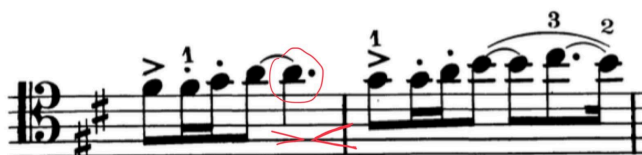
⁵⁵ 99arts.org, [Casals Master class Dvorak a 2of3](https://www.99arts.org/Casals-Master-class-Dvorak-a-2of3), 2016.

Casals also teaches that in music, as in speech, the most significant notes or words must be given attention and emphasized. It is important to develop this sensibility, to learn to not be in a hurry, to lean on a few notes. One of the key feedback I received regarding my first reference recording (for the research proposal) was likewise this. Eijlander advised me to enjoy top notes more in the melody, giving them a bit more time, and Antonio Mosca expressed the same concept telling me to "don't rush it: stay up on the tip of the mountain". For example, Casals leans on the C# of the passage below in *Requiebros*.⁵⁶



Cassadó, *Requiebros*, bars 12-13.

I've noticed that in his recording of *Requiebros*, Casals occasionally offers a simultaneous impulse of relaxation and a subsequent renewal of tension on the same note, helping to shape the direction of the musical phrase.



Cassadó, *Requiebros*, bars 10-11.

Casals taught to take a little time, and to breathe, when needed in music: "if you don't breathe, you die. Is the same in music".⁵⁷ He takes a few breaths in *Requiebros* as well, which produces diverse melodic effects. In the last 12 bars of *Requiebros* the first breathe, which I indicated at bar 116 in the passage below, for example, divides the melodic line into two phrases, emphasizing their distinct character and color. The last breathe, on the other hand, allows one to emphasize the final long F#, giving it space and articulating it with a powerful bow stroke. In this way, the piece concludes in a very powerful and convincing way.



Cassadó, *Requiebros*, bars 93-104 of Casals' version.

⁵⁶ Pau Casals, Blai Net (piano), *Gaspar Cassadó Requiebros*, recorded June 15, 1929, in Casals – Encore and Transcriptions 2, Naxos Historical HMV DB 1391 (2004).

⁵⁷ Violinkan, [Pau \(Pablo\) Casals Master Class: Brahms Sonata No.1 in E minor op. 38. 1st Mvmt](#), 2023.

Articulation and accentuation in music

In Casals's playing, the texture of each written articulation and accent changes according to the musical context. The bow's speed and vibrato's speed are what primarily ensure diversity. Casals performs the first F# in bar 22 of the passage of *Requiebros* enclosed in brackets with a strong accent, cutting the note's value (as indicated by the comma after the note) and lifting the bow. He then plays the other notes of that bar more tenuto, unifying the phrase that begins at bar 20 with the three F# market notes with an accent and with tenuto.



Cassadó, *Requiebros*, bars 16-25.

Nevertheless, Casals plays a lot of accented notes in *Requiebros* in a very "tenuto," orizontal, melodic manner.

When discussing inflections, Casals' statement that "each note is like a link in a chain, important in itself and also as a connection between what has been and what will be" is again insightful.⁵⁸ One note's inflection lends value to the next, and vice versa: we value an accented note primarily for the shade that comes after it, not for its intensity alone. Therefore, a strong accent needs a diminuendo to make it seem more natural and forceful. A hard stroke must be followed by a moment of release and relaxation. However, the notes that follow an accent need to be distinct and well-spoken.

Little accents are occasionally added by Casals as a rhythmic stress, providing order and equilibrium (first example), impetus and drive (second example).⁵⁹



Saint-Saëns, Cello concerto in A minor, bars 1-2.



Cassadó, *Requiebros*, bars 36-37.

⁵⁸ David Blum, *Casals and the Art of Interpretation* (University of California Press, 1980).

⁵⁹ Johann Auens Weltanschauung, [Casals: Meisterklasse ~ Saint-Saëns. Cellokonzert Nr. 1](#), 2021.

When a note is repeated, it is important to enunciate the beginning of the second (and, in the following example, also the third) note as well, so that they can be heard clearly, maintaining both speaking quality and clarity.



Cassadó, *Requiebros*, bar 88 of Casals' version.

The way the opening note was enunciated was also very important to Casals. He advised using an awareness to attend to the articulation and enunciation of a piece or melody in order to instantly infuse it with vitality. He frequently used to drop the bow upon the string to allow for this unique articulation, such as for the first note of the Solo cello in the Dvorak Cello Concerto, preparing it with a circular, counterclockwise movement in the air.⁶⁰



Dvořák, Cello concerto in B minor, bars 87-88.

It is crucial to focus on the speaking quality of the small notes and to develop a good articulation in order to ensure clarity in music. The left hand should use a percussive technique, and the right hand should attack clearly. Casals advised playing the ornaments frankly and emphasizing the first note. In his recording of *Requiebros*, the speaking character of little notes and embellishments is clearly audible.

⁶⁰ 99arts.org, "[Casals Master class Dvorak a 2of3](#)," 2016.

Rubato

Rubato - the Italian word for "robbed"- is, in music, a subtle rhythmic manipulation and nuance in performance. It works like a give and take of time values: time lost on expressive accents is to be regained by the intervening notes. David Cherniavsky claims that Casals' use of rubato improves the sense of progression in music by "*transforming mechanical metre into a living pulse*."⁶¹ In the Casals' recording of *Requiebro* the speed and rhythm flow naturally. In order to investigate the rubato element further, I examined that recording and reported the average metronome tempo for each half-beat. By looking at it, one can observe that the tempo varies.

The image shows a musical score for the piece *Requiebro*, bars 1-21. The tempo is marked 'Allegro con moto'. The score is written for Piano (Pno) and Cello (C). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/8. The score includes various performance markings such as 'ten. ten. ten.', 'rall.', 'a tempo', 'espress.', 'molto rit.', 'a tempo', 'accel. molto', 'cresc.', 'f', 'f con anima', and 'ff'. Red annotations are present throughout the score, including numbers (31, 26, 46, 49, 45, 41, 48, 46, 57, 53, 52, 54, 39, 30, 74, 77, 78) and arrows indicating tempo changes and phrasing. The score is divided into three systems.

Cassadó, *Requiebro*, bars 1-21.

It is interesting how Casals with the rubato creates a great variety of execution of some rhythmic patterns. In *Requiebro* the most obvious is one quaver followed by two semiquavers. In *Après un rêve* is the triplet, in *Salut d'Amour* they are the two quavers.⁶²

The image shows a musical score for the piece *Requiebro*, bars 1-15. The tempo is marked 'Allegro con moto'. The score is written for Piano (Pno) and Cello (C). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/8. The score includes various performance markings such as 'ten. ten. ten.', 'rall.', 'a tempo', 'espress.', 'ff', and 'a tempo'. Red annotations are present throughout the score, including numbers (31, 26, 46, 49, 45, 41, 48, 46, 57, 53, 52, 54, 39, 30, 74, 77, 78) and arrows indicating tempo changes and phrasing. The score is divided into two systems.

Cassadó, *Requiebro*, bars 1-15.

⁶¹ David Cherniavsky, "Casal's Teaching of the Cello," *The Musical Times* 93, no. 1315 (September 1952): 398-400.

⁶² Gabriel Fauré, *Après un rêve*, performed by Pau Casals (cello) and Nikolai Mendikoff (piano), rec. January 5, 1926, in *Pablo Casals: Encores and Transcriptions vol. 1*, CD, Biddulph LAB 017, 1990. Discography of American Historical Recordings, s.v. "Columbia matrix 80158. Salut d'amour / Pablo Casals," accessed April 2, 2024.

Casals often recurs to the transformation of written time-values to obtain what he calls “a rhythm that satisfies”. The intuitive placement of the short notes in dotted rhythm a fraction later adds a feeling of expressive tension and an energizing effect.



Dvořák, Cello concerto in B minor, bars 87-88.

However, Casals did not always play dotted rhythms with shorter notes; each rhythmic pattern must be analyzed in light of its particular context. The passage below, from the middle section of *Requiebros*, shows Casals playing semiquavers as demisemiquavers and dotted rhythm over dotted, with the exception of the upbeats in bars 51 and 61 (which I have circled), which he performs exactly as written.

l. molto

8va *pizz.*

con suono energico

espress. *3* *3* *3* *3* *rubato* *poco rit.* *a tempo* *Poco rit.* *poco rit.* *a tempo* *f energico*

10 *accel. molto* *p con fantasia* *12* *dim.*

Cassadó, Requiebros, bars 48-65 of Casals' version.

Observing the relationship between the piano and cello in the recording of *Requiebros*, I've found that the two parts frequently don't play together exactly as the printed score indicates. Compared to the piano, which often maintains a more regular tempo, the cello is typically more "free" in all of its tempo and rhythmic variations. This gives the two instruments a very nice and expressive conversational feeling. This rubato style is called *metrical rubato*, a type of rubato in which the melody lines are rhythmically altered while the accompaniment's metric regularity is substantially maintained. The metrical rubato is audible in Casals' recording when he performs with the orchestra or the piano.

The image displays a musical score for the piece *Requiebros*, specifically bars 7 through 13. The score is written for piano (p) and cello (c). The piano part is in the upper system, and the cello part is in the lower system. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes various performance markings such as *a tempo*, *accel.*, *rall.*, *ten.*, *ff*, *cresc. molto*, and *espress.*. Handwritten red annotations are present, including "before" with an arrow pointing to a measure, "after cello" with arrows pointing to measures, and "further" with an arrow pointing to a measure. The score shows a complex interplay between the piano and cello, with the piano part often playing a more regular tempo while the cello part is more rhythmically flexible.

Casad6, *Requiebros*, bars 7-13.

Re-enactment of Casals' recording of *Requiebros*

I re-enacted the recording of *Requiebros* (a work by Gaspar Cassadó) by Pau Casals and Blai Net to investigate Casals' interpretative and technical style in a direct, performative, and personal way.⁶³

I listened to Aldo Mata's lectures at the Casals symposium in October 2023, "Casals50: Modern or Romantic," during which he played some re-enactments of Casals' recordings.⁶⁴ Afterwards I interviewed him about how he makes a re-enactment; he told me that he usually selects a recording, he researches the performers and work in context, he listens to many editions, he annotates the score, and his last step is the "*embodiment, trying out the piece, not so much imitation as finding the spirit.*" In addition, he responded to my question about whether he employs Casals' approach or his own when reenacting his recording by saying, "*I try to get as close as possible with my own technique. I try my hands to follow my ears.*" In my reenactment of *Requiebros*, I mostly worked to stick to the concepts of embodiment, discovering the spirit, and hands that follow the ears.

I've listened to the Casals' recording of *Requiebros* carefully to have a general idea of that in mind, and I did three different annotated scores to analyze it. In the first one (that I've reported entirely in the appendix) that I used while practicing and performing the piece, I annotated Casals' editorial changes (reductions, alterations, and additions), and I used six different colors to annotate the other Casals interventions in six different parameters, as explained in the legend: alteration of written rhythms, rubato, articulation, portamento, breath, and "other" (timbre, color, dynamic, etc., and my personal annotations on what I noticed while I was doing the re-enactment). In the second score, I've annotated metronome tempi for every half bar, excluding the middle section of the piece, while in the third score I've annotated the rubato between the cello part and the piano part, and sometimes also between the different lines of the piano part. I didn't report these two scores entirely in my report, but I've reported some excerpts of those as examples in the previous section.

One of the biggest challenges I faced when recreating Casals' recording was not getting lost in the vast amount of detail that Casals gives attention to. Another difficulty for me in the beginning was to keep the sound full and tense without making an excessive effort; then, step by step, by applying the principles regarding the bow technique and about the release of tension that I've discussed before, it became more and more effortless to play this piece. Of particular importance has been the awareness of using just the amount of bow necessary by knowing which specific part to use in every moment. I also felt the necessity of having a solid but not stiff elbow and an elastic forearm, and I've often released tension by feeling the energy and weight in my belly. My recording of the re-enactment is the following: [09 Re-enactment of Casals' recording of Requiebros](#). I explained below what I did in more detail to re-enact Casals' recording, taking into consideration some specific phrases or sections of *Requiebros*.

1) [10 First phrase of the cello: bars 9-19 of Requiebros](#)

The piano introduction ends with an ascending arpeggio that culminates in a high register chord, like an exclamation mark. Then the cello enters with a bar of accented notes in tenuto that lead to the main tempo and melody in the following bar. To articulate well the attack of the first note without dropping the sound that follows, I think about the pinkie as the leading finger, I feel the contact of all the fingers on the stick, and I use more or less half of the bow. The following other three Gs have to be clear too, also because they are repeating notes, so one has to take care that you can distinctly hear them, but on the other side, they are also less affirmative than the first one, and they lead forward. To give variety and

⁶³ Pau Casals, Blai Net (piano), *Gaspar Cassadó Requiebros*, recorded June 15, 1929, in Casals – Encore and Transcriptions 2, Naxos Historical HMV DB 1391 (2004).

⁶⁴ La Nouvelle Athènes Centre des Pianos Romantiques, [11 CASALS50 Re-enactment Aldo Mata Martin Barré Sebastian Bausch](#), 2023.

- rhythm
- rubato
- articulation
- portamento
- breath
- other

Gaspar Cassadó

Gaspar Cassadó

Allegro con moto

Pno

ff

a tempo

molto rit.

a tempo

accel. molto

f

f con anima

espress.

cresc. f

vib.

ten. ten. ten.

rall.

a tempo

sing.

stop at bow before

more bow

slow

calm vibree

vibree (calm)

vibree calm

*** extra bow**

fast bow

focused bow

articulate

open right hand, more hair of the bow

good articulation

clear attack

focused bows, but feel the sound ringing!

(shaky vibrato, bow speed and different points of contact)

to hear the piano

27

2) 11 Beginning of the middle section: bars 51-65 of Requiebros

The middle section is characterized by the rhythmic pattern that first appears in bar 51 (with the upbeat). Casals plays semiquavers as demisemiquavers and dotted rhythm over dotted, with the exception of the upbeats in bars 51 and 60, which he performs as written. In bars 51-52-55, he also plays the last quaver by pushing it forward to the following note, which is the over dotted note on which he leans. This produces a dragged and gasping effect. Therefore, from bars 51 to 56, I apply to the rotten quaver one technique that Antonio Mosca taught me, the “inchino”: *“On the notes to lean on, put the bow on the string, pick up the note, sink forward, toward the bridge, slowly, and then vibrate: the note starts off steady and sinks later. This applies to both bow and left, where the lunge is the vibrato.”*⁶⁵ When that rhythmic pattern reappears in bar 6, it has another meaning than in 51: it’s more assertive and is not carried anymore. Therefore, my bow here is more dense, and it has a more regular speed and a more direct attack.

Handwritten musical score for Violin Concerto No. 1, Op. 35, by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. The score is divided into three systems, each with handwritten performance instructions and bowing techniques.

System 1 (Measures 51-56):

- Measure 51:** *cel. molto* (cello, molto). Handwritten notes: "push the finger forward", "gasping, dropping", "intensity" (circled 4).
- Measure 52:** *cresc.* (crescendo). Handwritten note: "8va" (octave).
- Measure 53:** *pizz.* (pizzicato). Handwritten note: "small amount of it at the frog, free the sound".
- Measure 54:** *sec.* (second). Handwritten note: "play with the forearm (but the hand must not be rigid)".
- Measure 55:** Handwritten note: "dense bow".
- Measure 56:** Handwritten note: "small amount of it at the frog, free the sound".

System 2 (Measures 57-61):

- Measure 57:** *con suono energico* (with energetic sound). Handwritten notes: "push the finger forward", "gasping, dropping", "intensity" (circled 4).
- Measure 58:** Handwritten note: "shorter" (circled 2).
- Measure 59:** Handwritten note: "Kind of small portamento".
- Measure 60:** Handwritten note: "F" (forte).
- Measure 61:** Handwritten note: "clim change" (circled 3).

System 3 (Measures 62-67):

- Measure 62:** *espress.* (expressive). Handwritten note: "very well articulated clean".
- Measure 63:** *rubato*. Handwritten note: "poco rit. (like M)" (poco ritardando, like M).
- Measure 64:** *a tempo*. Handwritten note: "a tempo suffering" (a tempo, suffering).
- Measure 65:** *a tempo*. Handwritten note: "molto (Poco) rit." (molto (Poco) ritardando).
- Measure 66:** *a tempo*. Handwritten note: "double the writer tempo".
- Measure 67:** *fenergico* (frenetic). Handwritten note: "dense bow".

System 4 (Measures 68-73):

- Measure 68:** *accel. molto* (accelerando molto). Handwritten note: "keep the note shorter" (circled 3).
- Measure 69:** *> p con fantasia* (accent, piano, with fantasia).
- Measure 70:** *12* (12 measures).
- Measure 71:** *dim.* (diminuendo).
- Measure 72:** *very +* (very +).

Cassadó, Requiebro, bars 51 (with upbeat) - 66 of Casals' recording.

3) 12 Melody in bars 30-37 of Requeibros and 13 Melody in bars 88-95 of Requeibros

⁶⁵ "Inchino" means bowing, the gesture of bending the body forward

This melody appears twice: the first time from bar 30, in B major, and *mp con dolcezza*; the second time from bar 88, in F major, and *pp come un eco*. My approach is the same both times, even if the second time I play it more piano: I look for a soft and lovely sound, but in the meantime, it is also clean, dense, and articulated. To obtain that, I stay on the tip with the bow and near the fingerboard, and I take care of the articulation of the left hand by keeping the fingers round and by applying the principles of Casals' living left hand. Finally, I shape the melody with a playful rubato.

The image displays two systems of handwritten musical notation for the violin piece "Requiebro" by Manuel de Falla, specifically bars 26-40 (top) and 83-98 (bottom). The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score is heavily annotated with handwritten notes in various colors (pink, blue, green, orange, red) and symbols, providing detailed performance instructions.

Top System (Bars 26-40):

- Bar 26:** *f con fantasia*. Annotations include "more legato" and "and decrease after the accent".
- Bar 27:** *meno forte* and *ff con fantasia*. Annotations include "to articulate better" and "at the tip, near to the fingerboard, well articulated with a bow and left hand".
- Bar 28:** *a tempo*. Annotations include "extension finger" and "lovely vibrato".
- Bar 29:** *dim. molto* and *mp con dolcezza*. Annotations include "nearer to the fingerboard" and "not too much vibrato".
- Bar 30:** *sfz*. Annotations include "più sonoro - more bow" and "più intenso - nearer to the bridge, more focused bow, harsher sound".
- Bar 31:** *calm* and *a tempo*. Annotations include "no port" and "allarga".
- Bar 32:** *dim.* and *p*. Annotations include "light, playful, sparkling".
- Bar 33:** *pp come un eco*. Annotations include "brilliant" and "immediately F and open, majestic".
- Bar 34:** *sfz*. Annotations include "use more bow and nearer to the bridge" and "extension fingers no portamento!".
- Bar 35:** *molto rit.* and *a tempo*. Annotations include "rit." and "p cresc."
- Bar 36:** *accel. 3*. Annotations include "p cresc."

Bottom System (Bars 83-98):

- Bar 83:** *poco rit.* and *a tempo*. Annotations include "brilliant" and "immediately F and open, majestic".
- Bar 84:** *dim.* and *p*. Annotations include "use more bow and nearer to the bridge" and "extension fingers no portamento!".
- Bar 85:** *pp come un eco*. Annotations include "light, playful, sparkling".
- Bar 86:** *sfz*. Annotations include "rit." and "p cresc."
- Bar 87:** *molto rit.* and *a tempo*. Annotations include "p cresc."
- Bar 88:** *accel. 3*. Annotations include "p cresc."

Cassadó, Requiebro, bars s 26-40 (top) and 83 - 98 (bottom).

3.1.5 Interventions / practical application

My performance of *Requiebros*

The work I did, described in the data analysis, culminated in my recording of *Requiebros*. The majority of what I did was

- focusing technically on the release of tension and on the articulation of the bow and of the left hand;
- analyzing, understanding, and relating specifically to *Requiebros* the musical principles and patterns of Casals' playing that I've recognized, selected, and explained in the data analysis;
- studying for the re-enactment of Casals' recording of *Requiebros*.

I focused on my re-enactment of Casals' rendition of *Requiebros* in order to achieve this new recording. I've done this by listening carefully to Casals' recording and paying close attention to what I was doing while I imitated him. This method seemed quite mechanical to me at first, but over time, it became more and more instinctive. I stopped playing *Requiebros* for a while after that, and when I played it again (in the original version) to create my own rendition, I immediately felt more naturally the approach I had learned from studying Casals' interpretation. On the other hand, I adopted many different musical choices quite spontaneously in this new performance, even if I was very influenced and inspired by Casals' rendition of the piece. Indeed, I could go in multiple directions based on data collection, and I tried to "let go" of what I learned, looking for what could reflect my taste and my own interpretation of the piece. Technically, I mostly focused on the release of tension and on the articulation of the bow and of the left hand. The most important performing elements I worked on while doing this recording were rubato, portamento, and the transformation of written time values (rhythm). I used those as expressive elements to help perform *Requiebros*, following what, in my opinion, Cassadó wanted to express through it: spontaneity, freedom, optimism, love, joy, and sometimes melancholy. I also think that *Requiebros* is a piece with an improvising, instinctive, and impulsive nature, and I tried to express this using what I learned from my study of Casals' playing by following my instinct and always keeping in mind to be logical and to give a sense of unity and continuity to the piece.

I was feeling more freedom and relaxation in my body and intentions when I first practiced it with the pianist, Hans Spruit, than I had before I started my research, but I was still trying to fit in the Casals version mechanically because I still had too much on my mind. Thus, I mostly focused on the following throughout the pianist's rehearsals:

- maintaining a full, present, and expressive sound
- creating variety with rubato, portamento, different articulations, and colors (mainly with different bow speeds and contact points)
- experimenting to see what would work better for the piece and my taste, particularly with the rubato
- relating to the piano part without being overly preoccupied with always maintaining his exact tempo.

I made the following annotated score of my new performance: it's a descriptive score, and I used it to report the most relevant elements I've recognized in my own performance.

Violoncello

à mon très cher maître Pablo Casals

- rhythm
- rubato
- articulation
- portamento
- breath
- other

Requiebros

Gaspar Cassadó

Allegro con moto

ten. ten. ten. rall. - a tempo

longer

leave space to the piano

ff

longer

shorter

molto rit.

a tempo

accel. molto

espress.

ten. ten. ten.

espress.

mf

cresc. f

leave space to hear the piano

f con anima

a tempo

meno forte

ff con fantasia

f

mp

f con fantasia

ff con passione

dim. molto

mp con dolcezza

sweet

sfz

più sonoro

più intenso

f

espress.

molto rit. -

a tempo

accel. molto

espress.

mf

cresc.

ff

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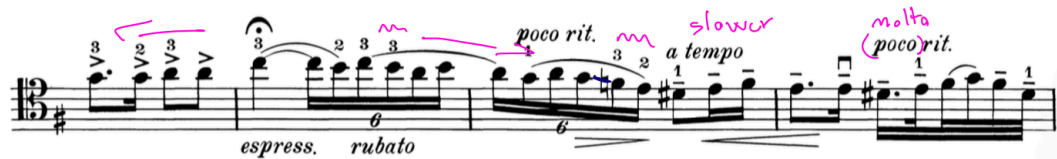
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2

Moderato e risoluto



3

a tempo *poco rit.* **Tempo I** *leave space to suu piano*

f cresc. molto *ff*

a tempo *molto rit.* *espress.*

a tempo *accel.* *mf* *cresc. molto f* *ff* *ten. ten. ten.* *f con anima* *a tempo*

V *meno forte* *f con anima*

poco rit. *a tempo* *dim.* *p* *pp come un eco*

sweet *sfz* *molto rit.* *a tempo* *accel.* *espress.* *p cresc.*

accel. sempre *a tempo* *molto rit.* *strong* *a tempo* *pizz.* *f* *ff* *fff* *fff*

Schott Music, Mainz 32 856

Here are a few examples of the things I altered between my interpretation and the re-enactment:

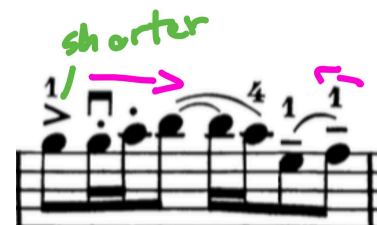
Re-enactment

My new interpretation

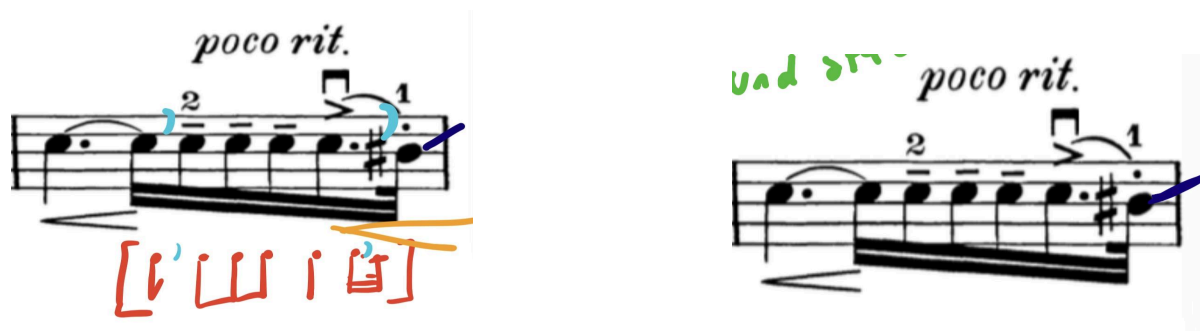
Casals takes a lot of breaths that I do not take. For example, he takes a breath before the final notes of bars 9 and 16, but I do not. Instead, I take my time, stretch the note before, and use some portamento to link to the next.



There are occasions when Casals employs rhythmic changes that I would not perform, such as in bars 12 (first example) and 15 (second example).

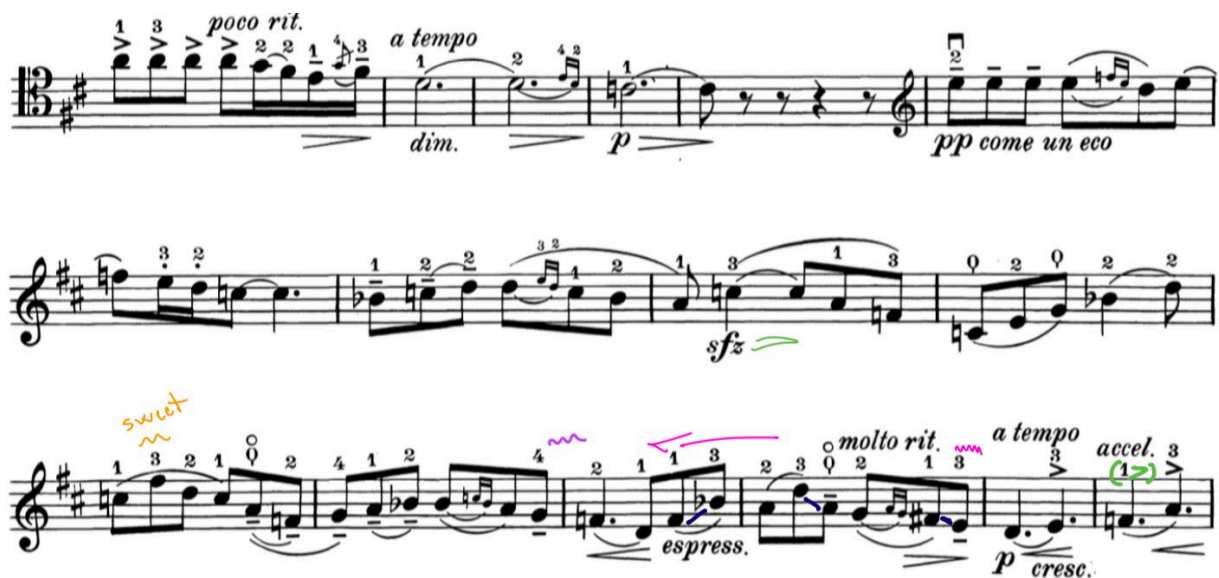


When the middle section ends and the recapitulation begins, Casals does a huge ritardando that I do not. That bar indeed does not end the middle section in Cassadó's original version of Requeiebros, which is the version I have finally recorded. Rather, it is still followed by numerous bars that Casals cut in his version.



In contrast to Casals, I played the PP come un eco section in my recording at a slower tempo. He progresses that section until the espressivo, where he drastically alters both character and tempo. I also used less rubato in the PP and more gradually ritardando in the espressivo than he did.

Annotated score for the re-enactment of Casals' version.



Descriptive score of my recording.

3.1.6 Outcomes

[14 Reference Recording 02 Clara Piccoli Requiebros](#)

Gaspar Cassadó, *Requiebros* (1929), for cello and piano.

Recorded by Clara Piccoli and Hans Spruit on 08/05/2024 at Codarts Rotterdam. Duration of the recording 05:31.

3.1.7 Feedback, reflection and conclusion

Feedback and reflection

I identified and summarized some aspects to work on in *Requiebros* through feedback from Joachim Eijlander and from two colleagues from my cello class at Codarts and my own reflection:

- **Sound quality and general approach:** Before this research cycle, I was more indirect in my right hand articulation, and therefore I played more with portato and a certain afterpressure, while now I have gained more speaking and direct quality, and my sound is also more radiant. I've gained better elasticity and relaxation of my body and of the movement that I make, and this has also made it possible to produce a fuller and clearer sound without a big physical effort. I should stick more to the indications written by Cassadó in terms of articulation (I should mostly take care of the accents, articulating them more) and tempo (for instance, I should not play too slowly the phrases that start on the second half of bars 58 and 74). Finally, there are moments when I should be more careful to change my color more quickly (for instance, in bar 116).
- **Phrasing:** Sometimes I should take more care to have a direction and connect everything well; in particular, I have to connect more of the ideas in the central part of the piece, exaggerating more what I want and flowing with the music.

The section of my recording I'm less satisfied with is the section of bars 109–117. The melody in bars 109–116 should be lighter and with more direction, with more rubato, with a more precise intonation, and with more confidence. Then, in bars 116–117, I have to exaggerate more what I want, playing with the tempo, the rubato, and the colors. Finally, I should take care to connect these two bars to the previous and following bars.

- **Rhythm:** I can exaggerate more when I want to stretch the tempo of the recurrent rhythmic figures (and also to rush a bit with others).
- **Rubato:** During this first cycle, I got more and more familiar with the use of rubato, but I can go further in this direction, zooming out and having whole passages more fluid or more retained, so that the piece will tell its story even more and a certain nostalgia will come out even more. Also, my rubato for now is too much on the slower side; I have to focus more on the fast side.
- **Articulation and accentuation:** I have gained a more direct articulation on both hands, but I have to go on working on that, avoiding blowing notes when not necessary and sticking more to the articulations written by Cassadó, like the accents, playing those with a bit more biting sound.
- **Ornamentations:** I can play more with the ornamentations, exaggerating the rubato and moving back and forth in the tempo. Some sixteen notes throughout the piece are, in fact, ornaments, so I can experiment more with the rhythm and rubato. I should look more for the important notes in the ornaments to have clear arrival notes in order to have some guidance for the rubato.
- **Portamento:** I think I've been able to use portamento as an expressive tool. I should go on working on that.
- **Intonation:** I have to be more precise with the intonation (I've marked in the score the most evident imprecisions).

Conclusion

In conclusion, these are the main principles that summarize what I've learned in this research until now and that I've tried to apply in my playing of *Requiebro*, and I will still keep them in mind in the next phases of my research:

- Find a **balance between being devoted to what the composer has written and not being afraid to apply ourselves to it** to understand it and interpret it to communicate it to the audience.
- Be present, active, explicit, convinced, and consistent in your **intentions**.
- Look for **continuity, unity, logic, and coherence**.
- **Always try to release tension** by focusing on your back as the support and source of energy for all movements, feeling tall and open in the chest, and being more aware of your shoulder blades. Relax and sense the weight in various body areas when you play (for example, the belly and legs).
- **Maintain a focused contact with the string with a flexible bow hold and relaxed bowing arm.** Use different amounts and speeds of bow. Explore the different sections of the bow and always find good adherence with the string, also at the tip. **Articulate** with the bow the attack of the notes.
- **Percussive technique** and **living left hand** guarantee a better sound's resonance, clarity, and purity of intonation, and a solid base to use **portamento** and fingerings in an expressive way.
- The texture of each written **articulation** and **accent** changes according to the musical context. Also, one note's inflection lends value to the next, and vice versa: we value an accented note for the shade that comes after it, not for its intensity alone.
- Give emphasis, clarity, and life to **ornamentations**. Play them frankly and emphasize the first note.
- Experiment with a **continuous, compensating, and metrical rubato**, transforming a mechanical meter into a living pulse.
- Consider the possibility of **transforming** some specific **written time values** to add a feeling of expressive tension and an energizing effect (as the intuitive placement of the short notes in dotted rhythm a fraction later).

3.2 Second Research Cycle

3.2.1 Overview of second research cycle

The second research cycle is about exploring Casals' expressive intonation, and applying it in the first movement of Cassadó's *Suite for Cello Solo*.⁶⁶ [A short explanation of what I did in this second cycle](#).

3.2.2 Reference recording

[15 Reference Recording 03 Clara Piccoli Preludio-Fantasia Cassadó Cello Suite](#)

Gaspar Cassadó, Suite per Violoncello Solo, Preludio - Fantasia (1926)

Recorded by Clara Piccoli on 19/10/2024 at Codarts Rotterdam. Duration of the recording 05:28.

3.2.3 Feedback and reflection

I identified and summarized some aspects to work on in the first movement of Cassadó Suite, through feedback from Emlyn Stam, Carlos Maldonado, Paula Lebon Real, and my own reflection.

Intonation:

- Do some detailed **analysis** of some **of Casals' recordings** to see what he does in detail.
- **Record** yourself and listen back and see what you hear and **compare it to Casals**, this will help you to see how far along you are in your approach.
- You are still too correct regarding intonation: **emphasize** much more the notes that are important in the scale/mode you are in every moment.
- Try experimenting with some greater extremes of **leading tones** or intonation of **different octaves and registers in different ways** or intonation that points out **enharmonic differences** in a more extreme style.
- **Analyze** more deeply the **modes and tonal regions** that Cassadó uses in this movement. It will help you identify the main notes and most interesting, the leading notes to use that expressive intonation. Make the note flatter if it leads down, and sharper if it leads up.
- **Use the bow to enhance your expressive intonation**. You can also make a sound considerably more tense by playing closer to the bridge or applying pressure with the bow if you wish to show a dissonant note. This will further improve the expressive intonation's utilization.

Other thoughts:

- **Connect** the various phrases more effectively.
- When different colors (*espressivo*, *dolce*) are written, look for a more noticeable **change in timbre**.
- **Don't blow notes** when it is unnecessary.
- Don't play some notes suddenly too in *F* (if not written on the score).
- Make the **climaxes** more compelling in terms of direction and intensity.
- Take **more risks in the dynamics**, going super piano to create those atmospheres and also

⁶⁶ Expressive intonation is a type of intonation in which notes react sensitively to their melodic connotations and the harmonic progressions that support them as changing phases in an organic line.

- going wild in the fortes. For instance, you can play even more piano in the harmonics section.
- Be more “informal” and **wild** in the **glissandos**, enjoying the change of note

3.2.4 Data collection & data analysis: my findings

Data collection

I choose the following data collection techniques during this first research cycle:

1) Media Research

Recordings

As for Casals' own recordings, I have listened to many of them freely, without analyzing them, and some more extensively, noting their scores (Beethoven's *Cello Sonata No. 3, Op. 69*, Dvorak's *Cello Concerto in B minor, Op. 104*, Fauré's “Après un rêve” from *Trois mélodies, Op. 7.*, and the “Intermezzo” from Granados' opera *Goyescas* arranged for cello and piano by Cassadó).⁶⁷

Masterclasses

I found very useful the episodes of the Augustin Hadelich channel about intonation in which he talks about some of his ideas about intonation, and he explains some principles of his way of using expressive intonation.⁶⁸

Books/articles/thesis/treatises

Sources that I've already used for the last cycle:

- “Casals's Teaching of the Cello”, an article in the Musical Times written by David Cherniavsky.⁶⁹
- Gabrielle Kauffman's PhD dissertation “Gaspar Cassadó: A Study of Catalan Cello Arrangements and Cello Performance Style”.⁷⁰
- David Blum's *Casals and the art of interpretation*, chapter “Insights for string players”.⁷¹
- Josep Maria Corredor's book *Conversation with Casals*, chapter “On Interpretation”.⁷²
- Maurice Eisenberg's *Cello Playing of Today*.⁷³

⁶⁷ Musizieren, [Beethoven Cello Sonata No. 3 in A major Op. 69](#) (Pablo Casals, cello, and Otto Schulhof, piano), 2019.

Pau Casals, Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, George Szell (cond.), *Antonin Dvořák Cello Concerto in B minor*, rec. April 1937, The Gramophone Company, DB 3288, accessed from Spotify [audio stream], 2009.

Gabriel Fauré, *Après un rêve*, performed by Pau Casals (cello) and Nikolai Mendikoff (piano), rec. January 5, 1926, in *Pablo Casals: Encores and Transcriptions vol. 1*, CD, Biddulph LAB 017, 1990.

Enric Granados, *Intermezzo*, performed by Pau Casals (cello) and Nikolai Mednikoff (piano), rec. February 28, 1927, in *Casals: Encores and Transcriptions vol. 1*, CD, Biddulph LAB 017, 2007.

⁶⁸ Augustin Hadelich, [Ask Augustin 10 - About Intonation Part 1](#), 2020,

Augustin Hadelich, [Ask Augustin 11 - About Intonation Part 2](#), 2020.

⁶⁹ David Cherniavsky, “Casal's Teaching of the Cello,” *The Musical Times* 93, no. 1315 (September 1952): 398-400.

⁷⁰ Gabrielle Kaufman, “Gaspar Cassadó: A Study of Catalan Cello Arrangements and Cello Performance Style” (PhD diss., Birmingham City University, 2013).

⁷¹ David Blum, *Casals and the Art of Interpretation* (University of California Press, 1980).

⁷² J. Ma. Corredor, *Conversation with Casals* (London: Hutchinson, 1956).

⁷³ Maurice Eisenberg, “Cello Playing of Today,” *The Strad* (1957).

- Oskar Falta's thesis "A Great Wave in the Evolution of the Modern Cellist: Diran Alexanian and Maurice Eisenberg, Two Master Cello Pedagogues from the Legacy of Pablo Casals".⁷⁴ *CelloMind, Intonation and Technique*, by Hans Jørgen Jensen and Minna Rose Chung.⁷⁵

New sources:

- "Mastering Intonation" an article in *The Strad* by Antonio Lysy, contains exercises to build a good intonation and to be aware of the power of expressive intonation.⁷⁶
- Dawn Seward's project report "Gaspar Cassadó: Suite for Solo Cello" was helpful for the analysis of the Preludio-fantasia of Cassadó Cello Suite.⁷⁷
- Belén Méndez Valledor's Artistic Research, "Expressive intonation in Romantic repertoire", contains a case study of Casals' intonation.⁷⁸

2) Interviews

I've interviewed my Codarts main subject teacher, Joachim Eijlander, about his way of using expressive intonation, and about Casals' intonation.

3) Self-critical practice

During the media research I started to consider intonation as an extra expressive tool in my everyday practice. I used it mostly on the Prelude-fantasia of Cassadó Suite for cello solo, as I will discuss in detail in the "intervention" section, and I applied my discoveries to other pieces of my repertoire.

Data analysis

On stringed instruments intonation is the result of the finger seeking and finding the heart of a note because of an intense desire to produce it.⁷⁹

According to Casals, intonation is an essential component of musical communication and a powerful expressive tool for strings. Casals was an active promoter and practitioner of expressive intonation, which he considered to be a dynamic and sensitive process in which each pitch had to adapt to its musical function. Casals's expressive intonation is an adjustment of the standard equal temperament, altered to pursue the content of the music and the player's musical instinct.⁸⁰ In fact, the notes of a composition do not exist in isolation: notes as part of an interval, not isolated sounds: in Casals' words, "*nothing should be isolated, each note is a link of a chain - important in itself and also a connection between what has been and what will be*".⁸¹ If intonation is too influenced by the equal temperament (which is an artificial

⁷⁴ Oskar Falta, "A Great Wave in the Evolution of the Modern Cellist: Diran Alexanian and Maurice Eisenberg, Two Master Cello Pedagogues from the Legacy of Pablo Casals" (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, November 2019).

⁷⁵ Hans Jørgen Jensen and Minna Rose Chung, *CelloMind, Intonation and Technique* (Chicago: Ovation Press, Ltd., 2017).

⁷⁶ Antonio Lysy, "Mastering Intonation," *The Strad*, March 2017.

⁷⁷ Dawn Seward, "Gaspar Cassadó: Suite for Solo Cello" (Manhattan School of Music, New York, December 2009).

⁷⁸ Belén Méndez Valledor, "Expressive Intonation in Romantic Repertoire" (master's thesis, Codarts Rotterdam, 2020).

⁷⁹ Maurice Eisenberg, "Cello Playing of Today," *The Strad*, 1957.

⁸⁰ The equal temperament is an intonation system that is an artificial compromise for the intonation of keyboard instruments. With this system all half steps of the scale are equal: that presents a practical solution to the fact that it is impossible to incorporate intervals of both pure fifths and pure major thirds into one tuning system.

⁸¹ J. Ma Corredor, *Conversation with Casals* (London: Hutchinson, 1956).

compromise for the intonation of keyboard instruments), notes are considered to be nearly separate entities with a fixed place, while they should respond to their melodic and harmonic implications. Thus, playing in tune is a dynamic process that enhances a sense of progression, heightens emotional tension, and helps portray the relationship between notes in a musical context. In Antonio Lysy's words, "a flattened third helps to give a sadder character; a sharpened leading note gives the feeling of pushing towards the tonic, where it will resolve, adding to the tension of the music".⁸² According to Casals, there are three main aspects of establishing a proper intonation:

- a) **intellectual awareness** (study of the harmonic context and the melodic direction)
- b) **intuitive perception** (determining the proper placement of diatonic semitones)
- c) **critical listening, quick and constant adjustment of the pitch.**⁸³

By adding some excerpts annotated with up or down arrows that indicate Casals' playing sharper or lower in the corresponding recordings, I will write about my results summarizing some of Casals' tendencies toward expressive intonation. *Casals and the Art of Interpretation* and *CelloMind* provided a few examples.⁸⁴ I collected other examples by listening to some Casals' recordings and noting any changed pitches I heard on those.

Playing melodically: attraction between the two scale tetrachords

We must comprehend the idea of what Casals referred to as "**gravitational attraction**" in order to understand his expressive intonation. According to Casals, the tonic, subdominant, and dominant of a certain tonality are points of repose that the other notes are drawn to. These pitches are set, like in equal temperament, and they create a fixed frame that the other scale degrees are attracted to. There is a "gravitational attraction" within the two tetrachords that compose the scale. The diatonic semitones in each tetrachord, which in the major scale are situated between the third and fourth degrees and between the seventh degree and the octave, naturally tend upward. These two semitones are typically raised by Casals, particularly the seventh degree that resolves upward to the tonic (see Ex. 1). In minor scales the attractions are altered, always in accordance with the same principle of relating a note to its neighbors (see Ex. 2 and 3). Diatonic semitones become smaller than chromatic ones: Casals says that we must have the tendency to maintain the half-tones close together.⁸⁵ Raising the two semitones of the tetrachords will result in a slight sharpening of the intermediate degrees (the second and sixth degrees). Minor and diminished melodic intervals will get narrower, while major and augmented melodic intervals will get wider. In melodic playing, there will be higher leading tones, higher major thirds/sixths, and lower minor thirds/sixths.

Ex. 1

Here we are in E major. The D# is a leading note and is drawn upwards towards the tonic.



Beethoven, Cello Sonata n.3, third movement.⁸⁶

⁸² Antonio Lysy, "Mastering Intonation," *The Strad*, March 2017.

⁸³ David Blum, *Casals and the Art of Interpretation* (University of California Press, 1980).

⁸⁴ Blum, *Casals and the Art of Interpretation*.

Hans Jørgen Jensen and Minna Rose Chung, *CelloMind, Intonation and Technique* (Chicago: Ovation Press, Ltd., 2017).

⁸⁵ Blum, *Casals and the Art of Interpretation*.

⁸⁶ David Blum, *Casals and the Art of Interpretation* (University of California Press, 1980).

Ex. 2

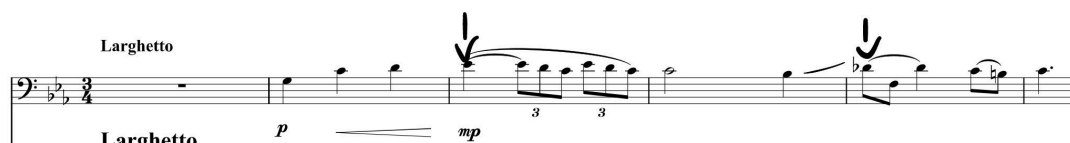
In the last three bars we are in Eb minor. The Gb is the minor third and is drawn downwards towards the second degree of the scale (F).



Granados, Intermezzo from "Goyescas", arrangement for cello and piano by Cassadó.

Ex. 3

Here we are in C minor. The Eb in the third bar is drawn downwards to the second degree (D). In the fifth bar, the Db is the diminished second degree, and is drawn downwards to the tonic, that is the C that we find later in the same bar.



Fauré, Après un rêve.

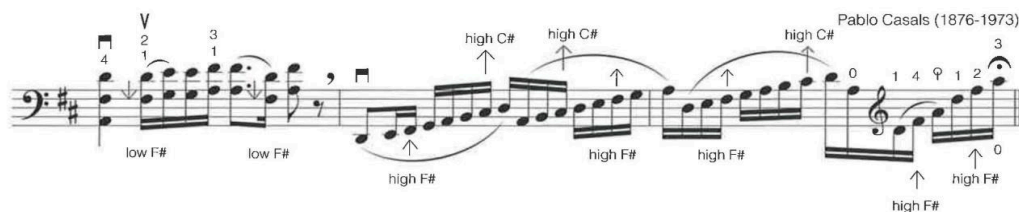
Double - stops

Regarding intonation in double-stops, Casals says: "I make an exception for double-stopped playing: in this case one must compromise between expressive intonation and the "tempered" one".⁸⁷ I believe we may interpret the meaning of "tempered" intonation here to mean just intonation.⁸⁸ In fact, major and minor thirds and sixths in double stops do sound more consonant in just intonation.

Casals talks about taking compromises: for instance, he may use expressive intonation for the top line and just intonation for the lower thirds or sixth note, which makes the notes sound fairly in tune, although not exactly consonant, yet also giving the line a sense of direction and expression.

Ex. 4

In his Cadenza of Haydn Cello Concerto in D Major, Casals makes the sixth F#-D sound more consonant by using just intonation for the double-stops section, as seen by the down arrows on the F#. Instead, he employs expressive intonation in the following melodic line, playing all of the F# and C#, the scale's third and seventh degrees, sharper, making it sound more brilliant and, in my opinion, expressive.



Casals, Cadenza from Haydn Cello Concerto in D Major.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ J. Ma. Corredor, *Conversation with Casals* (London: Hutchinson, 1956).

⁸⁸ Just intonation is a tuning system based on the harmonic overtone series.

⁸⁹ Hans Jørgen Jensen and Minna Rose Chung, *CelloMind, Intonation and Technique* (Chicago: Ovation Press, Ltd., 2017).

Ex. 5

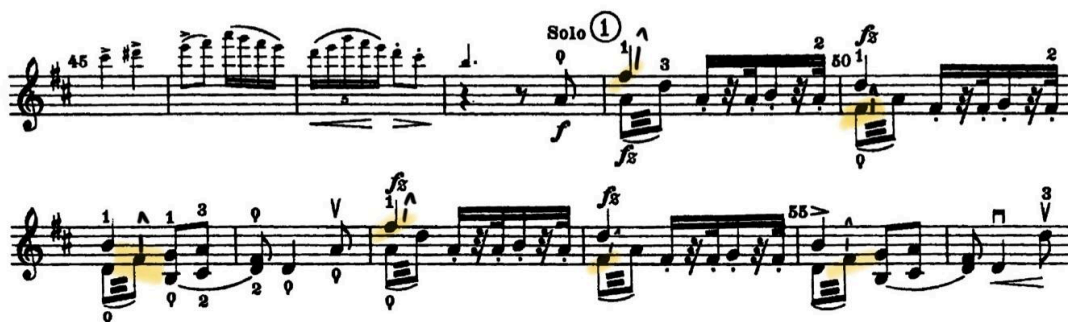
In the *Quasi Cadenza* of the second movement of Dvorak Cello Concerto in B minor, Casals plays the double-stops mostly in just intonation. In the fourth bar of the second system, as I indicated with arrows, he employs instead expressive intonation, by sharpening the F# and lowering the F \flat . I think he does that to underline the chromatism G - F# - F \flat , making the diatonic semitones G - F#, and F \flat - E narrower, and the chromatic semitone F# - F \flat larger.⁹⁰



Dvorak, Cello Concerto in B minor, second movement.

Ex. 6

In the passage with double-stops and trills of the third movement of Dvorak Cello Concerto in B minor, Casals applies expressive intonation on all the F# in double-stops, by playing them a bit sharper. This passage is in D Major, and the F# is the sixth degree of the scale. By playing the F# sharper, the top melodic line (F# - D - B) sounds more brilliant. The other F# which create trills with the D or with the A, are also sharper, making the passage sounding generally more brilliant but also more coherent with the top line.⁹¹



Dvorak, Cello Concerto in B minor, third movement

⁹⁰ Pau Casals, Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, George Szell (cond.), *Antonin Dvořák Cello Concerto in B minor*, rec. April 1937, The Gramophone Company, DB 3288, accessed from Spotify [audio stream], 2009.

⁹¹ Casals, Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Szell (cond.), *Antonin Dvořák Cello Concerto in B minor*.

Relationship with the piano

When playing with the piano, string players are influenced by the piano's equal temperament tuning. Anyway, as reported in Corredor's *Conversation with Casals*, Casals still feels free to employ expressive intonation:

That [the discrepancy between expressive and equal-tempered intonation] is a kind of conflict which is, to me, more apparent than real. In those orchestras which possess great technical perfection and employ some first-class soloists the conflict does not arise, which proves that the "fusion" between the "tempered" instruments and expressive intonation is perfectly possible. The discrepancy between expressive and equal-tempered intonation is easily tolerable.⁹²

In any case, when performing a section in unison with the keyboard instrument, especially with long notes, Casals would adjust his intonation to equal temperament.

Ex. 7

This excerpt from the first movement of Beethoven's Cello Sonata No. 3 shows the cello and piano playing the Sonata's opening theme in unison for the last time. In order to sound as cohesive as possible with the piano, Casals adjusts his intonation to equal temperament in this instance.⁹³



Beethoven, Cello Sonata n.3, first movement

Ex.8

Casals uses a different tuning for the G# of the third bar and the G# of the sixth bar in this passage from the Adagio cantabile of Beethoven Cello Sonata No. 3. The first G# is sharper than the second. Although the G# in the third bar is in unison with the G# and creates a third with the E of the piano, Casals sharpens it. This highlights the diatonic chromatism between the tonic and the leading tone in the melodic passage (fragment of a scale) A - G# - (E) - F#. In order to be in tune with the piano's E and G#, Casals plays the G# in the sixth bar lower than the preceding G# while maintaining equal temperament. In fact, this G# is a longer, leaning note that joins the piano's theme's E to form a major third. Additionally, the listener's attention is drawn in by the crescendo in that bar, which is followed by a P in the following bar. To sum up, in order to avoid sounding out of tune, the G# must adjust to equal temperament to form a consonant third with the E.⁹⁴

⁹² J. Ma Corredor, *Conversation with Casals* (London: Hutchinson, 1956).

⁹³ Musizieren, [Beethoven Cello Sonata No. 3 in A major Op. 69 \(Pablo Casals, cello, and Otto Schulhof, piano\)](#), 2019.

⁹⁴ *Beethoven Cello Sonata No. 3 in A major Op. 69* (Pablo Casals, cello, and Otto Schulhof, piano), musizieren, 2019, [YouTube Beethoven Cello Sonata No.3 in A major Op.69\(Pablo Casals - Otto Schulhof\)](#).



Beethoven, Cello Sonata n.3, third movement

Slow/fast tempo

The intonation of a passage is also influenced by the speed at which it is performed; in a very quick movement, we must emphasize the closeness of the diatonic semitones more. According to Blum, Casals illustrated this by playing the passage (Ex. 9) both in allegro and andante, making the semitones Bb-A and G#-A less narrow in the latter than in the former.⁹⁵

Ex. 9



Casals' exercise, reported in "Casals and the Art of Interpretation".⁹⁶

Open strings

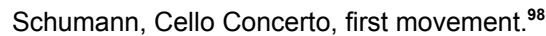
When an open string had to serve as the leading note, Casals occasionally stopped the string with the first finger whenever possible to enhance intonation and tone quality.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ David Blum, Casals and the Art of Interpretation (University of California Press, 1980).

⁹⁶ Blum, Casals and the Art of Interpretation.

⁹⁷ Blum, Casals and the Art of Interpretation.

Casals plays the B# with the first finger rather than the open string. This decision is made for two reasons: to avoid the timbre difference between a fingered note and an open string, to homologate the timbre of this passage. To narrow the diatonic semitone B# - C# is the second reason.



I analyzed the score of *Preludio-Fantasia* of Cassadó Suite for Solo Cello to have some knowledge on the structure and character of the piece that could help me to build my intervention on expressive intonation on it. The full score with my analysis annotation is reported in the Appendix. Reading Dawn Seward's Thesis on Cassadó Cello Suite, which includes a structural and harmonic analysis of the composition, was very helpful for this procedure.⁹⁹ These are my main discoveries on general structure of the piece:

- ### 3.2.5 Interventions / practical application

I started working on expressive intonation on the first movement of Cassadó's Suite for cello solo. I recorded the piece and used it as a reference recording, which I then listened to carefully and did an auto-feedback by annotating the score with indications of how I perceived the intonation: red if it seemed to me too sharp and green if too flat. Then, I started working on the piece from the feedback I collected for that recording, and from my analysis of the score. I considered the following broad strategies to develop expressive intonation:

- ⁹⁸ Blum, *Casals and the Art of Interpretation*.

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- To develop expressive intonation on the other notes, make sure the tonic, subdominant, and dominant of the tonality remain steady and in tune.¹⁰⁰
- Practice in small sections to build expressive intonation. Practice slowly with the metronome: play a single pitch for one beat, then pause for the next beat so that you can hear and feel the pitch in your mind, and compare it to the next one.¹⁰¹
- Help your expressive intonation with the bow, by using different pressures and points of contact.
- Record yourself when you practice and listen back.

It was a work of listening, analysis, experimentation, compromise and choices. I did an [annotated score](#) of the Preludio-Fantasia of Cassadó Suite for Solo Cello to show my choices in terms of intonation for my new performance of the piece. I've reported below some examples of different applications of expressive intonation. I chose three different notations to indicate different (and indicative) levels of expressive intonation, measured with the tuner during my practice:

- (↑)(↓) for variations of less than 20 cents
- ↑ ↓ for variations between 20 and 30 cents
- ↑↓ for variations of more than 30 cents

I use three distinct intonations to play the F, the third minor of the scale (we are in D minor), during the opening five bars of the composition (Ex. 11).

- In bars 1-2 I play the F in standard intonation, taking care of the intonation of the fifth F-C.
- In bars 3-4 I play the F a bit lower, between expressive intonation (pythagorean) and just intonation. It nevertheless shapes the upper melodic line expressively while sounding quite in tune in the chords D-A-F.
- In bar 5 I play the two F lower than the previous ones, narrowing consistently the diatonic semitones E-F-E and the minor third F-D. In this instance, I employ a more expressive intonation because the two Fs are extremely quick notes that don't interfere with the vertical, harmonic tuning.

Ex. 11

Cassadó, Suite for solo cello, bars 1-7

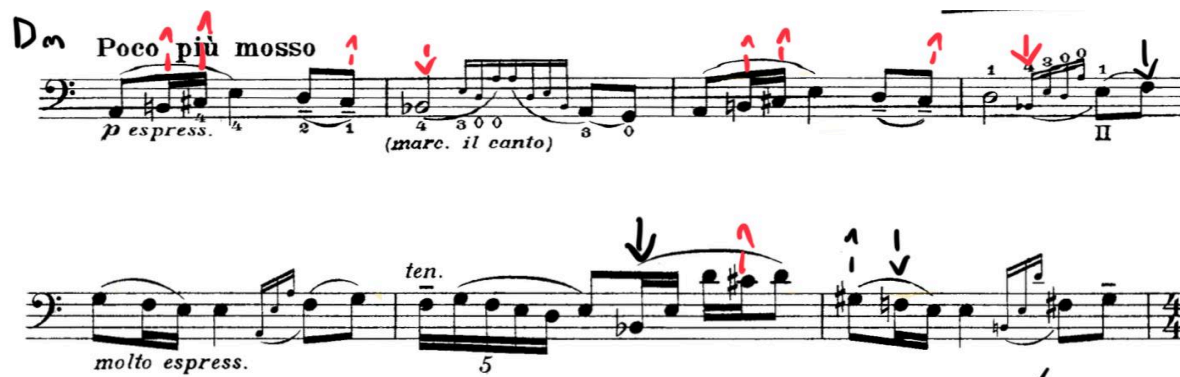
¹⁰⁰ Augustin Hadelich, [Ask Augustin 10 - About Intonation Part 1](#), 2020,

¹⁰¹ Violinmasterclass YouTube Channel, [Intonation: Expressive Intonation](#), 2022.

I made great use of expressive intonation to build the melodic line in the piece's third theme (Ex. 12), which is in D minor, and in his recapitulation in G minor (Ex. 13), to contribute to the *espressivo* indication using also the intonation as a tool.

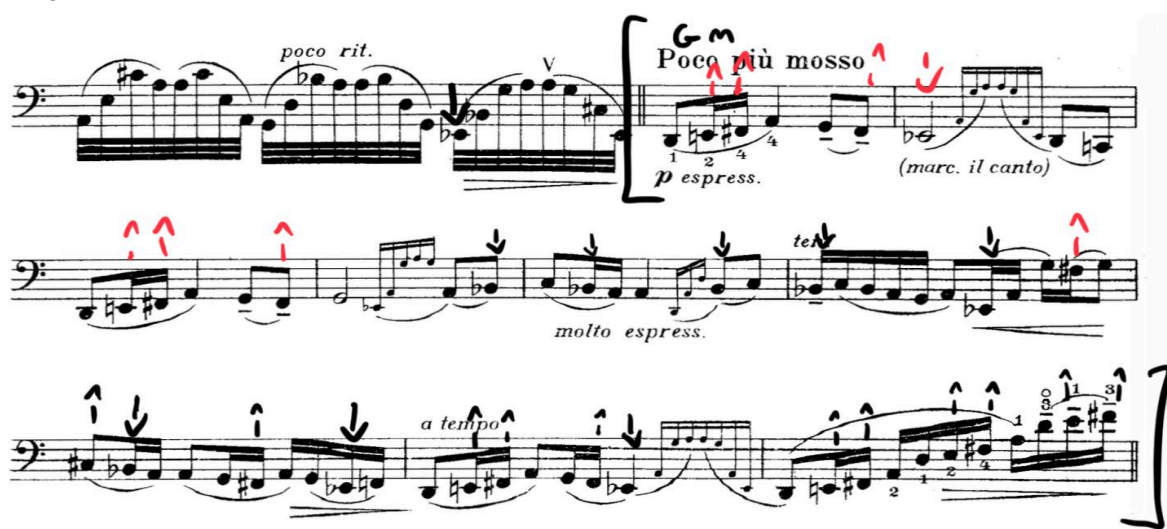
- The major sixth and the leading tone become sharper: B \sharp , C \sharp (Ex. 12), and E \sharp , F \sharp (Ex. 13).
- The third and the minor sixth become flatter: F, B \flat (Ex. 12), and B \flat , E \flat (Ex. 13).

Ex. 12



Cassadó, Suite for solo cello, bars 17-23

Ex. 13



Cassadó, Suite for solo cello, bars 63-68

I apply just intonation to the chords in the C major passage below (Ex. 14): two tonic triads are present in bars 8 and 9, the dominant seventh of the dominant and the triad of the minor seventh degree are present in bar 10. In the ornamentation of the first beat of bar 9, I use expressive intonation by sharpening the F# (the fifth degree's leading tone), the E (third major degree), and the D (second degree). I also sharpen the F# at the beginning of bar 10.

Ex. 14

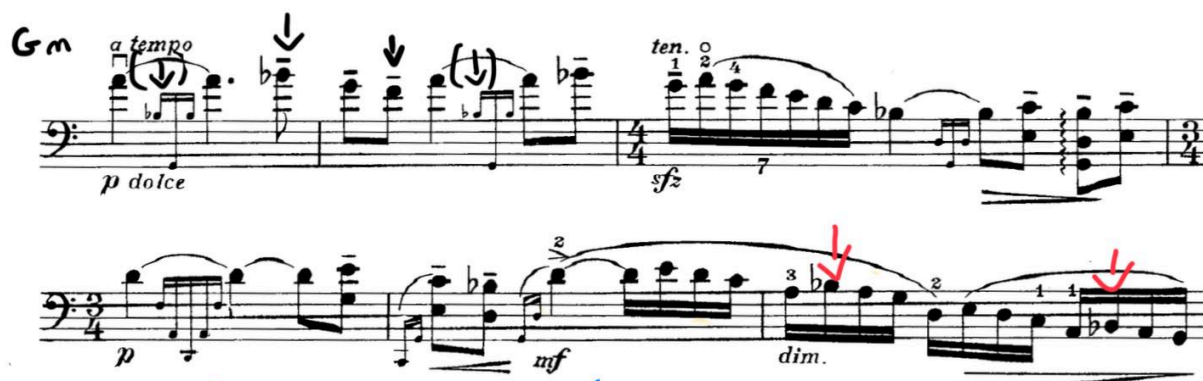


Cassadó, Suite for solo cello, bars 8-10

In the passage below (Ex. 15), which shows the second theme, his development, and the bridge to the third theme (Ex. 12), I play the Bb using four distinct intonations:

- As I noted with the symbol (↓), I play the Bb in the ornamentations of bars 11 and 12 with some expressive intonation. Since they resonate with the G and I don't want them to sound too discordant together, I don't play them flatter than that.
- In this case, the Bb has a significant attraction over the A of the next bar and forms a third minor interval with the subsequent G. Therefore, as I indicated with the symbol ↓, I play the Bb flatter than the previous Bb annotated with (↓).
- I use "just intonation" to play the Bb in bars 13 and 15 so that they sound in tune with the D and the G.
- As I indicated with the symbol ↓, I play the Bb of bar 16 very flat. Those Bbs do, in fact, gravitate strongly across the preceding and succeeding A, and they are also quite fast notes, so I need to flatten them further to fully express the difference.

Ex. 15



Cassadó, Suite for solo cello, bars 11-16

Bar 51 leads to a section of four bars (52-55) of natural and artificial harmonics (Ex. 16). I tested these natural harmonics' pitch on my cello. This section's first four harmonics, which are repeated later, have a pitch of 15 to 20 cents flat. Instead, the harmonic E and the harmonic A (played on the D in first position on the A string) sound quite in tune. In light of this, I play bar 51 flatter in order to connect it in a pleasing, consequent way with the (flat) natural harmonics. Since the first two notes of bar 56 follow the flat harmonics, I likewise flatten them. To make the artificial harmonics that are written in between the natural ones sound as consonant as possible with the natural harmonics, I try to play them pure or a little flat.

Ex. 16

The image shows a musical score for Ex. 16, which is a section of Cassadó's Suite for solo cello, bars 51-58. The score is written for a cello in 4/4 time. It includes three staves of music, labeled 51, 53, and 55. The first staff (bar 51) is marked *f con fantasia* and *calmando molto*. It features a series of notes with handwritten annotations: "sounds in tune" with arrows pointing to specific notes, and "sound 15/20 cents flat" with arrows pointing to other notes. The second staff (bar 53) is marked *p tranquillo* and includes a "rit." (ritardando) marking. The third staff (bar 55) is marked *ppp dolciss.* and *meno p*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Cassadó, Suite for solo cello, bars 51-58

3.2.6 Outcomes

Recording

[16 Reference Recording 04 Clara Piccoli Preludio-Fantasia Cassadó Cello Suite](#)

Gaspar Cassadó, Suite per Violoncello Solo, Preludio - Fantasia (1926)

Recorded by Clara Piccoli on 21/11/2024 at Codarts Rotterdam. Duration of the recording 05:24.

Annotated score

[Expressive intonation notations on Preludio-fantasia from the Cassadó Suite for solo cello](#)

3.2.7 Feedback, reflection and conclusion

Feedback and reflection

I summarized the feedback from Joachim Eijlander and my own reflection on my final recording:

- Compared to the last recording, **intonation is generally given more attention**, although I still need to work on it. My **sound** is more **present** and, as a result, more expressive than previously. I also sound more free.
- When it comes to expressive intonation, I should choose intonation with the **overall picture** (the tonality) **in mind**. Therefore, for instance, the last *Andante* is more successful than the one in the beginning, because I play the whole passage expressively, while in the first time some notes (for instance the B flat) are exaggerated. Another example is in the beginning of the piece: rather than tuning the B flat in the second line lower, it would be more effective to hear bars 6-7 in its entirety a bit lower than bars 1-2, and then colour the B flat maybe also a bit more. So, I should work from **larger phrases** towards detail.
- I have to look for more **differences in colors**, for example between *PPP dolciss.* and *meno P*, mostly using different vibratos and different points of contact of the bow.
- The different tempi are not always very clear, and I often rush. The **second beat** that overlaps in the third beat (for instance in bar three) is sometimes **too relaxed** so it doesn't carry the whole phrase
- Sometimes I need more **articulation** in the bow and in the left hand, a more biting sound

Conclusion

Researching Casals' expressive intonation was very interesting to me because it gave me a whole new perspective on the importance of intonation and on its expressive role in the musical context. It also pushed me to have a better awareness of the harmonic and melodic structure of a piece, since it is fundamental for applying expressive intonation. I think that this could be the start of a journey of discovery, and it will help me to deal with intonation in a more creative and also positive way. Sometimes working on intonation can be very hard and frustrating; seeing intonation as an organic, vital element instead of a sort of holy and changeless stone helped me to deal with that with a more positive, creative, and less frustrated attitude, and it also gave me the tools to have better control and understanding of it. I have to go on working on that and working mostly on the double awareness of the microstructure and macrostructure, of the placement of the single note and of the entire phrase, and finding a balance between those (as shown in the feedback and reflection). In conclusion, I think these are the main steps to keep in mind when building expressive intonation:

- Studying and analyzing the score to understand its harmonic and melodic structure
- Understanding the placement of the notes in the musical context and making decisions on intonation based on our interpretation of that: sometimes this can be "obvious" or easier; sometimes we have to make more "brave" decisions or compromise between different options.
- Recording ourselves and listening back to check if the intonation is as expressive as we want and if it is coherent with both the microstructure and the macrostructure

3.3 Third Research Cycle

3.3.1 Overview of third research cycle

In the third cycle I examined Casals' vibrato, and I deepened my understanding of Casals' playing. I've started to collect data by listening to the recorded conversation between Paul Katz, New England Conservatory cello professor, and Bernard Greenhouse, cellist and Pau Casals' student, in which they discuss the latter's approach to the vibrato that largely comes from Casals' influence.¹⁰² I also consulted two sources that were already important in the previous cycles: Oskar Falt's thesis on the treatises of Eisenberg and Alexanian and David Blum's *Casals and the Art of Interpretation*.¹⁰³ Then, I interviewed Emlyn Stann, who explained to me the method he uses to research vibrato and to annotate his findings. I listened to many of Casals' recordings and partly analysed some of them by annotating on the score the approximate progression of vibrato that I could perceive. Finally, particularly interesting were the two lessons I had with Alfiya Nakipbekova, cellist and researcher on both Casals and Cassadó, who helped me understand Casals' approach to vibrato and his playing in general.

I did my interventions on the Preludio-Fantasia from the Cassadó Suite for solo cello, keeping in mind and experimenting with all that I learned from this research from the start, with a special focus on vibrato.

3.3.2 Reference recording

[18 Reference recording 05 Clara Piccoli - Granados Intermezzo from Goyescas, arrangement for cello and piano by Cassadó](#)

Enrique Granados, Intermezzo from "Goyescas", arrangement for cello and piano by Gaspar Cassadó (1923).

Recorded by Clara Piccoli and Lisa María Blanco on 14/01/2025 at Codarts Rotterdam. Duration of the recording 05:03.

3.3.3 Feedback and reflection

I identified and summarized some aspects to work on in the first movement of Cassadó Suite through feedback from Emlyn Stann, Carlos Maldonado, Paula Leblón Real, and my own reflection.

Vibrato:

- Casals has a way of combining a kind of extreme articulation of the left hand with an immediate vibrato that gives a **spoken quality** to his playing: look for it and experiment more in this direction.
- For this piece, try to **rely more on your left hand** as the basics. Once you can play as you want by only changing the type of vibrato and how you connect the notes, then you can help yourself with the bow.

¹⁰² CelloBello. [Bernard Greenhouse on Maintaining Vibrato](#), 2015.

¹⁰³ Oskar Falt, "A Great Wave in the Evolution of the Modern Cellist: Diran Alexanian and Maurice Eisenberg, Two Master Cello Pedagogues from the Legacy of Pablo Casals" (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, November 2019).

Blum, Casals and the Art of Interpretation

- Think more of an **opera singer**: for them the vibrato is almost a natural resource. Look more for their type of vibrato, which is mostly a bit wider and sometimes faster.
- Connect the vibrato more between the notes (look for **continuous vibrato**).
- In the opening, use a faster vibrato to add more character to the phrase.
- You often reach a note without vibrato, and then you add it: do it in fewer notes to make it more special.
- During the FF passage, play with a continuous and faster vibrato, with so much energy that you get tired playing it.

Other thoughts:

- Take care of some **intonation** problems.
- Give the **opening phrase** more character and direction, and emphasize the third bar's syncopé even more.
- **Don't drop** the sound within a phrase; instead, try to build longer ones. Maintain consistency in vibrato and bow tension, particularly during bow changes, as there is a greater chance of the tension dropping.
- Take more risks in the **pushing and pulling of tempo**, and experiment with the lengths and swing of smaller rhythmic values, also being less concerned with playing together with your pianist.
- When it comes to producing the sound, be more **extreme with the tone quality**, pushing your instrument to the limit of its expressiveness rather than caring about the odd crack or imperfection.

3.3.4 Data collection & data analysis: my findings

I've structured the data collection and analysis of this third cycle of my research differently than in the two previous cycles. In the data collection, I've reported my main discoveries that I collected from the media research, the interview with Emlyn Stann, the two lessons with Alia Nakipbekova, and my analysis of Casals' vibrato in some of his recordings that I chose. In the data analysis, I've analyzed and summarized that information, and I reported the most relevant discoveries for my research.

Data collection

Media research

Bernard Greenhouse, cellist and Pau Casals' student, **in conversation with Paul Katz**, New England Conservatory cello professor, **in 2008**

- The ability to change the vibrato is an important expressive tool, and this change is mostly intuitive: you use the change in vibrato to help you to express the phrase in a certain way.
- Is important to explore and to be aware of the partnership of the vibrato and the bow (*you can't have a beautiful crescendo in the bow, without having something happen in the left hand to augment the crescendo*).¹⁰⁴

Oskar Falta, "A Great Wave in the Evolution of the Modern Cellist: Diran Alexanian and Maurice Eisenberg, Two Master Cello Pedagogues from the Legacy of Pablo Casals"

- Casals was not afraid of using open strings between vibrated notes.
- In softer dynamics or when the cello is playing an accompanying or secondary role to the piano, Casals would completely avoid vibrato.

¹⁰⁴ CelloBello. [Bernard Greenhouse on Maintaining Vibrato](#), 2015.

- Casals' vibrato was always receptive to the activity of the bow. According to Falta, Casals reportedly suggested that a student practice a Bach movement without vibrato for a full week in order to help him understand and value the bow's expressive potential.¹⁰⁵

David Blum, *Casals and the art of interpretation*

- Vibrato is an instrument to show sensitivity, not a proof of it.
- In order to intensify his vibrato, Casals first contracts his width and then increases his speed.
- In the lower register, the vibrato is wider than in the upper.
- The sound without vibrato can be lovely, especially in piano and pianissimo.
- There is no vibrato on the piano, so the string player must employ vibrato sparingly when he has an accompanying voice.¹⁰⁶

Interviews and lessons

Here are the key findings from my interview with Emlyn Stann and my two online lessons with Alfia Nakipbekova.

Emlyn Stann

His way of annotating vibrato on the scores, which I adopted too, is to do a wavy line for vibrato and a straight line for senza vibrato

Alfia Nakipbekova

Regarding vibrato

- Vibrato is part of the tone, not a separate thing that you put on top of the note.
- Vibrato is connected with the bow: look for this connection, and you will develop an organic feeling for it in both hands.
- Vibrato is intuitive and instinctive.
- Casals' vibrato is hard to grasp intellectually: it's various and is sometimes very subtle, almost no vibrato. This combination of almost no vibrato and a very intense one creates a very sensual blending of colors.

Other reflections

- The final aim of the research is not to emulate Casals' but to grasp the spirit of his playing, the heart of it, and to get in the spirit of the music and find a point of technique and interpretation. We can do this by listening to a lot of recordings and by researching the physical aspect of it, too.
- The heart of Casals' playing is in the connection between the notes. You should look for specific fingerings, vibrato, and bow distribution to take care of that. Pay attention to that: when you feel it naturally and you get a taste for it, you will get closer to what Casals was doing.
- In Casals' playing we can often hear a sudden closing and opening towards some notes, a feeling of getting excited or calm suddenly: a sudden change of mood. The combination of almost no vibrato and a very intense one also contributes to creating a very sensual blending of colors.
- The sound goes in waves, and it breathes. Don't force anything. There is softness at the end of each note, even if it is very strong. This gives elasticity to his phrasing.

¹⁰⁵ Oskar Falta, "A Great Wave in the Evolution of the Modern Cellist: Diran Alexanian and Maurice Eisenberg, Two Master Cello Pedagogues from the Legacy of Pablo Casals" (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, November 2019).

¹⁰⁶ Blum, *Casals and the Art of Interpretation*.

- In your playing, you get involved too much in each note of each bar, while you should think more forward. Don't exaggerate at the start: there are more steps; remember to create development.

Specific indications on Cassadó Cello Suite:

- [Complete score of the Preludio-Fantasia from Cassadó Suite for solo cello with my annotations taken during my lesson with Alfia Nakipbekova](#)
- Play it more integrated in all his sections: it has a very clear structure. When you start a piece, you already have an arch to the end of it.
- This piece has an element of sorrow, although it is very exuberant.
- Find the impressionists in this piece: go more into the color, into the fantasy element.
- Look for a more refined sense of structure. It is a very episodic movement, but there is a line going from the start to the end. Don't stop; be more aware of how the particular fits in the general.
- Take care of the intonation in the lower strings.
- Be practical: you can't play everything super F. Be more aware of subtleties.
- Find the right gesture, the right connection to start: you should start from the string, but without preparing yourself. The gestures are important.
- *Calmando* doesn't mean *ritardando*. Fast passages don't have to be agitated, difficult, or complicated.

Analysis of the vibrato in some Casals' recordings

I tried to analyse what I heard in Casals' recording to understand his way of applying vibrato, even if he did this mostly intuitively and instinctively. I think that intuition is something that we can build and grow with knowledge, listening, and logic; thus, I've found it helpful to look into this.

I focused on the vibrato speed while listening to the records I selected. My drawing of the music's waves does, in fact, approximate the vibrato's intensity, which I deduced after listening to the YouTube audio at x0.50 speed.

Song of the birds

Ex. 17



Catalan song popularized by Pau Casals, *Song of the Birds*, bars 1-15

I analyzed the vibrato in the first phrase (from the upbeat of bar 6 to the upbeat of bar 12). In general, the melody is very spoken; every note sounds absolutely essential and heartbreaking, each note really contributes to saying something meaningful, is articulated, and stands for itself. I think this articulation comes very much from the use of vibrato that is very specific in every note and kind of rises again in nearly each note, as I showed in the score.

In the first two bars the vibrato is quite calm, and Casals plays the B and the D in bar 7 (which are passing notes) with almost no vibrato. Then, the vibrato increases from the upbeat of bar 8, which is a moment of harmonic and melodic tension in the middle of the phrase. The vibrato diminishes as the phrase ends for a natural conclusion, from the upbeat of bar 11.

Intermezzo from “Goyescas”

Ex. 19

Enrique Granados, Intermezzo from “Goyescas”, arrangement for cello and piano by Gaspar Cassadó, bars 1-5

We already hear a wide range of vibrato in the first phrase, which is an opening statement with a Spanish flavor made by the cello and piano playing in unison.¹⁰⁷

- Casals articulates all of the accented notes in bar 3 and the first accented note in bar 4 with a lot of vitality. Similar to the bow's speed, the vibrato begins quickly and lowers with each note to highlight the accents.
- Bar 5's ornament and the opening bar's turning note (Ab) are played in tenuto without vibrato.
- Casals speeds up the vibrato at the end of the notes before the cuts that I marked in blue.
- A steady vibrato is used for the last note.

¹⁰⁷ Enric Granados, *Intermezzo*, performed by Pau Casals (cello) and Nikolai Mednikoff (piano), rec. February 28, 1927, in *Casals: Encores and Transcriptions vol. 1*, CD, Biddulph LAB 017, 2007.

Ex. 20

The musical score is for Enrique Granados' Intermezzo from "Goyescas", arranged for cello and piano by Cassadó, bars 14-43. It is divided into three systems. The first system (bars 14-21) shows the cello melody with vibrato markings (red wavy lines) and piano markings (mf, cresc.). The second system (bars 22-29) continues the melody with vibrato markings and piano markings (p, cresc.). The third system (bars 30-37) shows the melody with vibrato markings and piano markings (p, cresc.). The piano accompaniment consists of chords and arpeggiated figures in the left hand.

Enrique Granados, Intermezzo from "Goyescas", arrangement for cello and piano by Cassadó, bars 14-43

- When the melody approaches an expressive note that typically also generates tension, as at the conclusion of bars 15, 23, and 25, Casals increases the vibrato.
- In bars 16 and 30, the vibrato is intense in the appoggiaturas and decreases when they resolve on the next note.
- To make it more expressive, he intensifies vibrato on the turning note, Eb, in bar 36.
- To keep the phrase going, he increases the vibrato at the end of bar 28.
- With the diminuendo and phrase concluding, he decreases the vibrato starting from bar 35.

Requiebros

Ex. 21

Gaspar Cassadó, *Requiebros*, bars 26-40.

From bar 30 to bar 40, I identified three different uses of vibrato chosen by Casals, which I indicated with three different colors.¹⁰⁸

- Casals generally avoids using vibrato in the *mp with dolcezza* (bars 30-37), with the exception of a few notes that I noted.
- The crescendo of bar 27 and the *più sonoro* of bar 38 mark the return of the vibrato.
- In the *più intenso*, Casals uses a slightly faster and more tense vibrato than in the *più sonoro*.

Dvorak Cello Concerto in B minor, I movement

Ex. 22

Antonin Dvořák, *Cello Concerto in B minor*, bars 99-101.

Casals passes the baton to the orchestra, which performs a captivating element in crescendo by vibrating the F# of bars 99 and 101 but stopping the vibrato at the second half or last quarter of these measures.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Pau Casals, *Blai Net* (piano), recorded June 15, 1929, in *Casals – Encore and Transcriptions 2*, Naxos Historical HMV DB 1391 (2004).

¹⁰⁹ Pau Casals, Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, George Szell (cond.), *Antonin Dvořák Cello Concerto in B minor*, rec. April 1937, The Gramophone Company, DB 3288, accessed from Spotify [audio stream], 2009.

Ex. 23



Antonin Dvořák, Cello Concerto in B minor, bars 139-143.

In the first four bars of the second theme, Casals plays the A with the open string and with the harmonic; he connects the notes that come before and after the A open string and the A harmonic, decreasing the vibrato and searching for a similar "crude" color, with the exception of the initial F#.

Data analysis

Casals' vibrato

Vibrato is a very important expressive device, and it is a part of the tone, not a separate thing that you put on top of the note. It is a vital aspect of playing, sensible to the context, always in movement, and connected to the other elements that influence the sound. The heart of Casals' vibrato is in the connection between the notes. To understand this, we can think about opera singers: they don't vibrate each note separately, but they vibrate continuously, without stopping between the notes.

Casals' vibrato is varied, and it has a big range of intensity that goes from a very subtle one (almost no vibrato) to a very intense one. You should be able to use different degrees of vibrato, relating it to the musical material in question. A fitting vibrato timbre should be chosen depending on the combination of

Use of the bow

The contact point, the pressure, and the quantity of bow that you use is related to the quality of vibrato. As Alfia Nakipbekova told me, there is a strong relation between the use of the bow and the vibrato. It is important to develop a sensibility for that by listening and observing carefully what you do with your right hand and how you vibrate and always researching an effective connection within them.

Register

Generally the vibrato gets narrower and more tense as the left hand gets nearer the bridge, and vice versa.

Dynamic

The vibrato becomes mostly slower and more elastic in softer dynamics and faster and more agile in the louder ones. In softer dynamics like P and PP, Casals sometimes avoids vibrato (see Ex. 21).

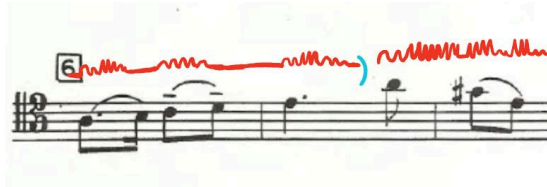
Agogic

For instance, see in Ex. 21 how in the mp *con dolcezza* Casals uses very little vibrato, and then in the *più intenso* he employs great vibrato.

Harmony and melody

The vibrato diminishes as the phrase ends for a natural conclusion (see from the end of bar 10 of Ex. 17, bar 6 of Ex. 18, and from bar 35 of Ex. 20).

In order to keep the music going and renew a phrase, he occasionally increases the vibrato (see the end of bar 28 of Ex. 20).



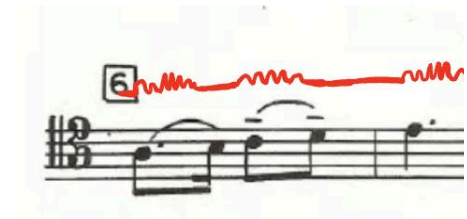
Casals increases the vibrato when he goes towards a harmonically tense moment (the end of bar 7 of Ex. 17)

In passages in which the cello has a subordinate or accompanying voice, Casals was sparing in his use of vibrato to not interfere with the bringing out of the melodic voice (bar 101 of ex. 22).



Casals play appoggiaturas with an intense vibrato that decreases or stops towards the following note (bar 16 of ex. 20).

Casals often plays the passing notes with less vibrato or without it (the B and the D, bar 6 of Ex. 17).



Casals sometimes plays the accented turning notes with an intense vibrato to underline their expressive role (bar 36 of ex. 20).



Articulation

The vibrato begins quickly and decreases in the accented notes. Casals speeds up the vibrato at the end of an energetic, accented note before the sudden cut of it (bar 3-4 of ex. 19).

Use of open strings

Casals often uses open strings between vibrated notes, and he shapes the vibrato in the notes that precede or follow the use of an open string to avoid sudden changes and dropping in the sonority (bar 141 of ex. 23).



Other things to remember for the interventions

- The heart of Casals' playing is in the **connection between the notes**, the transition. You should look for specific fingerings, vibrato, and bow distribution to take care of that. Pay attention to that, and when you feel it naturally and you enjoy and get a taste for it, you will get closer to what Casals was doing.
- In Casals' playing we can often hear a sudden closing and opening towards some notes, a feeling of getting excited or calm suddenly: a sudden changing of mood. The combination of almost no vibrato and a very intense one also contributes to creating a very **sensual** blending of colors.
- The sound goes in **waves**. Let the sound breathe, don't force it. In Casals' words, "*If you don't breathe, you die. Is the same in music*".¹¹⁰
- **Create development**. Don't get too involved in each note: think more forward. Look for continuity, unity, logic, and coherence.
- **Sustain, but don't force** the sound. There is softness at the end of each note, even when it is very strong: this gives elasticity to the phrasing.

¹¹⁰ Violinkan, [Pau \(Pablo\) Casals Master Class: Brahms Sonata No.1 in E minor op. 38. 1st Mvmt](#), 2023.

3.3.5 Interventions / practical application

I applied what I learned from my research in the first movement of Cassadó Suite for cello solo. I already worked on this piece during the second cycle by experimenting with expressive intonation. Now I will experiment with vibrato, and I will keep applying what I learned in the first and second cycle of my research.

Vibrato

These are the main principles that I focused on and I tried to apply to my playing after my data analysis and my lessons with Alfia Nakipbekova:

- Vibrato is part of the tone, not something that you put over the notes, and it is always changing and adapting to the context.
- Develop a sensibility, a special care for the vibrato in the transition between the notes.
- Vibrato is an expressive tool. Develop an instinctive, intuitive use of it by constantly relating it to what is written on the score (harmony/melody, register, articulation, agogic, dynamics, rhythm, tempo), and connecting it to the use of the bow.
- Move the attention from the left hand to the bow, that has to be sensible to the context and sensible to the vibrato, and vice versa: there is a strong interconnection between the bow and the vibrato.

I've also annotated the [approximate progression of my vibrato in the first 20 bars](#) to show in detail my approach with the vibrato in this piece.

Bars 1-10

Gaspar Cassadó

Andante

f sostenuto

marc. e con anima

f sostenuto

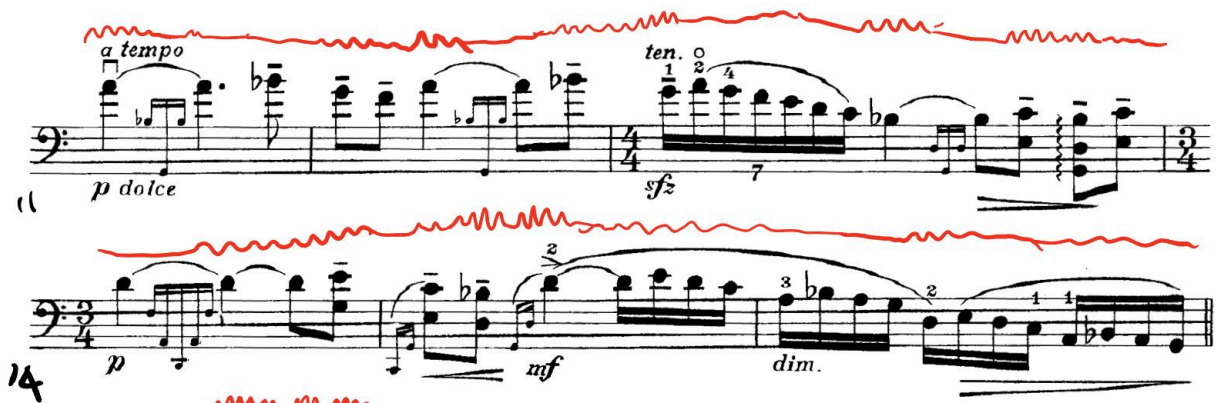
marc. e con anima

rit.

Gaspar Cassadó, *Suite for Solo Cello, Preludio-Fantasia*, bars 1-10.

- I generally use an intense vibrato, quite **fast and narrow**, in this first section marked with ***F sostenuto*** and ***marcato e con anima***.
- The intensity of the vibrato **follows the direction** of the phrase. If we look at the macrostructure, we can see that the vibrato generally increases towards the third bar, decreases towards the fifth bar, and in the last note of bar 5 increases again to create continuity towards the following phrase that starts from bar 6. Then again, it increases towards bar 8, and in bar 10 the vibrato diminishes as the phrase ends for a natural conclusion. If we look inside each bar instead, we can notice that generally the vibrato increases towards the second beat; in fact, as I wrote before, the writing suggests a constant emphasis on the second beat.
- I sometimes use a simultaneous **impulse of relaxation** and a **subsequent renewal of tension**, made with the speed of the bow and the vibrato, on some long accented notes to underline their accent and push forward the direction at the same time. I do this, for example, in the opening of the piece, on the first accented D, and in the G of the second beat of bar 8.
- In the last note of bar 5, I **speed up the vibrato at the end of the accented note before the comma**, as Casals does, for instance, in the recording of the Intermezzo by Granados (see bar 3-4 of Ex. 19)

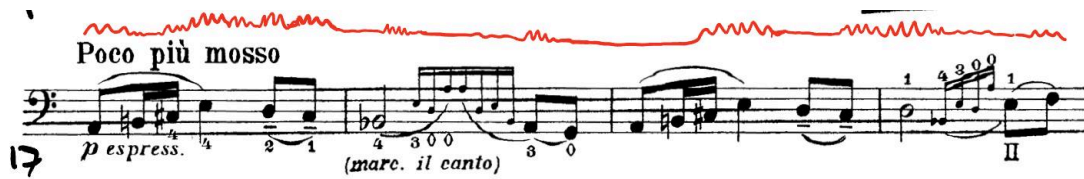
Bars 11-16



Gaspar Cassadó, *Suite for Solo Cello, Preludio-Fantasia*, bars 11-16

- **Mark different sections clearly with different tones!** After the ***F sostenuto*** and the ***F marcato e con anima*** of the first ten bars, in bar 11 there is a ***P dolce***. Here, from bar 11 to bar 14 (and similarly from bar 73 to bar 76), I play with the bow nearer to the fingerboard, and the vibrato that I use here is slower and broader, more delicate, calmer, and *dolce* than the vibrato of the previous section.
- I increase the vibrato in some important notes, such as the A of the second beat of bar 12 (let's remember the Sarabande structure and the leaning on the second beat) and the G of the first beat of bar 13 (that has a *sforzato*).
- I also shape the double-stops with the vibrato underlining their lyrical role and the direction of the phrase: I decrease the vibrato at the end of bar 13 to underline the decrescendo, and from the second beat of bar 14, I take care of vibrating every note until the accented D in *mf* of the following bar.

Bars 17-20



Gaspar Cassadó, *Suite for Solo Cello*, bars 17-25

- The *poco più mosso* of bar 17 is marked with a ***P espressivo***. To make the sound more *espressivo* and contrasting with the previous section in *dolce*, I use a contact point nearer to the bridge, and a slower bow. Consequently, I should adopt a more intense vibrato, fast and narrow, but I also have to consider another element: these bars are written for the **III and IV** strings, and generally the vibrato gets wider as the left hand goes to the lower register. Therefore, I'm using a quite intense vibrato, fast and narrow, but still wider than if it were on the first string.
- I play the last G of bar 18 with the **open string**. To avoid sudden changes and dropping in the sonority, since I can't vibrate the open string, I decrease the vibrato in the A before the G, and I play the A that follows the G with no vibrato.

Phrasing, rubato, portamento, dynamics

I also made an [annotated score](#) with my interventions on the piece regarding the phrasing, the rubato, the portamento, and the dynamic. I discussed these elements in the first cycle of my research, which I kept in mind for the interventions on the *Preludio-Fantasia*, in addition to my new acknowledgement about vibrato that I gained during this cycle and to what I learned during my lessons with Alfia Nakipbekova. I also kept applying the expressive intonation, which I haven't annotated in this score since I've already discussed it in the second cycle. Additionally, I kept in mind what Joachim Eijlander told me in his feedback for my final recording of the second cycle: to keep the general picture in mind (that means the tonality) when I choose to apply expressive intonation.

I report below two excerpts from my annotated score with my explanation of some interventions that I made. This is the legend of my interventions annotated in the score of the *Preludio-Fantasia*:

- Phrasing, direction
- Rubato
- Portamento
- Dynamic

3.3.7 Feedback, reflection and conclusion

Feedback and reflection

I identified and summarized some aspects to work on in the first movement of the Cassadó Suite through feedback from Zhao Duoqiao, Joachim Eijlander, Carlos Maldonado, Aldo Mata, Paula Lebón Real, and my own reflection.

- I'm more conscious of the vibrato's range in terms of speed, width, and direction. I need to continue refining that, constantly searching for a successful vibrato-bow relationship.
- My performance of this composition is less fragmented and has more coherent form and better direction than before.
- I discovered a better balance between letting the music flow and controlling it.
- My sound can be too heavy at times. I should shape the sound more so that it follows the phrase's direction. I believe that the majority of this issue comes from the fact that I often utilize an excessive amount of bow. I should therefore organize the bow distribution better.
- In an effort to achieve extremes or to create a harsher tone, I sometimes break the sound. I should speak the notes' beginnings more clearly instead of doing that, which would still result in a harsh tone. Working on a direct projection from the back into the bow, minimizing superfluous motions, and positioning the right hand's fingers—primarily the index—more compactly, not too far apart, may also be helpful for this purpose.
- In the opening there are still possibilities to gain an even more compact basis from which the rest is evolving/developing.
- In order to establish that stable frame that the other notes of the scale are drawn to and become expressive of, I need to be careful to play the tonic, subdominant, and dominant notes precisely in tune.
- To highlight greater contrast and nuance between the various sections, I can experiment further with a free and flexible use of tempo. To contrast with the areas where I use more rubato, I could, however, play some passages more metronomically and in tempo.
- Aldo Mata told me that my recording is still too mainstream for Casals' taste. According to him, Casals would have likely used more portamento, tempo variations, and rhythmic irregularities as expressive devices; he would have also played the *p* and *pp* with less vibrato and played the Andalusian gestures in the second theme more guitar-like.

Conclusion

Vibrato is part of the tone, part of the sound, and it is in this sense continuous because it is a living part of it, always flowing, changing, and adapting. What makes Casals' vibrato interesting and often surprising to me is its progression: the heart of Casals' vibrato stays in the transition, the connection between the notes. To get closer to Casals' vibrato, I have to develop an instinctive and natural feeling, a care and taste for these transitions. According to Casals, vibrato is an expressive tool and is mostly instinctive. His vibrato has a big range of intensity: it can go from an almost still one, or very subtle, to a very intense one. The variety depends on the speed, width, direction and progression of it. An instinctive, intuitive taste for the vibrato has to be developed by constantly relating the vibrato to what is written on the score (harmony/melody, register, articulation, agogic, dynamics, rhythm, tempo) and by connecting it to the use of the bow. The use of the bow (point of contact, quantity, pressure) is sensible to the context and sensible to the vibrato, and vice versa; therefore, to take care of the vibrato, I have to take care of the bow, listening carefully to my sound and moving the attention from the left to the right hand.

4 Research findings and outcomes

4.1 Documentation and explanation of the research outcomes

1) Final outcome, first cycle:

[14 Reference Recording 02 Clara Piccoli Requeibros.](#)

Gaspar Cassadó, Requeibros (1929), for cello and piano.

Recorded by Clara Piccoli and Hans Spruit on 08/05/2024 at Codarts Rotterdam. Duration of the recording 05:31.

Inspired by Casals' playing, my recording of Requeibros is the outcome of my investigation into a "strong suppleness" in the body and a variety in the expressivity.¹¹¹ My research of strong suppleness allowed me to generate a fuller sound that is also elastic, soft in a way, and not tense or forced. It also meant that I was more actively relaxed, finding greater stability, and spending less physical effort. I concentrated on the subsequent strategies:

- Releasing the tension in the body with different strategies: focusing on my back as the support and source of energy for all movements; feeling tall and open in the chest; being more aware of the movements of my shoulder blades; relaxing and sensing the weight in various body areas (such as belly and legs) while I play.
- Developing the percussive technique (throwing the fingers of the left hand and allowing them to relax immediately upon striking the string) and a living left hand. The development of these two technical aspects resulted in a better sound's resonance and clarity, a continuous release of unuseful tension and better elasticity in the hand and in the sound, and a more solid base to use portamento and fingerings in an expressive way.
- Maintaining a focused contact with the string with a flexible bow hold and relaxed bow arm, and articulating with the bow the attack of the notes.

I mostly focused on these expressive tools in order to produce variety in the expression yet maintain coherence, logic, and continuity:

- Use of the portamento.
- Use of the rubato.
- Utilizing the modification of certain written rhythmic patterns, such as the placement of the short notes in dotted rhythm a little later, to provide an energetic effect and a sense of expressive tension.
- Use of different amounts, speeds, and points of contact of the bow while constantly aiming for a good adherence with the string.
- Variety of the bow's articulation depending on the context.

¹¹¹"Strong suppleness" is a term used by Bonnie Hampton in her article "Right is Might," referring to Casals' bow arm. (Bonnie Hampton, "Right is Might," *The Strad*, June 2005, 46–47.)

2) Final outcome, third cycle:

[19 Reference recording 06 Clara Piccoli Preludio-Fantasia Cassadó Suite for cello suite](#)

Gaspar Cassadó, Suite per Violoncello Solo, Preludio - Fantasia (1926)

Recorded by Clara Piccoli on 05/04/2025 at Codarts Rotterdam. Duration of the recording 05:41.

I worked on the following in order to create this recording:

- Use of expressive intonation, which I discussed in the second cycle of the research.
- Use of the vibrato as an expressive tool. I worked on it mainly by taking care of the connections, the transitions between the notes, and by focusing on the connection vibrato-bow. Within the Preludio-Fantasia, I contextualized the use of vibrato within the phrases, shaping the direction and showcasing the different character, intensity, and color of the different sections.
- Use of rubato with logic and coherence to shape the direction expressively. I also applied it within certain rhythmic patterns to make them more alive, as in *Requiebros*: in the Preludio-Fantasia, this applies mostly to the ornamentations.
- Look for tension and release in the body and in the music (within the phrases and within the different sections). Make the sound breathe, and look for elasticity of the sound and tenderness at the end of each note.
- Create different intensities for different sections. Recognizing different moments: some are more heroic, others lyrical, others more simple, and others transitional. Recognize and distinguish the Spanish and the impressionistic elements, finding a balance between them.
- Play longer phrases with direction. Find unity in the piece, thinking about an arch that goes from the first to the last note. Even though it is a quite episodic piece, the different moments coexist within the same picture.

4.2 Self-assessment of the research outcomes and expert feedback

Thanks to several aspects I worked on, inspired by Casals' playing, this research enabled me to enhance and improve my performances of some of Cassadó's compositions. In my final recordings, these are the primary results of my research that I, my colleagues, and the experts I consulted acknowledged. My body and movements' flexibility and relaxation have improved, which has helped me produce a fuller, more radiant sound; the notes gained a more "speaking" quality, thanks to the articulation of both hands; experimenting with vibrato, intonation, portamento, and rubato enhanced the expressiveness of my performances; my phrasing improved in clarity and direction and became less fragmented; I was able to find a better balance between paying attention to the details, making each aspect come to life, and preserving the piece's overall coherence and logic; I found a better balance between letting the music flow and controlling it.

4.3 Conclusion

The question that guided my research was, “How can I improve my playing and develop my interpretation of Gaspar Cassadó's music by incorporating Pau Casals' playing style into my own?” My goal was therefore to immerse myself in Casals' playing to grasp the spirit of it and to look for what could help me to improve my playing and specifically my interpretation of Cassadó's music. I investigated both the intellectual and the physical aspects of Casals' playing, and I selected and applied the most interesting and relevant discoveries for me in my performance of some compositions by Cassadó (*Requiebros* and the *Preludio-Fantasia* from his Suite for Cello Solo). It was very useful for me to enter into the world of Casals' and to analyze his conception of music that he developed through his long and fascinating journey through music. He was a complete musician, more than “only” a cellist. He considered the cello as an instrument in his meaning of tool, used to communicate through music. In his vision, the cello technique is considered a solid base toward which one could develop his own interpretation. This base is given especially by a good articulation of both hands and the speaking quality. Casals gave a great space to interpretation, guided by instinct and controlled by logic. I learned from him the importance of giving life to each note and each phrase written on the score, playing imaginatively and not mathematically. I've looked into his vibrato, rubato, portamento, and expressive intonation, which were his main expressive devices, and I experimented with my findings. I learned the importance of being brave and daring with my artistic choices, but also logical, always looking for unity, continuity, and coherency. This research also made me reflect on taking care of the detail without losing track of the bigger picture, the balance between the microstructure and the macrostructure: “Each note is like a link in a chain, important in itself and also as a connection between what has been and what will be” is one of the main Casals' thoughts that guided me through my research. This research was also a further way to feel more relaxed, find greater stability, and make less effort while playing. I did that, focusing on my back as the support and source of energy for all movements and working on the preservation of the arms and fingers' suppleness. I saw how the stability and elasticity of my movements reflect on the elasticity of the sound and of the phrasing.

My understanding of some aspects of Casals' playing also went through my embodiment of them. Listening to his recordings and re-enacting what I heard and researching the physical aspect of it gave me a lot of information and insights, and this reminded me how imitation can be an incredible learning process. This research gave me more autonomy and confidence in my cello practice. I understood how useful it is to be very analytical during my practice, and I saw how sometimes I can do more than I think if I decide what I want to do, I recognize the tools to obtain it, and I use and combine them in the right way. However, I could have paid more attention to a few things during my research. In collecting new information and applying my findings in my performances and during my practice, I sometimes left behind and ignored some of my previous discoveries. Also, working on different aspects of playing (vibrato, expressive intonation, percussive left hand...) separately as I did allowed me to go in depth on some concepts that I really needed to delve into, but on the other hand, since many aspects of playing are interconnected, separating them was sometimes problematic since it made me ignore their interconnections. For instance, I hadn't considered the relationship between the bow and the vibrato when I worked on the bow during the first cycle.

In the future I could do this work of taking inspiration and learning from other cellists' and musicians' experiences more systematically. Exploring different visions of playing would give me other insights and would give me new opportunities to grow as a musician.

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Recordings of Requiebros

- Casals, Pau. Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, George Szell (cond.). Rec. April 1937. *Antonin Dvořák Cello Concerto in B minor*. The Gramophone Company, DB 3288. Accessed from Spotify [audio stream], 2009.
- Fauré, Gabriel. *Après un rêve*. Performed by Pau Casals (cello) and Nikolai Mendikoff (piano). Rec. January 5, 1926. In *Pablo Casals: Encores and Transcriptions vol. 1*, CD, Biddulph LAB 017, 1990.
- Granados, Enric. *Intermezzo*. Performed by Pau Casals (cello) and Nikolai Mednikoff (piano). Rec. February 28, 1927. In *Casals: Encores and Transcriptions vol. 1*, CD, Biddulph LAB 017, 2007.
- Isaiah Gonzalez, [Pau Casals: Song of the Birds](#). 2012.
- Musizieren, [Beethoven Cello Sonata No. 3 in A major Op. 69](#) (Pablo Casals, cello, and Otto Schulhof, piano). 2019.

Other Casals' recordings

Casals' masterclasses at Berkeley

- Auens Weltanschauung, [Casals: Meisterklasse ~ Saint-Saëns, Cellokonzert Nr. 1](#). 2021.
- CelloBello, [Pau \(Pablo\) Casals Master Class: Haydn D Major Concerto 1st Movement](#). 2013.
- Violinkan, [Pau \(Pablo\) Casals Master Class: Boccherini BbMajor Concerto 1st movement](#). 2022.
- Violinkan, [Pau \(Pablo\) Casals Master Class: Brahms Sonata No.1 in E minor op. 38, 1st Mvmt](#). 2023.
- 99arts.org, [Casals Master class Dvorak a 1of3](#). 2016.
- 99arts.org, [Casals Master class Dvorak a 2of3](#). 2016.
- 99arts.org, [Casals Master class Dvorak a 3of3](#). 2016.

Lectures, lessons, video-interviews

- La Nouvelle Athènes Centre des Pianos Romantiques, [CASALS 50: Modern or Romantic - Session 1/4](#). 2023.
- La Nouvelle Athènes Centre des Pianos Romantiques, [11 CASALS50 Re-enactment Aldo Mata Martin Barré Sebastian Bausch](#). 2023.
- La Nouvelle Athènes Centre des Pianos Romantiques, [17 Alfia Nakipbekova](#). 2023.
- La Nouvelle Athènes Centre des Pianos Romantiques, [20 CASALS50 Laura Granero Aldo Mata](#). 2023.

Lectures, lessons and concerts at "Casals50: Modern or Romantic".

- CelloBello, [Bernard Greenhouse on Finding Your Voice](#). 2015.
- CelloBello, [Bernard Greenhouse on the Language of Emotion](#). 2015.
- CelloBello, [Bernard Greenhouse on Maintaining Vibrato](#). 2015.
- CelloBello, [Bernard Greenhouse: Playing/Talking at 92](#). 2015.
- CelloBello, [Greenhouse Meets Casals-Part 1](#). 2011.
- CelloBello, [Greenhouse Meets Casals-Part 2](#). 2014.
- CelloBello, [Right Hand Expression](#). 2011.
- CelloBello, [Softness is Strength](#). 2011.
- CelloBello, [Janos Starker on Rhythmic Freedom](#). 2015.
- CelloBello, [Janos Starker on Releasing Tension](#). 2015.

Video-interviews on CelloBello Youtube channel.

- Augustin Hadelich, [Ask Augustin 10 - About Intonation Part 1](#). 2020.
- Augustin Hadelich, [Ask Augustin 11 - About Intonation Part 2](#). 2020.
- Violinmasterclass YouTube Channel, [Intonation: Expressive Intonation](#). 2022.

6 Network

- Aldo Mata, *Spanish cellist, chamber music teacher at Centro Superior Katarina Gurska in Madrid.*
- Alfia Nakipbekova, *cellist, active as a soloist, chamber musician, researcher, and Professor at Leeds Conservatoire and at Guildhall School of Music, London.*
- Antonio Mosca, *cellist, teacher, and student of Gaspar Cassadó.*
- Duo-Jiao Zhao, *cellist, Job ter Haar's student, is currently researching some Casals' recordings.*
- Emlyn Stann, *violinist, active as a chamber musician, soloist and orchestral musician in the Netherlands and throughout Europe.*
- Joachim Eijlander, *cellist, main subject cello teacher at Codarts in Rotterdam.*

7 Appendices

Appendix 1: List of all self-produced AV media included in report

Reference recording, first cycle:

[01 Reference Recording 01 Clara Piccoli Requiebros](#).

Gaspar Cassadó, *Requiebros* (1929), for cello and piano.

Cello part recorded by Clara Piccoli on 13/10/2023 at Codarts Rotterdam. Duration of the recording 05:00.

Exercises:

- From *Cello ergonomics: a handbook to help develop freedom of movement, balance and fluency at the cello* by Steven Doane: *Exercise on mixed bowing patterns* ([02 Exercise on the lower third of the bow](#), [03 Exercise on the middle third of the bow](#), [04 Exercise on the upper third of the bow](#)), [05 Exercise "Casals Crawl"](#).¹¹²
- From *La tecnica del violoncello (mano sinistra)* by Aldo Pais: [06 Pais exercise 4 a.b page 8](#), [07 Pais - exercise 4 c.d.e.f page 9](#), [08 Pais exercise 5 page 9](#).¹¹³

Re-enactment of *Requiebros* recording by Pau Casals and Blais Net:¹¹⁴

- Full recording: [09 Re-enactment of Casals' recording of Requiebros](#).

Re-enactment of Casals' version (1929) of Gaspar Cassadó *Requiebros* (1929), for cello and piano.

Recorded by Clara Piccoli and Lisa María Blanco on 22/05/2023 at Codarts Rotterdam. Duration of the recording 04:28.

- Excerpts: [10 First phrase of the cello: bars 9-19 of Requiebros](#).

¹¹² Steven Doane, *Cello ergonomics: a handbook to help develop freedom of movement, balance and fluency at the cello*, (Bartholomew Music Publications, 2006).

¹¹³ Aldo Pais, *La tecnica del violoncello (mano sinistra)*, (Universal Music Publishing Ricordi S.r.l., 1943).

¹¹⁴ Pau Casals, Blai Net (piano), *Gaspar Cassadó Requiebros*, recorded June 15, 1929, in Casals – Encore and Transcriptions 2, Naxos Historical HMV DB 1391 (2004).

[11 Beginning of the middle section: bars 51-65 of Requeibros.](#)

[12 Melody in bars 30-37 of Requeibros](#) and [13 Melody in bars 88-95 of Requeibros.](#)

Final outcome, first cycle:

[14 Reference Recording 02 Clara Piccoli Requeibros.](#)

Gaspar Cassadó, Requeibros (1929), for cello and piano.

Recorded by Clara Piccoli and Hans Spruit on 08/05/2024 at Codarts Rotterdam. Duration of the recording 05:31.

Reference recording, second cycle:

[15 Reference Recording 03 Clara Piccoli Preludio-Fantasia Cassadó Cello Suite.](#)

Gaspar Cassadó, Suite per Violoncello Solo, Preludio - Fantasia (1926)

Recorded by Clara Piccoli on 19/10/2024 at Codarts Rotterdam. Duration of the recording 05:28.

Final outcome, second cycle:

[16 Reference Recording 04 Clara Piccoli Preludio-Fantasia Cassadó Cello Suite.](#)

Gaspar Cassadó, Suite per Violoncello Solo, Preludio - Fantasia (1926)

Recorded by Clara Piccoli on 21/11/2024 at Codarts Rotterdam. Duration of the recording 05:24.

Work-in-progress pitch:

[17 Pitch: a short explanation of what I did in this second cycle](#)

Reference recording, third cycle:

[18 Reference recording 05 Clara Piccoli - Granados Intermezzo from Goyescas, arrangement for cello and piano by Cassadó](#)

Enrique Granados, Intermezzo from “Goyescas”, arrangement for cello and piano by Gaspar Cassadó (1923).

Recorded by Clara Piccoli and Lisa María Blanco on 14/01/2025 at Codarts Rotterdam. Duration of the recording 05:03.

Final outcome, third cycle:

[19 Reference recording 06 Clara Piccoli Preludio-Fantasia Cassadó Suite for cello suite](#)

Gaspar Cassadó, Suite per Violoncello Solo, Preludio - Fantasia (1926)

Recorded by Clara Piccoli on 05/04/2025 at Codarts Rotterdam. Duration of the recording 05:41.

Appendix 2: Critical media review

The two items from my media list that I will use for this review:

- 1) David Cherniavsky, "Casals's Teaching of the Cello"¹¹⁵
- 2) Gabrielle Kaufman, "Gaspar Cassadó as Performer: The Catalan lineage of cellists"¹¹⁶

David Cherniavsky, "Casals's Teaching of the Cello"

The article describes some fundamental principles of Pablo Casals' playing. It explains firstly that Pau Casals' approach to the cello and to music in general is based on a natural, instinctive basis, but it is also based on a deep conscious awareness of music and its performance. The author asks himself:

"How therefore this [the fact that Casals was fully analytical about everything he does] be reconciled with an artist so markedly spontaneous, whose whole approach is above all inspired?"

I think this is an interesting question, because I want to find a balance between these two aspects in performing Gaspar Cassadó music at the end of my research. The author answers to this question:

...such analysis is possible, in fact, necessary precisely BECAUSE of Casals's volcanic temperament and the depth of his feeling within. During performances it is of course forgotten or, at any rate, swept aside by the overwhelming conviction of what he has to say. Casals's mind then becomes completely integrated and knows no distinction between his inspiration and the process by which it has been refined.¹¹⁷

For the author, the two items and basic principles that make possible his particular musicality, characterised by clarity and vitality, are *la justesse expressive* and the percussive technique. The author points out that "*justesse expressive enhances music's sense of progression just as rubato achieves this with regard to rhythm, transforming mechanical metre into a living pulse*". In fact *la justesse expressive*, or expressive intonation, is a kind of intonation that is more natural than the ordinary intonation, which is too influenced, according to Casals, by the equal temperament of keyboard instruments. The expressive intonation considers the melodic implications and the harmonic progression, permitting to play in a more dynamic way, and with a finer sense of direction and progression. It is necessary to develop the sensibility to this type of intonation, by listening and experimenting, and a theoretical and deliberate approach is necessary at the beginning (for instance, it can be good to study scales according to expressive intonation principles), but in the last resort all such subtleties can only be achieved intuitively and naturally (it is natural based!). On the other hand, his percussive technique enhances the resonance and clarity of sound, and gives a sense of vitality and precision, with guitar-like precision. Fingers have to fall like hammers on the fingerboard, and then they have to relax immediately upon striking the strings. In order to integrate this technical element, the author reports that Casals recommended practising often without the bow, especially in practising scales. The percussive technique permits to have a solid base on which to be in control, and to be able to add any necessary embellishments (such as those produced by glissando, portamento, and vibrato) exactly where the music demands.

¹¹⁵ David Cherniavsky, "Casal's Teaching of the Cello," The Musical Times 93, no. 1315 (September 1952): 398-400.

¹¹⁶ Gabrielle Kaufman, "Gaspar Cassadó: A Study of Catalan Cello Arrangements and Cello Performance Style" (PhD diss., Birmingham City University, 2013).

¹¹⁷ David Cherniavsky, "Casal's Teaching of the Cello," The Musical Times 93, no. 1315 (September 1952): 398-400.

Gabrielle Kaufman, “Gaspar Cassadó as Performer: The Catalan lineage of cellists”

In this chapter of her study “Gaspar Cassadó: A study of Catalan Cello Arrangements and Cello Performance Style”, Gabrielle Kaufman, after an introduction to the Catalan historical and cultural context at the beginning of the XX century, including Casals’ origins and influences, goes through a comparison of nineteen recordings made by Pablo Casals, Gaspar Cassadó (who was Casals’s student) and the contemporary Catalan cellist Lluís Claret (who studied chamber music with Enric Casals, Pablo Casals’s brother) “ *to establish whether these cellists share any specific performance characteristics stemming from their common cultural heritage*”. The works recorded are four, and for each work there is at least one recording of every of these cellists:

- 1) Requiebro (1929) by Cassadó.
- 2) Intermezzo (1915) from Goyescas by Enrique Granados, in the form of a transcription for cello and piano made by Cassadó.
- 3) Après un rêve (1877) by Gabriel Fauré, in the form of a transcription for cello and piano made by Casals.
- 4) Prelude (1720) by J.S. Bach is the Prelude from the G major Suite.

Since I will start my research with the re-enactment of Casals and Cassadó recordings of Requiebro, this analysis is going to be very useful for me. The analysis and comparison is divided into five headings: Edition, Tempo/Rubato, Rhythm/Accentuation, Portamento and Timbre. It is very detailed and insightful, provided also with some graphs on the comparison of the rubato and on the quantity of portamento in a specific passage, for instance. Kaufman reflects on the various nature of similarities and differences between the choices of these cellists. Sometimes they can be the results of a generational gap: for instance, the big changes applied on Requiebro by Casals, who even rearranged a whole section, were legitimized at his time (he was born in 1876 and he died in 1973), at least for a musician with his stature and authority, while contemporary performers, like Claret (born in 1951), generally prefer to avoid changes of that type. Or they can be about a personal interpretation of a rhythm, or of an indication on the score: Cassadó in middle section of Requiebro didn’t want the repeated dotted rhythm to be a marching rhythm, however many cellists, among them Casals, overdots all the rhythms in this section, sounding march-like, because the standard praxis of dotted rhythms elsewhere in the recordings is playing the note after the dotted note slightly late and accentuated, and also for Cassadó’s indication in the score “*con suono energico*”. There are many aspects to deepen in the analysis and comparison of the recordings, and I think that the Gabrielle Kaufman investigation is really careful, clear, deep, and open to create new questions and new answers.

Appendix 3: Full feedback on reference recordings

Complete feedback on reference recording #1 for the Research Proposal

1. Your own reflection on this recording; the questions about the piece itself

- In general, I think my execution is a bit rushed and mechanical. There is a lack of many moments of breathing space between sections, and I don't enjoy the arrival notes enough. As Antonio Mosca told me in the interview I did with him, "You need to stay more on the tip of the mountains." At some points, as at bars 13 and 29, I also tend to rush uncontrollably and unconsciously, and in this way I disconnect some bars from the melody that continues. I would like to find a less anxious, gentler and freer character.
- Intonation is not always precise. I want to start getting a better intonation in this piece and then, when I'll have a solid base to work on, I could try to experiment with expressive intonation to have a more colorful melodic line.
- I would like to be able to be freer, not mechanical, with the tempo, in the sections where there are no indications of tempo change, making some internal rubato.
- I would like to explore the different recurring rhythmic figurations in this piece and try to render them in different ways, also drawing inspiration from Spanish folklore and other performances of this piece, looking for a way that is convincing to me and fits the character of the piece.
- Some of the written articulations, particularly the stitches, are a bit dull, and soft
- The ornamentations are not always well articulated.
- I would like to have a more varied and vital vibrato

2. The feedback you received from peers / experts / teachers.

Aldo Mata, Spanish cellist

The recording is nice, but too "usual". Everything depends on what you want to do with the piece: a more "antique" version, with your own "cadenzas" ', some portamento...it might be a bit eccentric, you could make your own interpretation with more creative participation. Casals' reading is astonishingly original and unique, changing several things, with a very good tempo and execution of ornaments, making up his own "coloraturas" '. He introduces many nuances, colors, phrasings, he does many downwards portamento...very imaginative. The cadenza is like "Joselito", a little kid who had a very special voice (Spain 1960s), and who was famous for his melismatic coloraturas. In the recordings that you are going to analyze, try to look for what is not written (agogics, irregular rhythms, portamenti, tempo modifications), and to do your own with these resources.

Joachim Eijlander, cellist, my cello teacher at Codarts

Good first recording, especially after the first page. In general:

- Play more with bounce and release in both hands and elbows, and their coordination.
- Take a closer look where you emphasize notes or groups of notes, and how you do that (in relation with timing and direction). For instance: all rhythmic figures as in bar 10 can have a light start even when it's emphasized, so use more bow for the start rather than pressure. In contrast, when you play bars like no.12 or 24 at the end, where all notes in a group are accented, play with a bit more resistance in the bow.
- A simple thing that can help together with that: ascending can be augmented in tempo and dynamic, descending figures can decrease, but not always, like in bar 75.

- Take a closer look at where there is resistance/release in the musical phrase. For instance, bar 13 is expressive, therefore bar 14 is more relaxed/free. With you it's the opposite right now. And there are equivalent places, you will find them also for example bar 16/17. It has to do with my previous comment about bounce/release.
- Some other things: bar 51 first note decreases but doesn't stop, right now there are gaps after each dotted eighth note. Firm but bouncy I'd say.
- Enjoy top notes more in your melody, give them a bit more time. Drop weight at the start of tones with both hands, again, has to do with bounce-release.

My colleagues of the artistic research lesson

- Be more intense, sometimes you could be more aggressive and less "kind". Be more personal, more dramatic, especially when there is *fortissimo* or *piano* (subito).
- Take some time, don't always go straight on, and breathe more, especially from phrase to phrase. Think that in this way it is easier for the audience to understand the phrasing and the different sections.
- Be more progressive (with the colors and with the tempo) in the ornamentations
- Articulate the ornamentations.
- Increase vibrato with the time when there is a crescendo (for instance, bars 17-19) , or when the level of intensity rises.
- Do a more continuous vibrato, sometimes, in the dotted quarter notes.
- Bite the beginning of the notes.
- Change the atmosphere in the different sections.

Complete feedback on the Reference recording #2 of the first Research Cycle

1. Your own reflection on this recording; the questions about the piece itself

- I've gained a more varied, colored, and full sound than before.
- I've gained better elasticity and relaxation of my body and of the movement that I make, so I could create a bigger sound without a big physical effort.
- My performance of the piece is more passionate and freer than the first recording I made for the Research Proposal, but I still have to be more confident in using rubato and exaggerating, being more explicit in what I want to do.
- Rubato is too much on the slower side; I have to focus more on the fast side.
- I should sometimes stick more to the indications written by Cassadó, in terms of articulation (I should mostly take care of the accents, articulating them more) and tempo (for instance, I should not play too slowly the phrases that start on the second half of bars 58 and 74).
- I still blow some notes. I have to go on working on direct articulation.
- I think I've been able to use portamento as an expressive tool. I should go on working on that.
- I have to be more precise with the intonation (I've marked in the score the most evident imprecisions).
- There are moments when I should be more careful to change my color more quickly (for instance, in bar 116).
- The section of my recording I'm less satisfied with is the melody of bars 109–116: it should be lighter, with more rubato, with a more precise intonation, and with more confidence: in the recording, I'm very much on the eggs while I'm playing it.

I've annotated a score with specific things that I've noticed in my own recording that I can adjust or add:

à mon très cher maître Pablo Casals

Gaspar Cassadó

Gaspar Cassadó

Allegro con moto

1

11

16

22

26

31

36

41

46

ten. ten. ten. rall. - - a tempo

ff

espress.

molto rit.

a tempo

accel. molto

f con anima

meno forte

ff con fantasia

f

mp

f con fantasia

ff

con passione

dim. molto

mp con dolcezza

sfz

più sonoro

più intenso

f

espress.

molto rit.

a tempo

accel. molto

ff

espress.

mf

cresc.

ff

use vibrato

do it more

intention

connect more

subito a tempo!

more direct accent

connect more

connect more to the previous and next bars

do it blow the note

articulate more with the bow

less bow

take care of this intonation

use vibrato

play it more different from the beginning, lighter and with more direction

ED 1562

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2
Moderato e risoluto

51 *con suono energico*

56 *espress. rubato*

60 *f energico*

66 *accel. molto*

72 *Vivo*

77 *rit. Animando poco a poco*

82 *a tempo*

Handwritten notes and markings:

- more lively in this first phrase, evidence more the turning point using direction and dynamic
- not too slow!
- stick more to the written dynamics
- not so slow

86 *a tempo* *f cresc. molto* *poco rit. Tempo I* *use ff vibrato*

91 *a tempo* *molto rit.* *espress.* *more direct accent* *more accented and tenuto*

99 *a tempo* *mf* *cresc. molto f* *ff* *f con anima* *ten. ten. ten.* *a tempo*

100 *meno forte* *f con anima* *don't rush, sing more*

104 *poco rit.* *a tempo* *dim.* *p* *pp come un eco* *clearer, more preparation intonation* *not too slow!*

110 *sfz*

114 *molto rit.* *a tempo* *espress.* *p cresc.* *more expressive from the beginning, change sound more immediately and stay nearer to the bridge*

120 *a tempo* *molto rit.* *a tempo* *pizz.* *more!* *accel. sempre* *more character!* *fff* *fff* *fff*

2. The feedback you received from peers / experts / teachers.

Joachim Eijlander

First impression: I really like it! I feel this research has a good outcome: you were more indirect in your right hand articulation before and therefore you played more with portato and a certain afterpressure. Now with this recording it has changed substantially in a more speaking, direct quality where your sound is also more radiant. Keep going in this direction!! Also what I like is your freedom with tempo and rubato. You can even go further in this direction, zoom out and have whole passages more fluid or more retained, so that the piece will tell its story even more and a certain nostalgia will come out even more. But in general it's really good!

Cello colleagues from Joachim Eijlander's class at Codarts

Paula Lebón Real

- First of all it's a very nice recording of this piece, in general I feel this "Spanish" style while listening to it. Focusing on the parameters that you told me that you worked on (rhythm, rubato, articulation and ornamentation) I think that you can play more with the rubatos. For example in the beginning you can take even more time in the first eight notes, for me this first bar reminds me of someone trying to catch the attention of an audience. Maybe in other bars that had the same rhythmic cell it is not necessary to take as much time as in the beginning, but I would emphasize that difference between the eight notes in the beginning and the other similar cells.
- On the other hand, focusing on the ornamentations, I think that you can play more with them, exaggerate the rubatos and move back and forth the tempo, Spanish music is usually written in some way but played in another so, some sixteen notes throughout the piece are in fact ornaments, so you can play with the rhythm and tempo.
- Another thing to point out is that in the central part of the piece, from the 2/4 you have very good ideas but I feel that they're not well connected, maybe you need to exaggerate more what you want, or just flow with the music.
- And finally at the end, before the accelerando I feel that you can exaggerate more what you want, and maybe you can play with the tempo. For example, there's a molto ritardando, but before maybe you can speed a little bit to make a contrast.

Carlos Maldonado

- It is a great version of Requiebros, I really enjoy it and see the thoughts behind the playing. Concerning the style of Casals I think you manage very well to represent it with a great legato and a clear and full sound.
- About rhythm, I think you could exaggerate more when you want to stretch the tempo (also if you want to rush a bit some others). The rubato is very natural but I think you can do more, mainly when you have ornaments. For that I would look for the important notes in the ornaments to have clear arrival notes in order to have some guide for the rubato.
- About articulation, as said before, you really resemble the type of sound and articulation of Casals, the only comment I have concerning articulation is that even though you play very similar to Casals recordings, do not forget about the many accents that are written in the score, look for a bit more biting sound when you have those to not just have everything with the same kind of legato.

Complete feedback on the Reference recording #3 of the second Research Cycle

1. *Your own reflection on this recording; the questions about the piece itself*

About intonation:

- I feel I'm often a bit sharp: to fix this, play nearer diatonic semitones, and lower minor thirds and minor sevenths. The note G is often high, and sometimes also Mib and Sib.
- Look for a better homogeneity in intonation: if there is a passage with notes that repeat themselves, also going in the same direction, look for the same intonation

Other observations:

- In bars 1-2, and 6-7, maintain the same color on all the passages, without making it too shrill on the A string, in comparison with the other strings. You can fix it working on the point of contact of the bow, by putting the bow nearer to the bridge when playing on C, G and D strings
- Avoid blowing notes when it is unnecessary, and don't play some notes suddenly too F (if not written on the score). When you want to do as diminuendo and then a following crescendo on the same note, be very clear in your intention
- A little dull sometimes, it can be more vital. I need to link the different phrases better: now some of those are placed one after the other, not very well connected and consequential, especially at the beginning.
- Look for a more immediate difference in sound when there are written different colors (*espressivo*, *dolce*). The Piano *espressivo* for example can have a more different vibrato than before, maybe faster, and can be played with the bow closer to the bridge, using little bow but focused
- In climaxes be more convincing, in intensity and direction

I made an annotated score with my markings about what I've noticed in my recording. The annotated score is the following:

● sharp
● flat

СЮИТА I Прелюдия-фантазия

33

Г. КАССАДО

Andante

f marc. e con anima

sostenuto

sostenuto

marc. e con anima

p dolce

sf

rit.

more P and delicate

Poco piu mosso

p

mf

dim

find right color

p espr.

(marc il canto)

molto espr.

ten.

largamente

cresc

more effective

ff climax

a tempo

dim.

p

cresc.

3972

agitato più agitato
 poco a poco e cresc.

agitatissimo ff

molto meno agitato

calmando IV- Andante
 p sostenuto cresc.

a tempo V ten.
 pp ma espr. sf

ten. poco agitato ten.
 sf

con fantasia more eccentric
 7 cresc.

calmando molto rit.
 p tranquillo

3972

in this harmonic passage, look for a common atmosphere

35

The musical score is written for a solo cello in 3/4 time. It begins with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature of 3/4. The score is divided into several measures, with various dynamics and articulations indicated. Handwritten annotations in red ink include 'legato' at the bottom left and 'crescer' in the middle right. The score includes the following markings:

- Measure 1:** *ppp dolciss.*
- Measure 2:** *meno p*
- Measure 3:** *a tempo*
- Measure 4:** *sonore*, *mf*
- Measure 5:** *p subito*, *mf* *sonore*
- Measure 6:** *poco rit.*, *Poco piu mosso*, *p* *espr.*, *legato* (handwritten), *marc. il canto*
- Measure 7:** *molto espr.*, *ten.*
- Measure 8:** *a tempo*, *crescer* (handwritten), *Andante*, *p dolce*, *sf*
- Measure 9:** *p*, *mf*, *ten.*
- Measure 10:** *dim.*, *p*, *pizz.*, *pp (ma sonore)*

3972

legato

1. *The feedback you received from peers / experts / teachers.*

Emlyn Stamm, violist

I enjoyed listening to your performance. Your way of playing sounds to me both expressive and noble and you have already found a great degree of rhythmic freedom in your performance which is also something Casals was well known for.

Casals had a very unique sound and approach, I can always recognise him on recordings. I found particularly his way of playing untogether with his pianist or chamber music partners striking, as well as the way he chooses his intonation differently from fellow string players when playing for example unisons - which can sometimes even sound quite jarring or extreme.

Your playing is already very advanced and expressive. I think if you want to learn from Casals' approach it might be useful for you to do some detailed analysis of some of his recordings to see what he does in detail. From what I can hear your intonation is very correct and not necessarily 'expressive' in the more extreme way that Casals uses it. I think here what you can do is try experimenting with some greater extremes of leading tones or intonation of different octaves and registers in different ways or intonation that points out enharmonic differences in a more extreme style. Record yourself and listen back and see what you hear and compare it to Casals, I think this will help you to see how far along you are in your approach.

Cello colleagues from Joachim Eijlander's class at Codarts

Carlos Maldonado

- I will start by saying that I liked the performance of the piece a lot. Regarding phrasing and musical taste, it was very beautiful.
- Now, regarding expressive intonation. I think you are still too correct, meaning that you play very well in tune without being too extreme with the use of the intonation. I think you can exaggerate much more the notes that are important in the scale/mode you are in every moment. For instance, in the section "a tempo" on the first page the B flat I missed the leading of the note, playing it even lower, since in that section we are in A Phrygian the first half-tone (A - Bb) is quite an important note, don't be afraid to make it lower.
- In the progression of chords arpeggiated in the next page, I would show more which note you think is important, and therefore change a bit the intonation of that note. Of course the bass note is important but in those chords there are more important ones that you can stand out.
- Having said this, I think you should analyze more deeply the modes and tonal regions that Cassadó uses in this movement. It will help you identify the main notes and most interesting, the leading notes to use that expressive intonation. If the note leads up make it sharper and if the note leads down make it flatter. Don't forget it is inspired by Flamenco. And in Flamenco music the singers exaggerate this a lot.
- My last recommendation would be to help your expressive intonation with the bow. If a note is dissonant and you want to show it, you have more resources than just pulling the note down in pitch, you can also make a sound much more tense with the pressure of the bow or playing closer to the bridge. This will enhance even more the use of the expressive intonation.
- And again, don't be afraid to be more extreme in exaggerating the half notes, it will give you a very personal performance of your piece if you truly know where and why you choose to change the intonation.

Paula Lebón Real

- In the harmonics part I think that you can risk more the dynamic and go even more piano; like at the end that you create such an intimate atmosphere with the dynamic. In general I missed more risk in the dynamics, going super piano to create those atmospheres and also going wild in the fortes.
- Another thing that I want to mention is the glissandos. I noticed that you make them sometimes, and that's really nice! They match with the style of the piece but I would say that they are very academic, like the glissandos that you play in a Mahler piece. Here I think that they can be more "informal" and wild, like saying: I'm doing the glissandos. Enjoying the change of note through those glissandos.
- And finally about intonation, as you wanted that specific information, I think that all it is very good in tune, just pay attention to the double stops

Complete feedback on the Reference recording #4 of the second Research Cycle

1. *Your own reflection on this recording; the questions about the piece itself*
 - In general, there is more attention on intonation than in the previous recording, but I have to go on working on it.
 - Double stops must be more in tune sometimes.
 - The different tempi are not very clear, in general the felt beat is a bit vague, and I often rush.
 - I have to look for more differences in colors, mostly using different vibratos and different points of contact of the bow.
 - I have to enjoy the important notes.
 - I need more articulation in the bow and in the left hand, a more biting sound.
2. *The feedback you received from peers / experts / teachers.*

Joachim Eijlander

- I enjoy your recording, you sound more free now; especially the second half of the piece sounds free and played with a lot of fantasy to me. Your sound is more present ("real") and therefore more expressive than in the past, well done. In general you keep the musical tension and the attention of the listener.
- As far as expressive intonation I think that the last andante is very successful, more than the parallel place in the beginning (the fourth line in the UE edition). I think the reason is that you play the whole passage expressively as far as intonation is concerned and the first time I hear some notes exaggerated (for instance the b-flat). I think you're more successful when you keep the general picture in mind (that means the tonality) when you choose your intonation expressively. For instance in the beginning rather than tuning the b-flat in the second line lower, to "hear" bars 6+7 in its entirety a bit lower than bars 1+2, and then colour the b-flat maybe also a bit more. So, to work from "larger phrase" towards detail.
- I like your build-up towards FF agitatissimo a lot and the passage itself is also well done. Harmonics after are good and clear. You could maybe make more differences in intonation between PPP dolciss. and meno P, and also the a tempo place with the arpeggios, maybe even lower when it starts in C Major and higher two bars later when it's A major. The last page felt like a natural flow, freely and resonant.
- The second beat that overlaps in the third beat (for instance bar three) is sometimes too relaxed so it doesn't carry the whole phrase.

Complete feedback on the Reference recording #5 of the third Research Cycle

1. *Your own reflection on this recording.*

- Some intonation issues.
- The first phrase is all the same: I should give more direction and character by varying in color and dynamics the B. I should also underline more the syncope in the third bar.
- Don't drop the sound within a phrase: I should have more continuity in the vibrato and in the bow tension, which I often drop when I change bow.
- Vary more the vibrato.
- Clearer idea on the tempo that I choose: sometimes I felt it as if it was a bit vague and random, and as if it was difficult for me to fit in.

2. *The feedback you received from peers / experts / teachers.*

Emlyn Stamm, violist

This is another very nice recording you have sent me. The performance is quite convincing overall in terms of character and phrasing. I think since you have so much facility as a cellist that you can afford to take greater risks in your playing now, especially in the context of a research project. I think two aspects that could be learned from Casals here are being more exaggerated in your pushing and pulling of tempo as well as experimenting with the lengths and swing of smaller rhythmic values (also being less concerned with playing together with your pianist) as well as being more extreme in tone quality pushing your instrument to the edge of its expression when it come to developing the sound and not worrying about the occasional crack or blemish.

With regard to vibrato I find your approach in general to be quite nice. What Casals does which is quite distinct with vibrato is he has a way of combining a kind of extreme articulation of the left hand from the finger with an immediate vibrato lending a spoken quality to his playing which you might experiment with more.

Cello colleagues from Joachim Eijlander's class at Codarts

Carlos Maldonado

I like a lot how you change character between the sections of the Intermezzo and it's great that you don't always vibrate the notes straight from the beginning.

As some things to improve I would try to connect the vibrato more between the notes, sometimes it is inevitable to have a brief moment of non vibrato but when the notes are one after another try to match the movement of the vibrato to the left hand so you switch finger in the precise moment. In that way it will feel as a continuous vibrato (like an opera singer, don't forget it is the intermezzo of the opera Goyescas).

Having said that, I would think more of an opera singer, for them the vibrato is almost a natural resource. You should incorporate that in your playing by using their type of vibrato, I would say a bit wider and sometimes faster.

It is very interesting how at the end you change your colour to play much more dolce but still you are doing a lot of things with the bow. For this piece try to rely more on your left hand as the basics and then once you can play as you want only changing the type of vibrato and how you connect some notes then you can help yourself with the bow. From my point of view, this is the piece to overuse the vibrato even more trying to sound like an opera singer.

Paula Lebón Real

Very nice interpretation of Intermezzo by Cassadó! I think that you have a clear idea of what you want to do. I also have some comments that may help you improve even more your playing of this piece:

- In the beginning I think that you can use a faster vibrato, to add more character to the phrase. I liked the pizzicato that follows this entrance, it is dry and you don't use vibrato but then with the dynamic you add some vibrato and it is very nice.
- When the lyric part starts, maybe you can start with a little vibrato and then increase the amplitude with the phrase.
- I noticed that you do this a lot: reaching a note without vibrato and then adding it. It is nice but maybe you can use it in fewer notes so it can be more special. If you use this a lot during the piece, it is not going to be special, just a normal thing and it can be "boring" and expected and I think that is not the case.
- In the fortissimo passage, sometimes I miss the little notes, the ornaments. You emphasise the biggest notes, which is nice but then I think that you can take more into account the little ones. And also during that passage, I would play with a continuous and faster vibrato, with so much energy that you get tired playing it. If I imagine a singer singing this, I think that he would sing with vibrato all the passage.
- Maybe you can create longer phrases, for me it would be nicer. Now I hear a lot of little and beautiful phrases that maybe can be part of a bigger one.
- I really like the last pizzicato, very nice vibrato and accelerando!

Complete feedback on the Reference recording #6 of the third Research Cycle

1. *Your own reflection on this recording.*

What I think I mostly improved

- I have a better awareness of the vibrato as part of the tone and not as something that you put on some notes: this gives the piece a better direction, since I take care of the vibrato also in the passage between the notes.
- I play with more variety in the vibrato speed, width, and direction.
- The piece has a better direction and unity and it is less fragmented within the phrases and within the whole piece, that now is more an arch from the start to the end.

What I think I have to improve

- I have to go on working on the vibrato, always looking for an efficient connection with the bow. Sometimes I feel that it is still too mechanical and not really integrated, as part of the tone.
- Sometimes my sound is too heavy, especially in the first section, until bar 10. I should look for more direction in the sound, and I still have to take care of not blowing the notes (when it is not wanted). I think that this problem is mostly related to the quantity of bow that I use: I generally use too much bow. I should develop a better awareness of that.
- The first 10 bars should be more epic, more like a statement. I should exaggerate the accents, and make more contrast with the non accented notes and with the *tenuto*.
- I should articulate more the ornamentations
- I should stay more in the P sometimes.
- I should be more careful with the intonation. I have to be more precise with it, I have to develop a better awareness of the use of expressive intonation, thinking about the larger picture (the tonality, the phrase), more than the single passage. When I use expressive intonation, I should

play the tonic, subdominant and dominant precisely in tune to create that fixed frame towards which the other notes of the scale are attracted and become expressive.

- I should be more aware of the interventions that I make on the piece, especially with the tempo. I should play less by following my habits and I should keep studying the score and all the indications written to be able to be free within them, but with awareness. For example, sometimes I play *ritenuto* when it is not written, and I'm not really aware of that, I'm only doing it because of habit. Therefore, I should listen better to what I do and keep looking at the score to have a solid base within which I can apply my expressive freedom, my musical choices, but without forgetting the unity and the logic of the piece.

2. The feedback you received from peers / experts / teachers.

Aldo Mata

It is well played, but if we take a closer look your interpretation seems to me very much in the actual mainstream way that one expects. I guess Casals would have used more portamenti as an expressive device. Regarding vibrato, he insisted that in p-pp vibrato is "bad taste" (did you see his Dvorak master class?). It is tough but that would include almost every modern cellist nowadays.

As for the shaping of phrases (probably you read Blum's *Art of Interpretation*) there may be more use of tempo variations as an expressive device for the shaping, and the Andalusian gestures (second theme) more guitar-like. Maybe also the use of rhythmic irregularities.

Duo-Jiao Zhao

I've listened to your recording, and I think you did a wonderful job. Your interpretation clearly reflects the effort you've put into understanding and applying Casals' style. At the moment, I'm focusing on tempo flexibility and expressive intonation in Casals' Bach Suite recordings, and I could really hear how these elements were present in your playing — especially in your use of portamento, your approach to shifting, and your intonation choices.

I'm not sure whether Casals ever recorded the Cassadó Suite, but I did listen to his 1929 recording of *Requiebros*, where I was struck by his remarkably free and flexible use of tempo. To me, this kind of tempo freedom seems closely related to how he approached the Bach Suites — with a clear expressive logic depending on the character of each passage, whether it's a lyrical melody or a virtuosic run. I wonder if this could be explored even further in your interpretation of the *Preludio-Fantasia*, to bring out more contrast and nuance between the different sections.

Joachim Eijlander

Your recording is a result of a process to be proud of. You have gained overview, large form, and the refinement you always had now has a good place within the whole of the performance. You let the music breathe and found more balance between letting it be and controlling it.

In the opening there are still possibilities to gain an even more "compact" basis from which the rest is evolving/developing. Speaking in technical terms: work on a direct projection from the back into the bow, avoid unnecessary motions and place the fingers of the right hand (mainly the index) not too far from each other.

Well done on your intonation, it serves the piece so well, it makes it more expressive.

The whole performance is longing, it feels like a here-and-now-event. Well done!

Cello colleagues from Joachim Eijlander's class at Codarts

Carlos Maldonado

First of all, congratulations for this recording because you have developed a lot of your interpretation of Cassadó through the research. I really liked the performance and I think you made it your own, nevertheless you could think of some things more:

- Regarding the rubato, I really like how you move the tempi, but since it's almost ad libitum it is difficult to notice when it is rubato and when it is not, I would recommend you to chose some passages where you can be more "metronomical" so when you do rubato is more obvious.
- The next advice I'd like to share with you is about articulation and phrasing. It is already very good but I can hear that sometimes you break the sound (or almost) trying to reach extremes, that is great, but there are more things you can use for reaching that aggressive sound, try biting more the beginnings of the notes. In that way you won't break the sound and it will still feel like a harsh sound.
- Regarding the vibrato, I love it, it has developed a lot. I would just play flatter with the bow when you don't vibrate, it will enhance the result of the non vibrato.

Paula Lebón Real

- Vibrato: In this recording I can hear a lot of different vibratos, which is nice because you really create different atmospheres and you build the tension with it. The moments that I like the most are the ones in which you start a note without vibrato and then you start to add it in a progressive way.
- Rubato and phrasing: For me, this time the rebates are very clear and progressive, I find the phrases very well connected with the rubato and also I like how you play with the dynamics in combination with it.
- Expressive intonation: I think that with this specific intonation you give some more tension in some moments that require some tension. There are some moments that I really enjoy because of this, I feel them really "painful" and I think that this is what you want to express.
- Articulation: In general everything is very clear, the moments that you want to make them shorter are very clear and the legato parts are really nice. I can also understand every note in all the chords. The last pizzicatos are also nicely interpreted.

Appendix 4: Transcription of interviews

Interview with Aldo Mata, Spanish cellist

E-mail of the 23/03/24

What are your steps when you study for a re-enactment?

1. Choice of recording
2. Contextual study of work performed and players
3. Different listening (tempo, rhythm, portamentos, vibrato, etc.)
4. Study of editions (looking for expressive fingerings, etc.)
5. Annotation in score (different colors)
6. Embodiment, trying out the piece, not so much imitation as finding the spirit

Do you use annotated scores? If yes, which parameters do you write about? Portamento, rhythm, rubato? Do you also take notes about vibrato or expressive intonation?

If they are shocking, definitely...

When you do a re-enactment, do you use Casals' exact technique (such as his bow hold, his articulation of both hands, or his way to vibrate) or have you developed a manner of your own to sound like him?

Well, I try to get as close as possible with my own technique. I try my hands to follow my ears.

Do you incorporate your personal taste into a re-enactment (for instance, in the timbre and color variety) or do you stick to Casals' recordings, putting your performing style apart?

I guess it is impossible not to do it since I don't consider the ultimate goal of just imitating, so incorporating my own taste within certain limits is adequate.

Which aspects of Casals' playing do you find most appealing?

Spontaneity, freedom with order, and imagination

When you perform Cassadó music (apart from the re-enactment), do you also take inspiration from Casals' playing?

Yes. Also, Cassadó has inherited a lot from Casals.

Interview with Joachim Eijlander, cellists and Professor at Codarts, Rotterdam
Live interview, 24/10/2024

What does Casals mean with expressive intonation?

It's a melodic oriented intonation, to amplify his intentions in a melodic sense, leading tones are higher when going up. Bending intonation, also to do difference with the piano. Different, coexisting systems of intonation but more on the melodic sides, is Pythagorean. Intonation depends also on the tonality you are playing. In C Major, for instance, will be different than in D Major: D Major is generally more brilliant, while C Major is more related to the C string.

Do you use expressive intonation?

Yes, but I don't think I use it enough! It should be a conscious tool that helps you to get a sense of direction, of musical tension. For sure I don't use it as much as Casals, who was fanatic about it. Barenboim says that Jaqueline Du Pre took lessons with Casals and it was too much for her, because he was obsessed with intonation.

Do you use different types of intonation for different types of music?

Absolutely! For Bach I use less leading tones, because there is more harmony based, so I use more just intonation. I use much more in the music of melodic composers like Schumann and Schubert. In contemporary and modern it depends if it has a tonal center. If it's serial is hard to do. Yet, I feel that in serial music you still have the feeling of semitones and half steps. I think the human soul is oriented to the tonal center. Then for example in Shostakovich, who is clearly building upon the romanticism of expressive melodies, you have a lot of possibilities, even more than in Romanticism, because is freer, so you have maybe more choices

How do you use intonation in double stops?

I think it depends on the tempo: in a series of double stops, if it's slow it is easier for the ear to hear just intonation, but if you go faster I would use more Pythagoric: I think melody is always dominant.

Example 1

The image contains two musical examples. The left example is a short musical phrase in G major, featuring a cadence with a double stop. It is marked with a first finger (1) and a dynamic of *mf*. The handwritten note "just intonation" is written below the staff. The right example is a longer musical phrase in G major, featuring a sequence of double stops. It is marked with a first finger (1) and a dynamic of *mf*. The handwritten note "pythagorean intonation" is written below the staff, and another handwritten note "just intonation" is written below the staff towards the end of the phrase.

Example 2



Do you think you can use expressive intonation when playing with the piano?

Yes, I think you can separate yourself sometimes. And Casals did it a lot. But is tricky, and we have to pay attention on it: for instance, at the start of Beethoven Sonata N.3 you can play the F# a bit higher if you play by yourself, but when you play with the piano you can't!

Interview with Emlyn Stan, violist

E-mail of the 01/03/25

How do you research vibrato? Do you use any software?

I have researched vibrato using Sonic Visualiser which is a free recording analysis software you can download online. In the Changing Sound of Music CHARM project there is also a tutorial on how to do this. (<https://charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/intro.html>). Basically you create a spectrogram of the vibrato you want to analyse, and then you can count the number of cycles per second using some basic math and count from the top to the bottom of each bit of vibrato you see. You can also measure the width, and of course you can see how this changes throughout a recording. We are measuring vibrato speed in cycles per second and vibrato width in hz from the top to the bottom of the pitch oscillation. Those are the two parameters. When it comes to applying this yourself, if you know the number of cycles per second you can put on a metronome at 60 and try to create this number of oscillations per beat. The width can sometimes be a bit more difficult to achieve; this really has to be done by ear.

How are your findings documented on the score? Do you use different signs or just one to indicate different parameters?

With regard to annotating scores I created a wavy line for vibrato and a straight line for senza vibrato, where I was dealing mostly with whether or not vibrato was present and in what way in my research.

Lessons with Alfia Nakipbekova, cellist, researcher, and pedagogue

Notes from the first lesson, 12/03/2025

- Let's reflect on your aim of performing in your research. Casals' recording is from 100 years ago, when people used to perform and listen differently than now. Copying doesn't work, we don't want to emulate something, it is not possible or desirable. What work is to grasp the spirit of it, the heart of it, and to get in the spirit of the music and find a point of technique and interpretation. We can do this by listening to a lot of recordings, and by researching the physical aspect of it, too. You should also take in mind that Casals' recordings are often very hard to judge, they can give false impressions in terms of vibrato, dynamic and use of the bow.
- Cellists like Casals and Cassadó had a refined technique, and they really took care of the details. This is also linked to the tradition of that time of playing a lot of short pieces, the "miniature" pieces. The technique and tone is more reflected in shorter pieces rather than in longer ones: a piece like the Intermezzo is harder to present rather than the Cassadó Suite, which is more expansive work with very effective passages.
- What you can do is play in your own way and try to feel where the heart of Casals' playing that you're researching is coming from. I think it is very much about the connections between the notes, the transitions. You should look for specific fingerings, vibrato, and bow distribution to take care of that. Pay attention to that, and when you will feel it naturally and you will enjoy and get a taste for it, you will get closer to what they're doing.
- You also have to look for that feeling of Spanish flavor, sensual in good taste and elegant. Close and open towards some notes, get excited or calm suddenly. Spanish color changes mood suddenly. Arriving and suddenly letting it go.
- Vibrato is part of the tone, not a separate thing that you put on top of the note. Vibrato is connected with the bow: look for this connection, and you will develop an organic feeling for it in both hands. Vibrato is intuitive and instinctive. Vibrato also depends on harmony. Casals' vibrato is hard to grasp intellectually: it's various, and is sometimes very subtle, almost no vibrato. This combination of almost non vibrato and a very intense one creates a very sensual blending of colors.
- The sound goes in waves, and it breathes.
- Listen to Cassadó's playing: he never forced anything. There is softness at the end of each note, even if it is very strong. This gives elasticity to his phrasing.

Specific technical aspects to improve particularly:

- You lift your fingers too high. You should keep your left hand more together, like a union. Be strong in the fingertips and soft in the hand.
- Give attention to the waves, be more aware musically speaking. In your playing you get involved too much in each note of each bar, while you should think more forward. Don't exaggerate at the start: there are more steps, remember to create development.
- You don't have enough articulation of the bow. Don't use too much bow all the time, and vibrato must follow. When you pay attention to the bow, your vibrato changes. Sometimes you pay too much attention to the left hand and forget about the bow.

Specific indications to perform *Intermezzo*:

- [Complete score of the Intermezzo from "Goyescas" by Enrique Granados \(arrangement for cello and piano by Cassadó\) with my annotations taken during my lesson with Alfia Nakipbekova.](#)
- Listen to the piano, there is an impulse on the first beat of each 3. Immerse yourself in this word: Intermezzo is a short piece but also a whole word.
- The beginning is establishing this great passion atmosphere. Create this by taking forward: don't play it flat. Use more rubato, and change fingers. Feel the direction.
- In the pizzicato introduction you should already prepare, create the drama. Don't play it statically.
- Complete score of the Intermezzo from "Goyescas" of Enrique Granados (arrangement for cello and piano by Cassadó) with my annotations taken during my lesson with Alfia Nakipbekova

Notes from the second lesson, 02/04/2025

- [Complete score of the Preludio-Fantasia from Cassadó Suite for solo cello with my annotations taken during my lesson with Alfia Nakipbekova](#)
- Play it more integrated in all his sections: it has a very clear structure. When you start a piece you already have an arch to the end of it.
- This piece has an element of sorrow although it is very exuberant.
- Find the impressionistic in this piece: go more in the color, in the fantasy element.
- Look for a more refined sense of structure. Is a very episodic movement, but there is a line going from the start to the end. Don't stop, be more aware of how the particular fits in the general.
- Take care of the intonation in the lower strings.
- Be practical: you can't play everything super F. Be more aware of suppleties
- There is no Vibrato and Non vibrato, vibrato is not black or white
- Find the right gesture, the right connection to start: you should start from the string, but without preparing yourself. The gestures are important.
- In the first two bars, go upwards: keep more the direction and the energy from the opening D to the last D of the second bar. Don't lay on the acciaccatura, if not you will lose impulse: jump on the horse.
- In the *sostenuto*, you should sustain and connect more notes.
- Play the first section (until bar 10) more heroic: you have a lot of lyrical moments later. It should be like an epigraph, a statement.
- In bar 5, enjoy the first C in the open string, and take care of the connection with the following C.
- Bar 6 ends with a question mark. From bar 7 is more exuberant, but in bar 9 he goes back.
- Play the melody from bar 17 more simple (like a folk melody): a lot is happening later.
- The ornamentations don't have to be in the way of melody: practice without them.
- Do a comma between the second and the third beat of bar 23 and after that start more P to be able to build up the following *crescendo*.
- Practice with double stops the ornamentations of bar 24.
- Don't drop too early the tension in bar 26.
- Play in tempo bars 49-51: is not a big deal, is like an arabesque, like Ravel.
- *Calmando* doesn't mean *ritardando*. Fast passages don't have to be agitated, difficult, complicated.

Appendix 5: Transcriptions, (annotated) scores, analyses

My score for the re-enactment of Casals's recording of *Requiebros*

Violoncello

à mon très cher maître Pablo Casals

- rhythm
- rubato
- articulation
- portamento
- breath
- other

Requiebros

Allegro con moto

Gaspar Cassadó

ff

a tempo

espress.

molto rit.

a tempo

accel. molto

mf

cresc. f

f con anima

meno forte

ff con fantasia

a tempo

f

at the tip, near to the fingerboard, well articulated with a bow and left hand

mp

f con fantasia

ff con passione

dim. molto

mp con dolcezza

nearer to the fingerboard

31

sf

and decrease after the accent

no port (allarga) vibrato

not too much vibrato

36

più sonoro

more bow

più intenso

nearer to the bridge, more focused bow, harsher sound

calm

f

espress.

41

ten. ten. ten. rall.

open right hand, more hair of the bow

good articulation

focused bow, but feel the sound ringing!

vibrato

(not by vibrato, bow speed and different points of contact)

espress.

mf

cresc. f

f con anima

meno forte

ff con fantasia

a tempo

f

at the tip, near to the fingerboard, well articulated with a bow and left hand

mp

f con fantasia

ff con passione

dim. molto

mp con dolcezza

nearer to the fingerboard

31

sf

and decrease after the accent

no port (allarga) vibrato

not too much vibrato

36

più sonoro

more bow

più intenso

nearer to the bridge, more focused bow, harsher sound

calm

f

espress.

41

Violoncello

44

in the original score the scissure is written after the C I put in brackets, but Cassel plays it like I wrote a tempo

47

espress. molto rit. stop almost triplet a tempo accel. molto 8va pizz. dense bow, small amount of it at the frog, free the sound

espress. > < cresc. 50a 50b * sec. play with the forearm (but the hand must not be rigid)

51 *con suono energico*
intensity *push the finger forward* *gasping, dragging* *shorter* *kind of small portamento* *clean change*

57 *espress.* *rubato* *very well articulated* *clean* *poco rit.* *a tempo* *suffering* *molto (Poco)rit.* *double the written tempo* *a tempo* *dense bow* *fenergico*

62 *Keep the rate shorter* *accel. molto* *< > p con fantasia* *12* *dim.*

66 *rit.* *rit. molto* *Tempo I* *+ F and different timbre, nearer to the bridge* *very explicit and open* *espress.* *con sentimento* *cresc.*

71 *rit.* *Animando poco a poco* *good articulation, slow the bow before anticipate* *anticipate* *f* *mf*

76 *molto, like quavers* *(poco)rit.* *a tempo* *strong* *cresc. molto* *cresc. molto* *poco rit.*

78 *Tempo I* *ff*

Cassadó, *Requiebros*, Casals' version from his recording

Violoncello

à mon très cher maître Pablo Casals

- rhythm
- breath
- rubato
- other
- articulation
- portamento

Requiebros

Gaspar Cassadó

Allegro con moto

ten. ten. ten. rall. - a tempo

longer

leave space to the piano

longer

shorter

molto rit.

a tempo

accel. molto

espress.

mf

cresc. f

leave space to hear the piano

f con anima

meno forte

ff con fantasia

f

mp

f con fantasia

ff

con passione

dim. molto mp con dolcezza

sweet

sfz

più sonoro

più intenso

a tempo

espress.

molto rit.

a tempo

accel. molto

espress.

mf

cresc.

ff

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Moderato e risoluto



3

a tempo *poco rit.* **Tempo I** *leave space to the piano*

f cresc. molto *ff*

a tempo *molto rit.* *espress.*

a tempo *accel.* *mf* *cresc. molto f* *ff* *ten. ten. ten.* *f con anima* *a tempo*

meno forte *f con anima*

poco rit. *a tempo* *dim.* *p* *pp come un eco*

sweet *sfz* *espress.* *molto rit.* *a tempo* *accel.* *p cresc.*

accel. sempre *a tempo* *molto rit.* *ten. ten. ten.* *strong* *a tempo* *pizz.*

f *ff* *fff* *fff*

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Gaspar Cassadó, *Requiebros*

My score of *Requiebros* with my annotations about specific things that I've noticed by listening to my own recording that I can adjust or add to do a better performance.

Violoncello

à mon très cher maître Pablo Casals

Requiebros

Gaspar Cassadó

Allegro con moto

1 **ff** *more direct accent* *ten. ten. ten.* *clearer* *rall.* *connect more* *a tempo* *subito a tempo! use vibrato*

11 *espress.* *connect more to the previous and next bars* *a tempo* *molto rit.* *don't blow use note* *accel. molto* *ten. ten. ten.* *f con anima*

16 *espress.* *mf* *cresc. f* *f con anima* *a tempo* *meno forte* *ff con fantasia* *f* *less bow* *mp*

22 *f con fantasia* *ff* *con passione* *dim. molto* *mp con dolcezza*

26 *f con fantasia* *ff* *con passione* *dim. molto* *mp con dolcezza*

31 *sfz* *more bow articulation* *take care of the intonation* *use vibrato*

36 *più sonoro* *più intenso* *a tempo* *f* *espress.* *connect more* *do it more*

41 *f* *espress.* *molto rit.* *a tempo* *accel. molto* *mf* *cresc.* *ff*

46 *espress.* *mf* *cresc.* *ff*

play it more different from the beginning, lighter and with more direction

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more lively in this first phrase, evidence more the turning point using direction and dynamic

2

Moderato e risoluto

51 con suono energico

56 espress. rubato

poco rit. a tempo poco rit.

60 f energico p con fantasia

66 accel. molto

72 Vivo

cresc. f dim. e calmando

77 rit. molto

Tempo I

con sentimento cresc.

82 Animando poco a poco

poco rit.

a tempo

cresc. ff con fantasia f mp con fantasia

3

86 *a tempo* *f* *cresc. molto* *poco rit.* **Tempo I** *use ff* *vibrato*

91 *a tempo* *molto rit.* *espress.* *more direct accent* *more accented and tenuto*

99 *a tempo* *mf* *accel.* *cresc. molto f* *ff* *f con anima* *ten. ten. ten.* *a tempo*

100 *meno forte* *f con anima* *don't rush, sing more*

104 *poco rit.* *a tempo* *dim.* *p* *clearer, more preparation intonation* *pp come un eco* *not too slow!*

110 *sfz* *more expressive from the beginning, change sound more immediately and stay nearer to the bridge*

114 *molto rit.* *a tempo* *accel.* *espress.* *p cresc.* *more*

120 *a tempo* *molto rit.* *ten. ten. ten.* *a tempo* *pizz.* *more!* *accel. sempre* *f* *more character!* *fff* *fff* *fff*

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Annotated score of the *Preludio-Fantasia* of the *Suite for Solo Cello* based on my observations from my reference recording for the second cycle of the research:

... ..

● sharp
● flat

33

СЮИТА
I Прелюдия-фантазия

Г. КАССАДО

Andante

sostenuto

marc. e con anima

sostenuto

marc. e con anima

p dolce

sf

rit.

more p and delicate

keep doing dble

clear

Poco piu mosso

p

mf

dim

find right color

p espr.

(marc il canto)

molto espr.

ten.

largamente

cresc

more effective

a tempo

dim.

p

cresc.

3972

climax

agitato più agitato
 poco a poco e cresc.

agitatissimo ff

molto meno agitato

calmando IV- Andante
p sostenuto cresc.

a tempo V ten.
pp ma espr. *sf*

ten. poco agitato ten.
sf

con fantasia more eccentric
 7 cresc.

calmando molto rit.
 a tempo V
p tranquillo

3972

in this harmonics passage, look for a common atmosphere

35

Handwritten annotations and markings on the score:

- Red highlights:** Several notes and slurs are highlighted in red throughout the score, particularly in the first, second, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh staves.
- Blue highlights:** A few notes in the sixth staff are highlighted in blue.
- Handwritten notes:**
 - legato* (written twice, once at the top right and once at the bottom left with an arrow pointing to a slur).
 - clearer* (circled around a passage in the sixth staff).
- Printed musical markings:**
 - ppp dolciss.* (first staff)
 - meno p* (second staff)
 - a tempo* (third staff)
 - sonore* (third staff)
 - mf* (third staff)
 - p subito* (fourth staff)
 - mf* *sonore* (fourth staff)
 - poco rit.* (fifth staff)
 - Poco piu mosso* (fifth staff)
 - p₁* *espr.* (fifth staff)
 - legato* (circled around a note in the fifth staff)
 - marc. il canto* (fifth staff)
 - molto espr.* (sixth staff)
 - a tempo* (sixth staff)
 - Andante* (seventh staff)
 - p dolce* (seventh staff)
 - ten. o* (seventh staff)
 - sf* (seventh staff)
 - p* (eighth staff)
 - mf* (eighth staff)
 - II-O* (ninth staff)
 - dim.* (ninth staff)
 - 3972* (ninth staff)
 - p* (ninth staff)
 - pizz.* (ninth staff)
 - pp (ma sonore)* (ninth staff)

2

a Francesco von Mendelssohn con affettuosa e profonda amicizia

Aufführungsrecht vorbehalten
Droits d'exécution réservés

SUITE

per Violoncello solo

I

PRELUDIO - FANTASIA

Gaspar Cassadó

• sections

• thematic material

• harmony (key centers)

1 **A** Andante **Dm**
f sostenuto marc. e con anima

5 **C(m/M)**
f sostenuto

8 marc. e con anima rit.

11 **Gm**
p dolce *sfz* ten.

14 **Dm**
p *mf* *dim.*

17 Poco più mosso
p espress. (marc. il canto)

II

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21 *molto espress.* *ten.* 5

24 *cresc.* *ff* *largamente* *DM*

26 *dim.* *p* *a tempo* *cresc.*

29 *agitato poco a poco e cresc.* *più agitato* *EM*

32 *f* *GM* *ff* *agitatissimo*

35 *molto meno agitato* *IV*

39 *calmando* *Andante* *Am* *p sostenuto* *cresc.*

42 *f*

The musical score is written in bass clef for measures 21-32 and 39-42, and in treble clef for measures 35-38. It features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Dynamic markings range from *molto espress.* and *ff* to *p* and *p sostenuto*. Performance instructions like *ten.*, *a tempo*, *calmando*, and *Andante* are included. Handwritten green annotations include *DM*, *EM*, and *GM*, while a red *a* is written below measure 39. Measure numbers 21, 24, 26, 29, 32, 35, 39, and 42 are printed at the start of their respective staves.

4 diminished chords

46 *pp* *ma espress.* *a tempo* *ten.* *sfz* 9

49 *sfz* *poco agitato* *ten.* 9 7 *cresc.*

50 *f* *con fantasia* 11 *dim.*

51 *calmando molto* *rit.* *a tempo* *p* *tranquillo*

53

55 *ppp* *dolciss.* *meno p*

59 *sonoro* *mf* *a tempo*

5 enharmonic change (Db = C#)

U.E. 8458

61 *p subito* *mf sonoro*

63 *poco rit.* *V* *p espress.* *(marc. il canto)* *Poco più mosso*

66 *molto espress.* *ten.*

70 *a tempo*

73 *p dolce* *Andante* *ten.* *sfz*

76 *p* *mf* *Dm*

77 *dim.* *p* *pizz.* *pp (ma sonoro)* *Dm*

J.E. 8458

Preludio-Fantasia of the Suite for Solo Cello with my expressive intonation indications

2

a Francesco von Mendelssohn con affettuosa e profonda amicizia

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Droits d'exécution réservés

SUITE

per Violoncello solo

I

PRELUDIO - FANTASIA

Gaspar Cassadó

Andante

Dm

1 *f* *sostenuto* *marc. e con anima*

5 *f* *sostenuto*

8 *marc. e con anima* *rit.*

Gm *a tempo* *p dolce* *sfz* *ten.*

11 *p* *mf* *dim.*

Dm **Poco più mosso** *p espress.* *(marc. il canto)*

17

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21 *molto espress.* *ten.* 5

24 *Bm* *cresc.* *largamente* *ff* *Dm*

26 *dim.* *p* *a tempo* *cresc.*

29 *Em* *agitato poco a poco e cresc.* *più agitato*

32 *f* *Gm* *ff agitatissimo*

35 *molto meno agitato* *IV*

38 *calmando* *Andante* *p sostenuto* *cresc.*

42 *f*

4

46 *a tempo*
pp ma espress. *sfz* 9

47 *sfz poco agitato* 9 7 *cresc.*

50 *f con fantasia* 11 *dim.*

51 *calmando molto* *rit.* *a tempo* *p tranquillo*

53

55 *ppp dolciss.* *meno p*

59 *sonoro* *a tempo* *mf*

U.E. 8458

61 *p subito* *mf sonoro*

63 *poco rit.* *Poco più mosso* *p espress.* (marc. il canto)

66 *molto espress.*

70 *a tempo*

73 *Andante* *p dolce* *sfz*

76 *p* *mf*

79 *dim.* *p* *pizz.* *pp (ma sonoro)*

U.E. 8458

Intermezzo from "Goyescas" of Enrique Granados (arrangement for cello and piano by Cassadó) with my notes taken during my lesson with Alfia Nakipbekova

2

Intermezzo

From the opera "Goyescas"

Granados - Cassadó

Moderato

Violoncello *ff*

Piano *ff*

Allegretto mosso *f pizz.* *dim.* *p*

f ben marcato e quasi pizzicato *dim.* *p*

senza pedale *arco* *mf sentita la melodia*

cresc. *f* *p*

connect *articulate the bow* *sustain*

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31441c

3

→ it changes from here, there is a duet with the piano, so you can't play it with the same tone

3

→ change tone since the cello is the protagonist again

3 4

→ eco ← 4 3 2 the sound breaths impulse

4

don't close!

there are 3 waves, 3 steps, this is the first, don't give too much from the start

gestures

look forward

ff *a tempo*

ff *marcatissimo*

articulate with the bow

sempre f

sempre f

III

culmination

dance, change of rhythm

con anima

Pizz.

fantasy, imagination

dim.

dim.

p

p

lighter, more gentle
smaller vibrato, use the upper part of the bow

5



First system of musical notation. The treble clef staff contains a melodic line with a slur over the first two measures, followed by a series of eighth notes. The bass clef staff contains a simple harmonic accompaniment. Performance markings include *rall. poco* above the treble staff, *mf la melodia sentita* above the treble staff, *a tempo* above the treble staff, *pp* below the treble staff, and *senza pedale* below the bass staff.



Second system of musical notation. The treble clef staff continues the melodic line with a slur over the first two measures, followed by a series of eighth notes. The bass clef staff continues the harmonic accompaniment.



Third system of musical notation. The treble clef staff continues the melodic line with a slur over the first two measures, followed by a series of eighth notes. The bass clef staff continues the harmonic accompaniment.



Fourth system of musical notation. The treble clef staff contains a melodic line with a slur over the first two measures, followed by a series of eighth notes. The bass clef staff contains a simple harmonic accompaniment. Performance markings include *cresc.* above the treble staff, *f* above the treble staff, and *rall. poco* above the treble staff.

31411

7

Tempo I^o

surprise

f *p* *pp*

poco allarg.

pizz. *arco* *p con sentimento* *rit.* *a tempo* *pp*

magic, like hypnosis *Keep the left hand round and relaxed*

(senza ritard.) *accel. assai* *pp*

81411

Enrique Granados, *Intermezzo* from "Goyescas", arrangement for cello and piano by Gaspar Cassadó

Preludio-Fantasia from the Suite for solo cello with my annotations taken during my lesson with Alfia Nakipbekova

2

a Francesco von Mendelssohn con affettuosa e profonda amicizia

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Droits d'exécution réservés

SUITE

per Violoncello solo

I PRELUDIO-FANTASIA

Gaspar Cassadó

Andante

f sostenuto

marc. e con anima

f sostenuto

marc. e con anima

rit.

a tempo

p dolce

sfz

p

dim.

Poco più mosso

p espress.

(marc. il canto)

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jump on the horse

save your bow

sustain

enjoy

loss

exuberant

enjoy open strings

don't slowdown

simpler

?

(o)

II

21 *molto espress.* *ten.* 5 *p*

24 *cresc.* *largamente* *ff*

26 *a tempo* *dim.* *p* *cresc.*

29 *agitato poco a poco e cresc.* *più agitato*

32 *f* *ff agitatissimo*

35 *molto meno agitato*

39 *calmando* *Andante* *p sostenuto* *cresc.*

42 *f*

not before
sustain

make a difference in terms of rubato

U.E. 8458

46 *pp* ma espress. *sfz* *ten.* *a tempo*

49 *sfz* *poco agitato* *ten.* *ten.* *cresc.*

50 *f* con fantasia *dim.*

51 *calmando molto* *p* tranquillo *a tempo* *rit.*

53

55 *mp* *dolciss.* *meno p*

59 *sonoro* *mf* *a tempo*

61 *p subito* *mf sonoro*

63 *poco rit.* *Poco più mosso* *p espress.* (marc. il canto)

66 *molto espress.* *ten.*

70 *a tempo*

73 *Andante* *p dolce* *comes back* *very intimate, melancholic* *ten.* *sfz*

76 *p* *mf*

77 *dim.* *don't play ritenuto* *p* *pizz.* *pp (ma sonoro)*

J.E. 8458

Annotated score of my vibrato in the bars 1-20 of the *Preludio-Fantasia*

2

a Francesco von Mendelssohn con affettuosa e profonda amicizia

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Droits d'exécution réservés

SUITE

per Violoncello solo

I

PRELUDIO - FANTASIA

Gaspar Cassadó

Andante

f sostenuto

marc. e con anima

f sostenuto

marc. e con anima

rit.

a tempo

p dolce

ten.

sfz

p

mf

dim.

Poco più mosso

p espress.

(marc. il canto)

II

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Gaspar Cassadó, Suite for solo cello, Preludio-Fantasia, bars 1-20

2

a Francesco von Mendelssohn con affettuosa e profonda amicizia

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Droits d'exécution réservés

SUITE

per Violoncello solo

I

PRELUDIO - FANTASIA

Gaspar Cassadó

- phrasing/direction
- rubato
- portamento
- dynamic

Andante

f sostenuto

marc. e con anima

mf sostenuto

marc. e con anima

p dolce

sfz

p

mf

dim.

Poco più mosso

p espress.

(marc. il canto)

rit.

ten.

3 tempo

II

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I
 21 *molto espress.* *ten.* *III* *p*
 24 *cresc.* *largamente* *ff*
 26 *dim.* *a tempo* *p* *cresc.*
 29 *agitato poco a poco e cresc.* *più agitato*
 32 *f* *ff agitatissimo*
 35 *molto meno agitato* IV
 39 *calmando* *Andante* *p sostenuto* *cresc.*
 42 *f*

Handwritten annotations include:
 - Red Roman numerals I, II, III, and IV.
 - Red arrows and brackets indicating phrasing or dynamics.
 - Blue arrows and brackets indicating phrasing or dynamics.
 - Blue circled plus and minus signs at the bottom.
 - A red exclamation mark above measure 39.
 - A red question mark above measure 39.
 - A blue 'p' below measure 39.
 - A blue 'p' below measure 42.

46 *pp* *ma espress.* *ten.* *sfz* 9

49 *sfz* *poco agitato* *ten.* 9 7 *cresc.*

50 *f* *con fantasia* 11 *dim.*

51 *calmando molto* *rit.* *a tempo* *p* *tranquillo*

53

55 *mp* *dolciss.* *meno p*

59 *sonoro* *mf* *a tempo*

61 *p subito* *mf sonoro*

63 *poco rit.* *Poco più mosso* *p espress.* (marc. il canto)

66 *molto espress.* *ten.*

70 *a tempo*

73 *Andante* *p dolce* *very intimate, melancholic* *sfz* *ten.*

76 *p* *mf*

77 *dim.* *p* *pizz.* *pp (ma sonoro)*

J.E. 8458