



University of Bergen  
Faculty of Faculty of Fine Art, Music and Design  
The Grieg Academy

**Title of thesis**  
**The Mythology of Violin Excerpts**

By:

**Amin Mojaddamzadeh**

A THESIS SUBMITTED  
FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF MUSIC PERFORMANCE

Supervisor

**Ricardo Odriozola**

(May 2020)

# *Contents*

## **INTRODUCTION (p. 4)**

The methodology of violin excerpts

## **CHAPTER ONE**

Analyzing the techniques (fast passages, shifting, string crossing, spiccato, tuning in 5ths) (p. 6)

**Fast passages (p. 11)**

**Blocking (p. 12)**

**Change the block (p. 13)**

**Adding a note (p. 14)**

**Rhythm (p. 15)**

**Dynamics (p. 16)**

**Accent (p. 17)**

**Chromatics (p. 18)**

**Recommended etudes for fast passages (p. 21)**

**Shifting (p. 22)**

**Anchor note (p. 23)**

**Shifting with the wrist (p. 27)**

**Recommended etudes for shifting (p. 29)**

**Other studies from different books (p.31)**

**Recommended etudes for high positions (p. 36)**

**Fingering (p. 38)**

**String crossing (p. 39)**

**Recommended tips for string crossing (p. 40)**

**Recommended etudes for string crossing (p. 43)**

**Spiccato (p. 46)**

**Different colors on spiccato (p. 48)**

**Spiccato coordination (p. 49)**

**Spiccato in orchestral excerpts (p. 50)**

**Example of spiccato and bouncing bow from other books (p. 51)**

**The methods of tuning in 5ths (p. 52)**

## **CHAPTER TWO**

Analyzing the orchestral excerpts (p. 54)

**Strauss, don juan (p. 55)**

**Schumann, scherzo (p. 57)**

**Mendelssohn, a midsummer night's dream (p. 60)**

**Mozart, symphony no.39 (p. 61)**

## **CHAPTER THREE**

The experience of playing in the audition, Interview, References (p. 62)

**The audition experience (p. 64)**

**Interview (p. 68)**

**References (p. 71)**

# *The methodology of violin excerpts*

In my final project, I intend to explore the method of practicing the orchestral excerpts in order to win auditions. I studied four common pieces that are required in many auditions which include:

- Strauss: Don Juan
- Schumann: Symphony No. 2 (2nd Mvt)
- Mendelssohn: A Midsummer Night's Dream (Scherzo)
- Mozart: Symphony No. 39 (2nd Mvt)

Based on my study, I found some fundamental techniques in these four excerpts which include fast passage, chromatics, shifting, string crossing, and spiccato. To evolve the fundamentals of each technique, I searched through different violin etudes and extracted useful etudes for each specific technique.

I also used my personal experience in violin lessons to show different aspects of the technique and what has worked for me during the years.

In the second part of the project, I analyze technically each excerpt and give some recommendations on difficult spots that I encountered and methods of practicing for different parts of the pieces.

Thereafter, I allocate a part of my project to the experience of playing on the stage to specify the challenges and the problems I have on stage. In this part of the project, I use my group performance lessons and auditions I have had as background.

Later on, I look into the method of tuning in 5ths and discuss a different approach to getting better intonation.

The last part of the project is an interview with a former orchestral member of the a North American orchestra. In this interview I get general tips for playing auditions and see what methods of practicing worked for this musician.

# *Chapter one*

Analyzing the techniques

# *Analyzing the techniques*

Below I show the main technical challenges I encountered in these excerpts

## **Strauss: Don Juan**

- *Fast passages*
- *Chromatics*
- *Shifting (positions 1-9)*
- *Spiccato/sautillé*

## **Schumann: Symphony No. 2**

- *Fast passages*
- *Chromatics*
- *Fast shifting (fast positions 1-3)*
- *Spiccato/sautillé*



## **Mozart: Symphony No. 39 (2nd Mvt)**

- *Articulation*
- *Various rhythms*
- *Style (different style of spiccato )*
- *String crossing*

## **Mendelssohn: A Midsummer Night's Dream**

- *Spiccato/collé*
- *String crossing*
- *Shifting positions 1-3*
- *Bouncing bow*

Richard Strauss  
Don Juan, Op.20

VIOLINO I

Allegro, molto con brio

*ff* *f* *mf* *ff* *fff* *ff* *pp* *ff* *tranquillo* *plebale* *p* *p* *p* *cresc.* *ff*

Schumann — Symphony No. 2 in C Major

VIOLINO I

8

SCHERZO  
Allegro vivace  $\text{♩} = 144$

*mf* *cresc.* *f* *mf* *p* *poco rit.* *a tempo* *Viol. II* *cresc.* *p* *cresc.* *f* *p* *p* *p* *cresc.* *ff* *poco rit.* *a tempo* *Viol. I*

# Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

## Symphony No. 39, K. 543

Andante con moto

6

14

17

22

30

35

40

45

50

55

60

A

B

# A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

## OVERTURE AND INCIDENTAL MUSIC

Scherzo.

Allegro vivace.

VIOLINO I

Nº 1.

16

A

cresc.

B

cresc.

C

pp

D

cresc.

E

15

pp

dim. - - - - - ul - pp

cresc. - - - - -

arco

pizz.

dim.

arco

pp

1

# *Fast passages*

Both Strauss and Schumann have difficult fast passages. They are especially difficult to control under stress in an audition situation. I was inspired by my previous teacher Setareh Beheshti to devise these methods. There are different methods of practicing fast passages.

***1-Block the phrase***

***2-Changing the block***

***3-Adding a note***

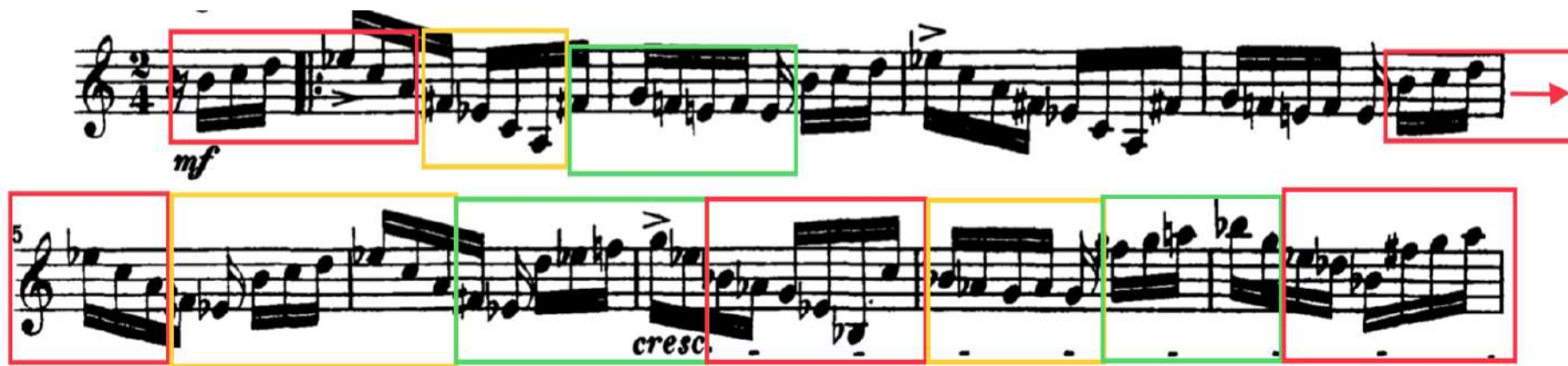
***4-Rhythms***

***5-Dynamics***

***6-Accents***

# Blocking

Selecting a few notes of a phrase makes a block. By blocking all selected notes we put them under a magnifier. I use this method for Strauss and Schumann which are fast and tricky to play. In each blocking, I consider fingerings, intonation, dynamics, string crossing, shifting and bowings. In the next step, I prolong each block in order to check every aspect of a phrase. Making a block also helps me to find the spots where I rush the tempo and it enables me to change the fingerings or bowings to keep a steady tempo.



# *Changing the Block*

As can be seen in the picture above, blocks are shown in different rectangles. I add a rest in each block to make it distinct from the others. Choosing the block is personal and depends on individual ability.



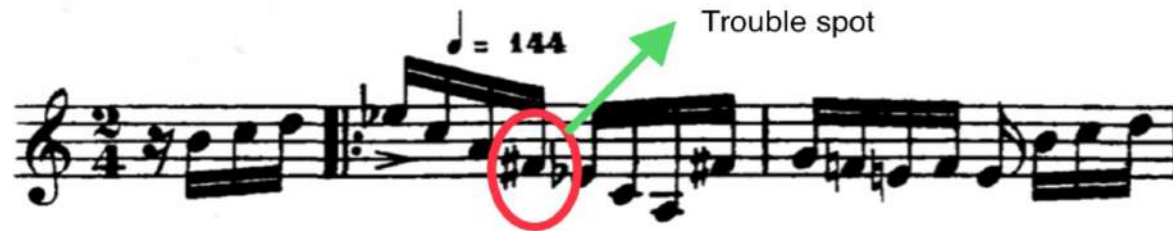
## *Longer blocking*

In this step, two blocks can be connected to make it longer. There are no specific rules on how many notes are added to a block.



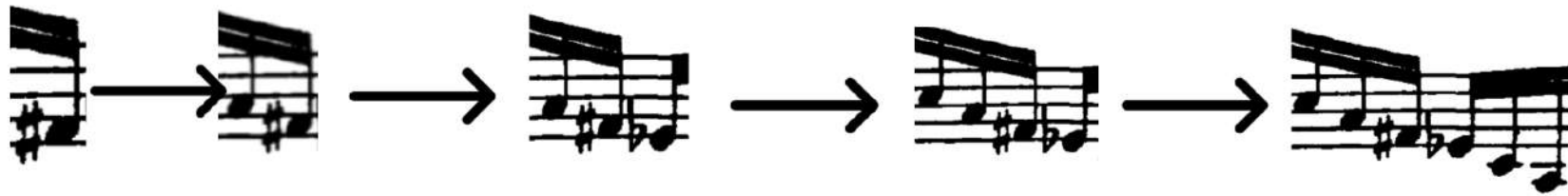
# Adding a note

We can now focus on the difficult spot and add a note before and after. One can gradually add one extra note

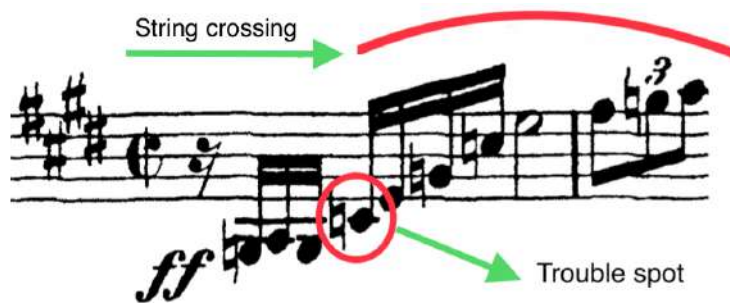


♩ = 144  
Trouble spot

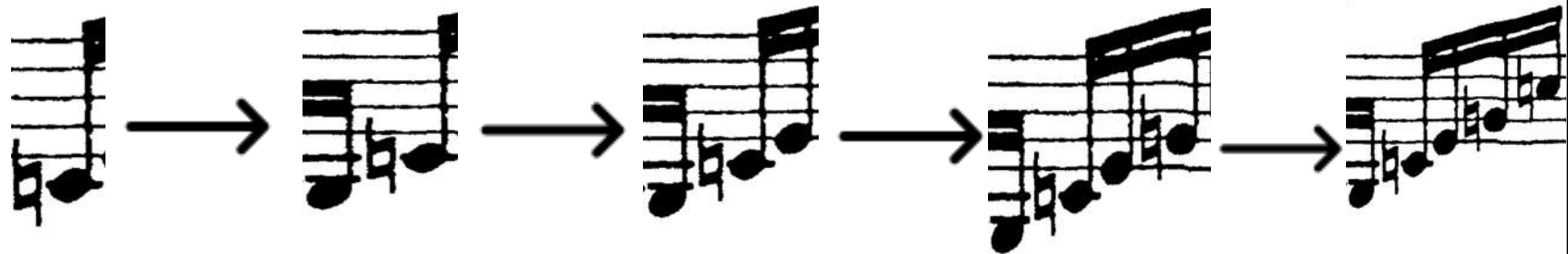
*Schumann, Scherzo*



In Strauss, the trouble spot for me is the C natural, because it is a quick shift from first to third position and it is soon followed by a string crossing.



String crossing  
ff  
Trouble spot

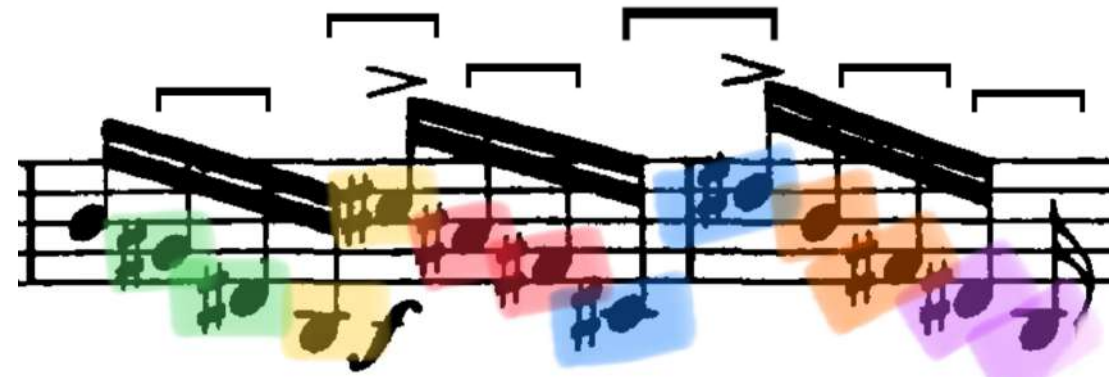


# Rhythm

Different rhythms can be used on practicing in order to improve finger speed, shifting and string crossing. As these rhythms have not equal time values, the shorter time value reinforces the left hand. These rhythms build the finger dexterity and bow/finger coordination. Please watch the video "string crossing" for more explanation.



=



This phrase can be practiced by double stops also.



# Dynamics

In the next step, I add dynamics to the phrase. Adding "*f*" or "*p*" changes the speed and weight of the bow and it may affect the left hand. To coordinate both hands, I change the right hand's behavior in order to strengthen the left hand. I used the following dynamics to coordinate the hands from every perspective.

I did not change any fingerings in order to coordinate the hands. I use the exact fingering I am practicing now for future auditions. Moreover, I usually rush the tempo under stress, and adding dynamics simulates that situation and helps me to control the left hand.

*F*   *P*   *F*

*P*   *F*   *P*

*P*.....*F*

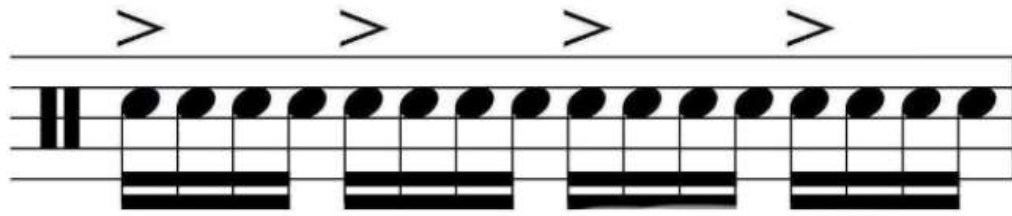
*F*.....*P*



# Accents

Finally I introduce accents to the passage. This can be done in two ways.

First, accents can be added to different beats of the rhythm. For example:



Second, the accents can be specified for different fingers. For example every time the second finger is used:

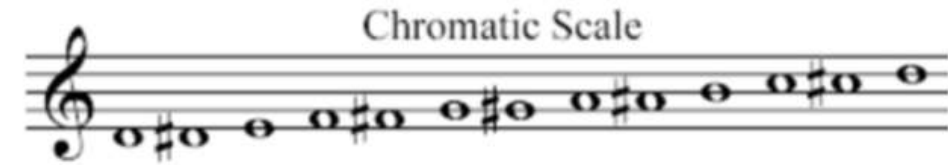


All the above methods are given in order to coordinate both hands. By adding a dynamic or an accent the coordination can be disrupted. Conscious disruption leads to improvement.

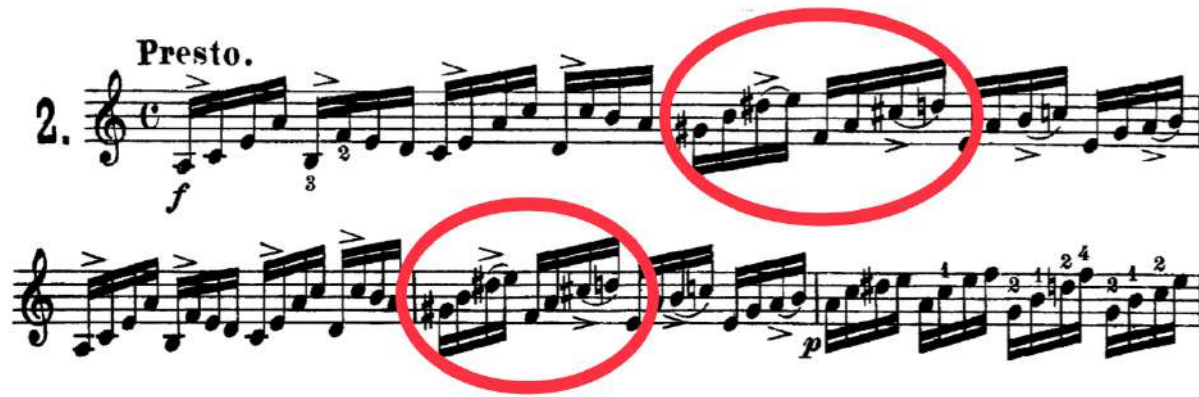
## Chromatics

Chromatics can appear in two forms.

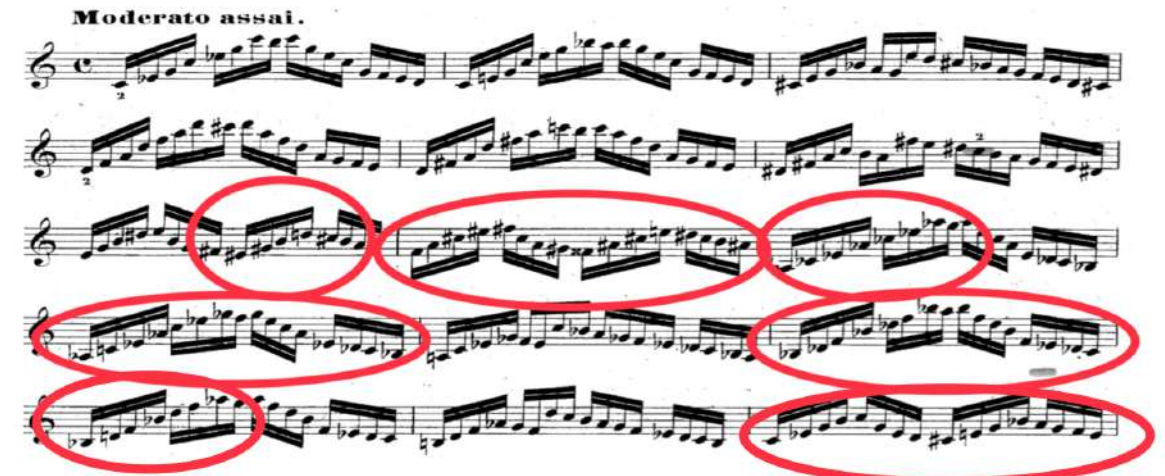
- 1- The chromatic scale
- 2- Notes that do not belong to the main tonality



### *J. Dont, etude. 2*

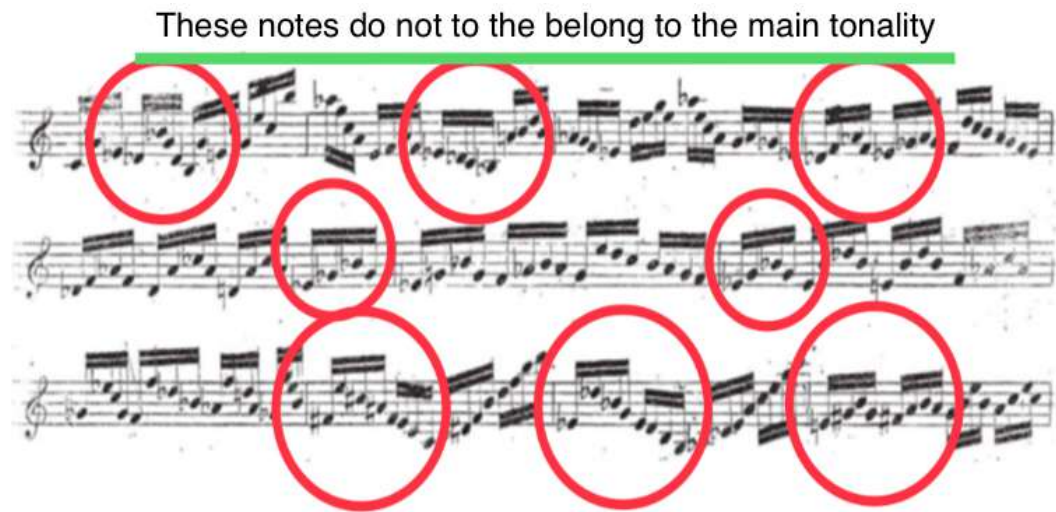


### *Fr. Fiorillo, etude. 35*



## N. Paganini, caprice no. 5

These notes do not belong to the main tonality



The image shows a musical score for N. Paganini's Caprice No. 5. A green horizontal line is drawn above the first staff, with the text "These notes do not belong to the main tonality" written above it. Several groups of notes in the first three staves are circled in red, indicating chromatic passages that deviate from the main tonality.

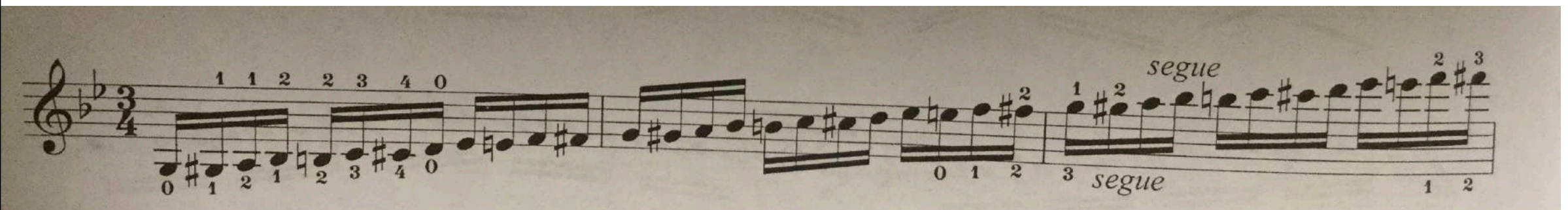
## F. Wohlfahrt, etude. 54

Nº 54. Allegro.



The image shows a musical score for F. Wohlfahrt's Etude No. 54. The title "Nº 54. Allegro." is written above the first staff. Several groups of notes in both the first and second staves are circled in red, indicating chromatic passages that deviate from the main tonality.

- For long chromatic scales, it is good to practice "scale system for violin" by C. Flesch with two patterns of fingering.



The image shows a musical score for C. Flesch's "Scale System for Violin". The score is in 3/4 time and features two patterns of fingering for long chromatic scales. The first pattern is labeled "1 1 2 2 3 4 0" and the second pattern is labeled "0 1 2 3 4 0". The word "segue" is written above the second pattern, indicating a transition to the next section. The score includes various chromatic passages and is annotated with fingerings and bowings.

Practicing chromatic scales can be tricky as fingers come on top of each other in high positions. For me, one of the most challenging parts in Don Juan is the chromatic passage at the end of page 1.

*Strauss, Don Juan*



*Schumann, symphony no.2*



# *Recommended etudes for fast passages*

*R. Kreutzer, etude 10 and 12*

I find it useful to practice Kreutzer etudes 10 and 12 by using the blocking and adding note techniques I explained above.

**Allegro.**



**Allegro moderato.**



# *Shifting*

When discussing shifting, we need to explore the following aspects.

**1-Finger pressure**

**2- Anchor note**

**3- Shifting with the wrist**

## **Finger pressure**

There are close relations between shifts and finger pressure. One of my violin teachers Iman Fakhr, introduced Simon Fischer's DVD In the video "The Secret of tone production" Simon Fischer talks about pressure levels of the left hand of the violin. He defines the levels as follows:

5= Harmonics

4= Slightly more pressure than harmonics

3= Middle pressure

2= enough pressure so that the note can be heard clearly

1= Completely pressed

Different types of pressure can be helpful to shift smoothly. I used to press my fingers on the fingerboard for many years and Simon Fischer's ideas helped me to shift more comfortably.

Different pressure levels can also be useful when the right hand needs more weight or speed, for example, to play crescendo. In this situation, both hands tend to press simultaneously, which creates difficulty for both hands.

In my experience, whenever I play "*Forte*" my left hand tends to press too much. If I play a chord or a difficult double stop, my right hand also tends to press. The above described technique is practical for the Strauss and Schumann excerpts which require a fast and nimble left hand.

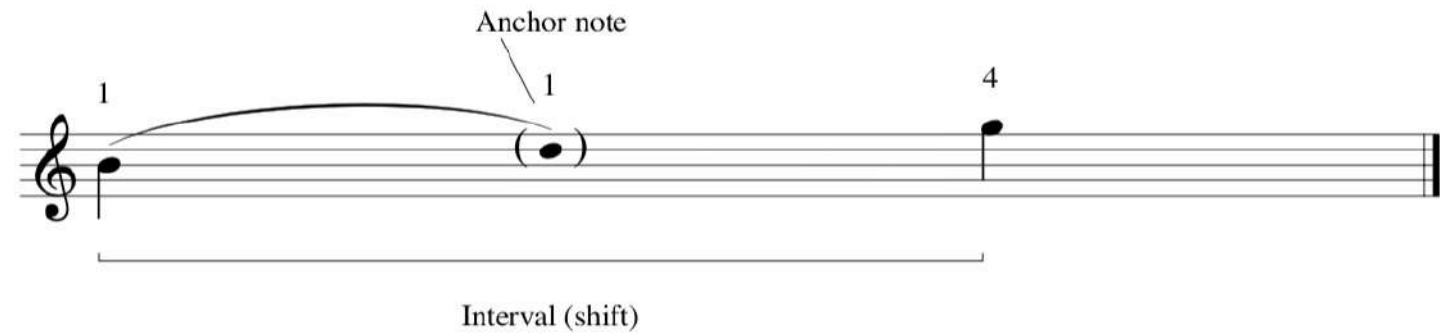
## **Anchor note**

An anchor note is a silent note used in practicing in order to make shifts easier. It is especially useful for long shifts. In other words, It acts as a guide to reach safely to the next note of a shift. I realized this idea on the first movement of Brahms' violin sonata in D minor. Although I practiced the shifts many times, they did not work until I used the anchor note technique.



I refer to the video "Anchor note" I made myself.

To explain in detail, I define the "Anchor note" with the picture below.

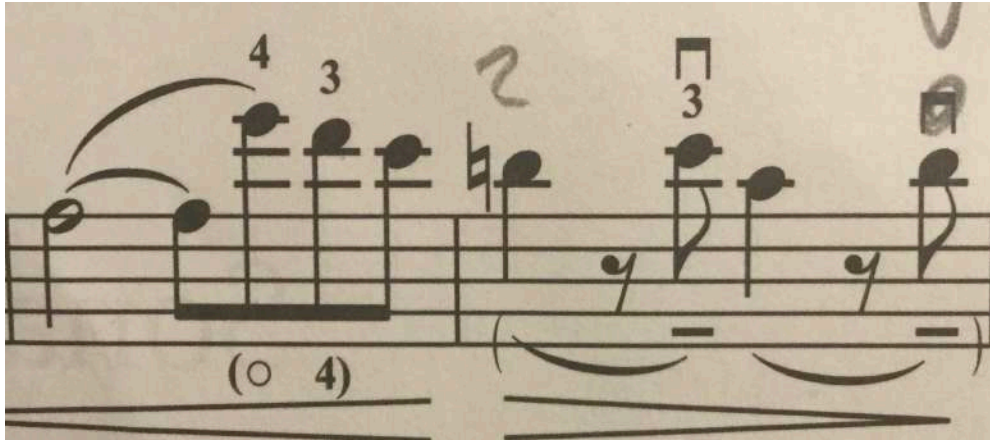


As it shows in the picture, to reach the "G" in A string in the third position, Anchor note is supposed to be "D" played with the first finger. This shortens the distance for the hand. In the following examples, there are different anchor notes with different fingers.

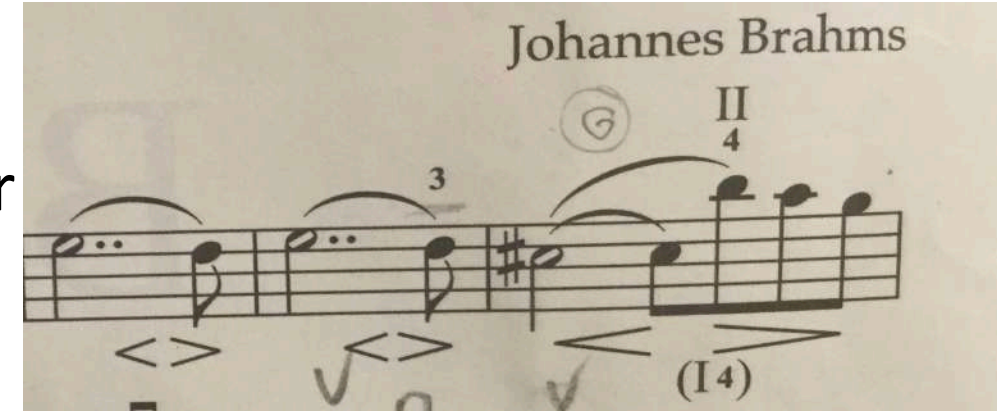
Anchor notes can be chosen according to one's ability. In the examples below, I will explain how I made it easier for myself.

*Brahms Violin sonata in D minor, First movement*

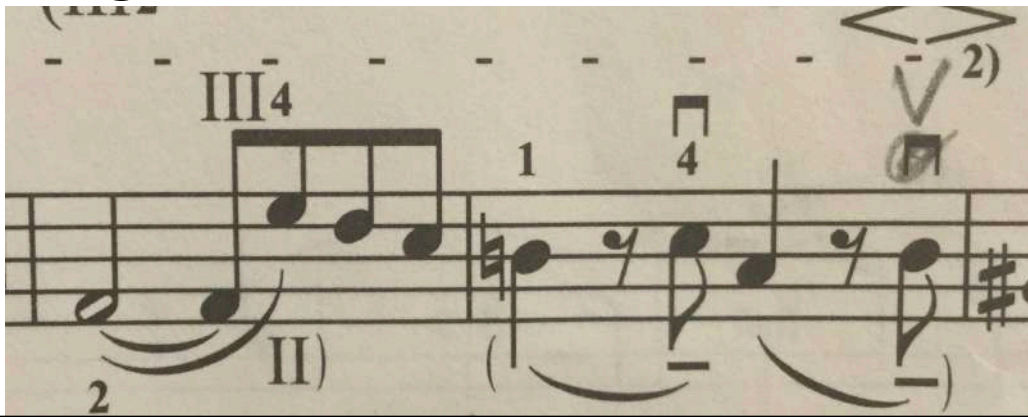
1<sup>st</sup> Finger



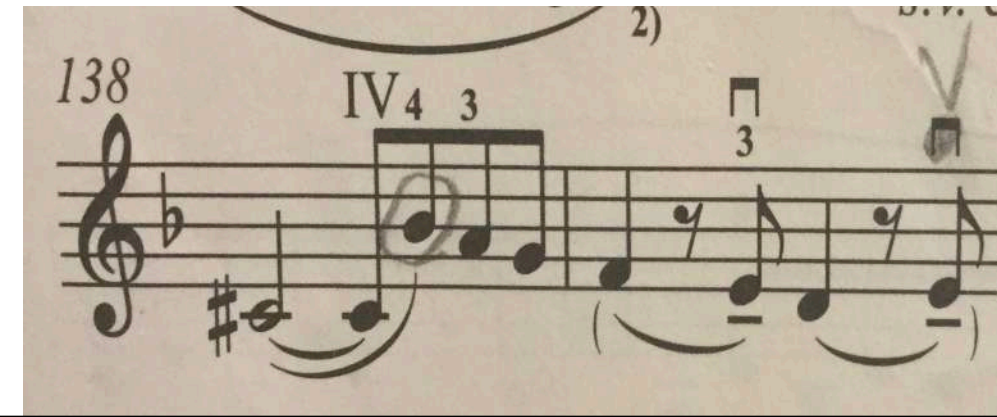
2<sup>nd</sup> finger



3<sup>rd</sup> finger



4<sup>th</sup> finger



I have chosen four shifts on different strings.

In the first picture, the anchor note for me is the 1<sup>st</sup> finger=A

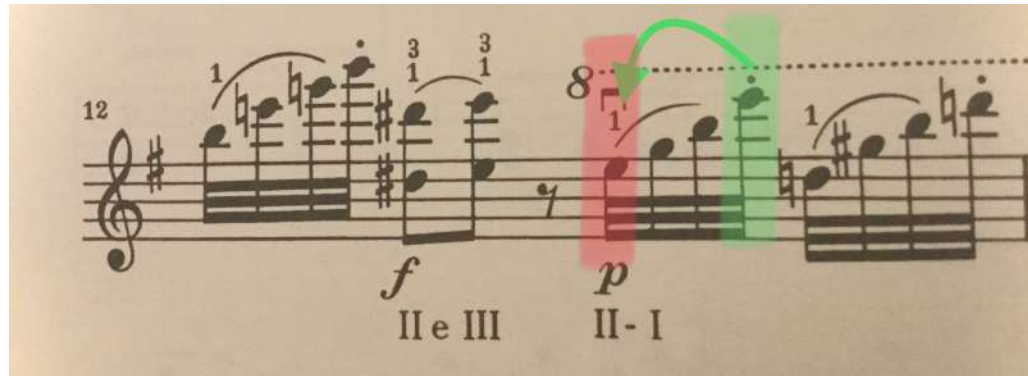
In the second picture, the anchor note for me is the 2<sup>nd</sup> finger=G

In the third picture, the anchor note for me is the 2<sup>nd</sup> finger=C

In the fourth picture, the anchor note for me is the 1<sup>st</sup> finger=F

In some cases, the anchor note can happen downwards.

*N. Paganini, Caprice 15*



Here to find E the 11<sup>th</sup> position, it would be better to take the 4th finger as an anchor

## Shifting with the wrist

Shifting with the wrist can be used in some circumstances. During the lessons I had with my tutor Ricardo Odriozola I found wrist-shifting on half steps beneficial. In my view, shifting with the wrist is mostly used above the third position which is a turning point for the wrist (see picture below). In this position, the wrist attaches to the neck, and fingers can move freely. Shifting with the wrist has some advantages for me. When I shift with the wrist, the sound is more connected and smoother and I play with less effort. Please watch the video "Shifting with the wrist" I made myself.

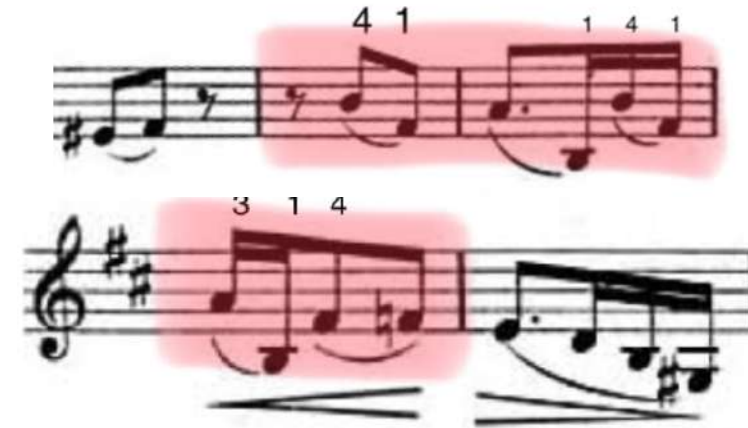


There are some examples in my current repertoire where I use shift with the wrist.

*Strauss, Don Juan*



*Brahms violin sonata in D minor*



*Beethoven violin concerto, first movement*





## XII.

### Exercises in the Fourth Position.

Exercise XII consists of two staves of music in the key of D major (two sharps) and 3/4 time. The first staff is labeled '1.' and the second '2.'. Both staves feature a single melodic line with a long slur over the entire piece. The first staff begins with a finger number '1' under the first note. The second staff begins with a repeat sign and a finger number '4' under the first note. The music includes various rhythmic patterns such as eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.

## XIII.

### Exercises on the First, Second, Third and Fourth Positions.

Exercise XIII consists of two staves of music in the key of D major (two sharps) and common time (C). The first staff is labeled '1.' and the second '2.'. Both staves feature a single melodic line with a long slur over the entire piece. The first staff begins with a finger number '2' under the first note. The second staff begins with a repeat sign and a finger number '1' under the first note. The music includes various rhythmic patterns such as eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.

# *Other studies from different books*

Here follows a list of several etudes that I find useful for working on shifting between different positions.

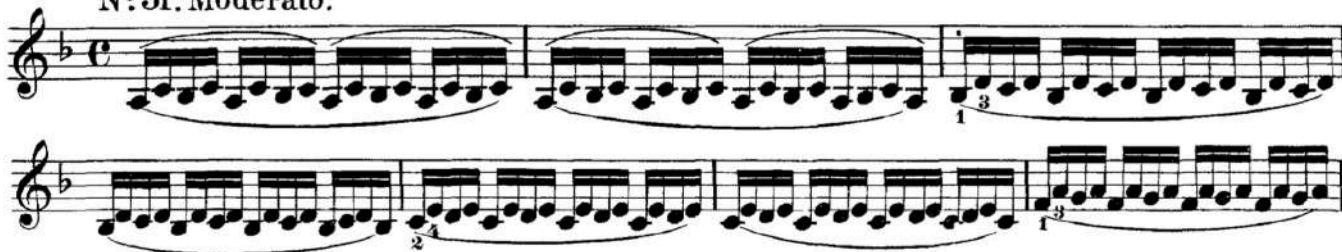
In Wohlfahrt book 2, from 31 to 43, all the etudes are good examples of the third position. Also, etudes 47, 50, 57, 58 are designed to increase dexterity in the third position.

Nº 48. Allegretto.



*F.Wohlfahrt, etude 48*  
*Second position*

Nº 51. Moderato.



*F.Wohlfahrt, etude 51*  
*Second position*



# H.E.Kayser, Book 2 etude 24

Third position

# H.E.Kayser, book 2 etude 25

Third, fifth and seventh position

H.E.Kayser, book 2 etude 26  
Third and fifth position

## R. Kreutzer, etude 11



*Third and fifth position*

## R. Kreutzer, etude 12



*Third, fifth, sixth and eighth position*

## R. Kreutzer, etude 13



*Third, fifth, sixth and seventh position*

## *R. Kreutzer, etude 24*



*Fifth and sixth  
Position*

As etudes move forward, they come with additional techniques. For example, Kreutzer etudes 27 and 29, which consists of various rhythms, different bowings, trills and different positions.

## *R. Kreutzer, etude 27*



*Third and fifth position  
Legato*

*R. Kreutzer, etude 29*



*Fourth, fifth and sixth position  
Trill, Marcato*

*F. Fiorillo, etude 9*



*Third and fourth position  
Legato, Staccato*

*F. Fiorillo, etude 10*



*Third and fifth position  
Arpeggio*

# *Recommended etudes for high positions*

## *F.Fiorillo, etude 11*



*Second, third, fifth and sixth position*

## *F.Fiorillo, etude 33*



*Second, third, fourth, sixth, eighth and ninth position.*

*Legato and staccato*

## *F.Fiorillo, etude 34*



*Sixth and seventh position*

*J.Dont op.35, etude 3*



*Second, third and fifth position. Octave.*

*J.Dont op.35, etude 7*



*Second, third, fourth and fifth position. Octaves and extensions.*

*J.Dont op.35, etude 17*



*Third, fourth, fifth and seventh position. Trill.*

*J.Dont op.35, etude 20*



*Second, third, fifth and sixth position*



# *String crossing*

String crossings can be considered in two ways: Technically and musically.

From a musical point of view string crossings should sound as smooth as a good shift. Just as a good shift connects two notes without sliding or breaks, string crossings should sound seamless without scratches or breaks in between. String crossings should be natural and not noticeable for the listener.

Technically, string crossings need the use of the wrist and the adjustment of the elbow in anticipation of the different string levels.



# *Recommended tips for string crossing*

The following methods can be applied to improve strings crossings:

- **Double stops** → Left-hand Preparation
- **Minimizing the distance between two strings** ( in short string crossings)
- **Applying weight towards the next string**
- **Slurring double stops** (anticipation of the right elbow before playing the next string)

All of these happen simultaneously. Please watch the video "string crossing"

I have come to realize the importance of being conscious about the levels of the right elbow. I call the levels as follows G-1 D-3 A-5 E-7

I find that there are also intermediate levels, achieved by placing the bow on two strings: GD-2 DA-4 AE-6

- **Preparation** → Preparation of the bow in silence before the next note
- **Engagement of sounding points** → Taking into consideration the thickness of the different strings.
- **Big and small movements** → Establishing one string as a center of gravity to facilitate moving between strings.

## Flexibility →

I realized that the work of the hands in shifting and string crossing is very similar. They both require flexibility and smoothness.

Regarding the concept of anticipation, as explained above, the Beethoven violin concerto (which I am studying) gives me a good example

The red spots in the picture below, indicate moments that combine both shifting and string crossing. When playing this passage with a pianist, I realized I was rushing because I did not anticipate the string crossing and shifting properly. Please watch the video "Left hand preparation" I made myself.

*Beethoven violin concerto, first movement*

The image shows a musical score for the first movement of Beethoven's Violin Concerto. It consists of two staves. The top staff is the violin part, and the bottom staff is the piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 2/4. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamics like *f* (forte) and *Tutti*. Red rectangular highlights are placed over specific notes and groups of notes in both staves, indicating moments where shifting and string crossing occur simultaneously. The piano part includes the labels "1<sup>rs</sup> violons" and "Basses".

# *Recommended etudes for string crossing*

Nº 27. Allegro.



Musical score for Etude No. 27 by F. Wohlfahrt, Allegro. The score is written for a single string instrument in treble clef, key of D major (one sharp), and 3/4 time. It consists of two staves. The first staff begins with a 'V' marking above the first measure. The music features a sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes with various fingerings indicated by numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 0. The second staff continues the melodic line with similar rhythmic patterns and fingerings.

*F.Wohlfahrt  
etude. 27*

Nº 41. Allegro moderato.



Musical score for Etude No. 41 by F. Wohlfahrt, Allegro moderato. The score is written for a single string instrument in treble clef, key of D major (one sharp), and common time (C). It consists of two staves. The music features a sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes with various fingerings indicated by numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 0. The first staff begins with a 'V' marking above the first measure. The second staff continues the melodic line with similar rhythmic patterns and fingerings.

*F.Wohlfahrt  
etude.41*

**Allegro moderato.** (♩ = 123)

*mf*

*cresc. - - - - - f dim. - - - - - cresc.*

*H.E. Kayser, etude. 7*

**Allegro non troppo**

*mf*

*mf*

*J.F. Mazas, etude. 10*

Исполняется: 

**Allegro non troppo** [Не слишком скоро]



*J.F.Mazas, etude.11*

I used Mazas etude 11 because there is a explanation for how to practice the etude

**Allegro assai.**



*R.Kreutzer, etude. 7*

**Allegro.**



*F.Fiorillo, etude 30*

# *Spiccato*

Bow strokes consist of three main 3 elements: bow speed, bow pressure, sounding point. When it comes to playing *spiccato*, height and width should be taken into consideration. The proportion of these two elements affects the quality of the sound.



More width and less height gives a warm, rounded, rich sound



More height and less width gives a dryer, hard and percussive sound

I improve my *spiccato* with O.Sevcik op.3. In this book there are many fundamental etudes that are suitable for *spiccato*. Most detaché etudes can be switched to *spiccato*. By practicing *spiccato* I like to look for different colors and qualities.

### ***Collé bow technique***

One of the techniques that I use as a supplement to upgrade my *spiccato* is the *collé* technique. This technique focuses on the springiness and the flexibility of the right-hand fingers. The more flexible and comfortable the wrist and fingers are, the softer the sound will be. *Collé* technique opens up other dimensions that are not achievable with only forearm movement.

I practiced this technique alternating between frog and tip with Kreutzer etude number 7. Please watch the video " Spiccato" I made myself.

### ***R.Kreutzer, etude 7***

**Allegro assai.**





# *Different colors on spiccato*

Other technical aspects can make different colors.

- **Sounding point** → As the bow goes near the fingerboard, the sound will be softer and vice versa.
- **Bow hair** → Using full hair gives more bounce because of the springiness of the hair. Tilting the bow gives a more brushing and warm sound
- **Area of the bow** → Controlled *spiccato* is generally played in the lower half of the bow. However, playing closer to the frog or the middle of the bow gives different dynamics and colors. In my view, there is no specific place for spiccato and it differs depending on the weight balance point of each bow.
- One of the tips to practice the *Spiccato* is to play the passage with the first finger off the bow. This method improves the control of the bow. When the first finger is pressed and locked, the sound is scratchy and choked. This method also helps to better feel the flexibility of the bow.

# *Spiccato coordination*

Playing *spiccato* in a slow tempo may not be a big challenge but when it comes to *spiccato* in fast passages or *spiccato* with string crossing, the coordination becomes apparent. In the video "*Spiccato coordination*" Nathan Cole explains the coordination between two hands. He compares the timing of the left-hand in both slurred and *spiccato* bows at half and one-quarter speed. He also gives some exercises to improve the coordination of the two hands: 1-practice the left hand fingers moving early (or the bow moving late) 2- practice pizzicato. Please watch the video "*Spiccato coordination*" by Nathan Cole for more explanations.

# *Spiccato in orchestral excerpts*

*F. Mendelssohn, A Midsummer Night's Dream*

*Allegro vivace.*

Nº 1.

The image shows a musical score for three staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 3/8 time signature. It starts with a measure containing a whole rest, marked with the number '16'. The music then begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a spiccato articulation. The first staff contains several measures of eighth-note patterns, some with accents and a '3' above a triplet. The second staff continues the eighth-note patterns, featuring a '4' above a group of notes and a '1' above another group. The third staff also continues the eighth-note patterns, with a '3' above a triplet, a '1' above a group, a '4' above another group, and a 'B' above a group. The piece concludes with a *cresc.* marking. The letter 'A' is placed above the final measure of the first staff, and the letter 'B' is placed above a measure in the third staff.



# *The method of tuning in 5ths*

In the video "RAM. Masterclass by Rodney Friend", he discusses various exercises and practice patterns to aid violinists in the cultivation of advanced left-hand facility, intonation, vibrato, and sound quality. He says *"One must understand that the fingers have to be positioned in 5ths in order to achieve better intonation, vibrato, and facility"*

He quotes from his book "The Violin Pedagogics" where he discusses Demetrius Constantine Dounis division of left hand positions into A and B. A consists of clockwise finger patterns (fifths, sixth, octaves) that are natural for the hand and B consists of counterclockwise finger patterns (thirds, fourths). They are unnatural for the hand.

According to Rodney Friend the other reason to practice in 5ths is that violinists tune their violin in 5ths and that is the perfect interval that is in every musician's ear.

Practicing in 5ths has some benefits. First, it makes me use the pad of the fingers and not the tip of the fingers. Second, it draws my attention to the elbow's adjustment. Rodney Friend adds that bad intonation comes from a false adjustment of the elbow and tuning in 5ths clearly proves this idea. Since scales books like "*Scale-Studies for Violin*" by J.Hřímalý and "*Scale System for Violin*" by C.Flesh have covered other intervals (3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, octave, and 10<sup>th</sup>) 5ths can be a good exercise for tuning. Playing 5ths can be extended by adding 6ths and octaves.

In the other part of the masterclass, Rodney Friend explains about the elbow adjustment. He believes that the elbow in the left hand should be moved only for string crossings. There is no need to bring out the elbow too much in high positions. I used to bring out my elbow too much and experienced tension in my left arm.

The next step is adding vibrato to the 5<sup>th</sup>. Vibrato fastens the fingers into the fifth. Vibrato should not wander outside the note. He mentions the vibrato should also be in rhythm.

I found practicing in fifths useful and apply it in my everyday practice. The exercise is not limited to scales, it can also be used in all repertoires.

# *Chapter two*

Analyzing the orchestral excerpts





First staff of music, treble clef, key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#), 3/4 time signature. The staff begins with a series of eighth notes with accents. A dynamic marking of *fff* is present. The staff contains several triplet markings (1, 2, 3) and other fingerings.

Second staff of music, treble clef, key signature of three sharps, 3/4 time signature. It continues the melodic line with triplet markings (1, 2, 3) and other fingerings.

Third staff of music, treble clef, key signature of three sharps, 3/4 time signature. It features a series of sixteenth-note runs with dynamic markings of *p* and *cresc.* (crescendo).

Fourth staff of music, treble clef, key signature of three sharps, 3/4 time signature. It continues the melodic line with triplet markings and a dynamic marking of *ff* at the end.

# Schumann, symphony no.2 scherzo

The following fragments are the spots I found difficult in Schumann scherzo.

The beginning of the first and half-line is played on 3 strings. Therefore, the elbow should be placed in the middle level on the D string and reaching other strings can be done by the wrist.


**SCHERZO**  
**Allegro vivace** ♩ = 144



Bow adjustment

(See page 41)

In the figure below, I use the method of practicing in double stops.



notes marked in the same color and bracket can be practiced as double stops.

My preferred fingering for Schumann, symphony no.2 will be as follows.

*Schumann, Symphony no.2*



The first system of musical notation shows a sequence of notes with the following fingering numbers above them: 1, 0, 2, 1, 4 2, 4 4, 4 2, and 1. The notes are marked with a *cresc.* (crescendo) and a *f* (forte) dynamic. The final note is marked with a *p* (piano) dynamic.



The second system of musical notation starts at measure 36. The notes are marked with the following fingering numbers above them: 1, 2, 4 2, 1, 1, 1, 1, and 1. The notes are marked with a *b* (flat) dynamic.



The third system of musical notation shows a sequence of notes with the following fingering numbers above them: 4, 3 2, 3 1 4, 1 1, 1 1, 4 3, 1, and 1. The notes are marked with a *b* (flat) dynamic.

In the picture below, difficult notes have been marked.

### 1- E flat- A natural tritone

- The first finger should be placed on A natural when the third plays C on the G string. In other words, the first finger should be in place before playing the A.



### 2- Bar 6, E flat- D natural

- There is shifting from e flat to d natural.
- The first finger should move to the third position when the bow is on the D string.



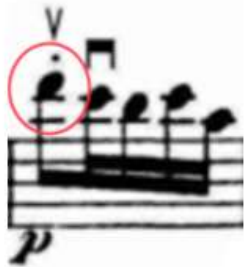
### 3- Bar 7, B flat- C natural

- Due to the fast tempo, it is not possible to shift twice.
- In this excerpt I stay in the 3rd position and extend backwards for the low B flat. The left wrist should stick to the neck.



# Mendelssohn, *A midsummer Night's Dream*

- The main technique in this excerpt is *spiccato*. The dynamic of the piece is "*piano*" and the first note should be *staccato*. I start with an up bow and use the fingers' flexibility instead of moving the whole arm. (see page 41)



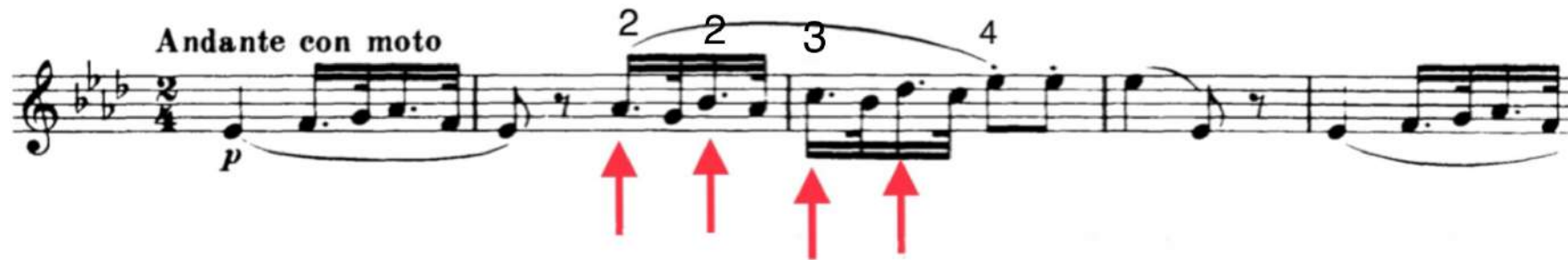
For the 16<sup>th</sup> notes, the bow should bounce naturally by itself

Flexible wrist and fingers would be helpful in another part of the piece. Playing "*sf*" while the piece is "*piano*" requires fingers flexibility (*collé* technique- see page 51)



# Mozart, Symphony no.39

- The articulation and rhythm are the main points that should be considered. In the first line I would prefer to stay on the D string in order to keep the same color. Active notes are marked by arrows.



- In the second theme, the accurate and precise rhythm can be achieved by feeling the 32<sup>nd</sup> notes.



# *Chapter three*

The audition experience

Interview

I already auditioned 3 times in Iran. The idea of making a method in order to master the auditioning situation comes from that time. During the years, I have monitored myself and collected every nuance which tended to be challenging. My plan is to audition for European orchestras that require a higher level of performance. All techniques I mentioned in previous pages have improved my techniques and my performance has become more controlled. I know this is not the end of the story and each audition opens up a new dimension of performance that needs to be addressed. In this chapter, I explain what I have improved in my performance recently.



# *The audition experience*

Stage fright is one of the controversial subjects I usually face in the master project meetings. I see many students suggesting different courses of action and sharing many personal experiences. But when I switch to the violin these approaches may not be applicable for me. This is because each instrument has its own technical difficulties and everyone has his or her own strengths and weaknesses. From my point of view, stage fright is an issue that needs to be addressed. I decided to monitor myself while playing in front of the audience. I noticed there are common problems in every piece which can ruin my performance.

## ***Posture***

It is important for me to detect how stage fright can influence my body. In my last group class, I found that my posture under stress tends to sag to the left and my neck starts pressing. This is why I feel exhausted at the end of my performance. Poor posture causes the chest to narrow which leads to rapid uncomfortable breathing and also hunching my shoulders. Since recognizing these symptoms I am trying to keep an eye on myself to control my body.

## ***Shoulder rest and Chinrest***

The adjustment of shoulder rest and chinrest to fill the gap between the neck and the shoulders plays an important role for the violinist. I have a long neck. Therefore I decided to change my chinrest and moved to a higher one. The change had a considerable impact also on the comfort of my left-hand.

## ***Vibrato***

Another problem in my performance was vibrato. At the end of my performance I felt an incredible pain on my forearm and I could not play the piece again. After analyzing my body movement I realized I had a tense vibrato that comes from my forearm. I notice there are many violinists who vibrate with the forearm, I prefer to vibrate mostly with the wrist, which works better for me.

## ***Tempo***

Every individual reacts differently in response to stress: shaky bow, sweating hands, wrong rhythm or false notes, etc. However, when it comes to my performance, I react to stress by rushing. This is caused by excitement and/or lack of technical preparation.

## ***Stress management***

Many methods can be applied in order to relieve stress levels. My experience of playing auditions and concerts has taught me different approaches to control my stress:

### **Breathing**

Diaphragmatic breathing helps to calm down mentally. This method can also be useful in performance. I had an online course in 2017 "conquering Performance Anxiety" in which I learn how to breathe diaphragmatically. Inhale and exhale marks can be put into the score to make breathing conscious when practicing.

### **Quiet mind**

Yet another problem I face during the performances is to start thinking when making a mistake, thinking about difficult passages that come after in the piece or thinking a few seconds about mistakes I made. This can cause me to lose my concentration. Speaking in my mind is one of the main elements that lead to loss of focus. I try to sing the melody in my mind in order to be focused on the piece.

# *Interview*

I had an interview with my previous violin tutor, one of the former orchestral members of the New World Symphony and Tanglewood, Dr. Setareh Beheshti to get more familiar with the audition atmosphere and get more tips for preparation. This interview was conducted on April 23, 2020 via Skype.

## **How did you prepare yourself for the auditions?**

I practiced the excerpts with the keywords in mind: which excerpt has been chosen for which skill. Example: Mendelssohn spiccato with dynamics.

## **How did you control your stress in the auditions?**

In my view, stress is controlled by knowing where the key points are, what the body needs to keep the stamina within an audition is pacing the excerpt keywords mentally. Physically one needs to be well hydrated, keep light snacks with slow release sugars such as dates, dried fruit, nuts etc...

## **Did you make any schedule for practicing the excerpts?**

Yes, sure. I believe practicing excerpts should be in a cyclical manner, hard, medium, easy. I practiced the hard ones at each practice session, medium ones once or twice a day and the easy ones every other day. As I got closer to the audition date, I practiced randomly so I didn't get used to a certain routine.

## **Do you find etudes helpful?**

All etudes help, but excerpts need to be practiced in an audition situation. One assumes that the skills are good enough for excerpts.

## **What are jury members looking for?**

Jury members usually listen to first the basics-- intonation, rhythm, then the fact that one needs to listen to the excerpt as if they are listening to the entire orchestral piece. The player needs to show all the nuances and articulations.

## **How many auditions did you have?**

My audition history has included auditions for symphony orchestras: principal and section viola, principal and section second violin and section first violin. Opera orchestra with the same seats as mentioned and chamber orchestra and major summer festivals throughout North America. I preferred a variety of excerpts and positions.

After the interview, I realize different orchestras focus on different kinds of music. Therefore my choice for the right orchestra will be important. Whether they require a violinist for contemporary music, Opera orchestra, or chamber orchestra. I also learned to focus on keywords for each excerpt. Example: Schumann steady tempo and coordination.

I learned how to nourish my body by hydration and eating food with slow release sugar like dried fruits.

The most important thing I learned from this interview is focusing on fundamental techniques. Instead of playing each excerpt many times, I can make optimal use of my time and practice techniques.

Each audition is a unique experience and gives a new perspective. My experience would definitely be different from others. Therefore, my plan is to audition for different orchestras to get new experiences and upgrade my performance.

# References

- **Etudes**

*Wohlfahrt, Franz- Sixty Studies for the Violin- G.SCHIRMER, INC- New York-1905*

*Kayser, Heinrich Ernst -Thirty Six Elementary and Progressive Studies For the Violin op.20- G. Schirmer- New York- 1915*

*Mazas, Jacques Féréol - Violin Etudes, op.36- Muzgiz- Moscow- 1962*

*Kreutzer, Rodolphe - 40 Etudes for the Violin- Max Brockhaus- Leipzig- (ca.1850)*

*Don't, Jakob - 24 Etudes or Caprice, op.35- Carl Fischer- New York- 1903*

*Fiorillo, Federigo- 36 Caprices for Violin Op.3- Bartholf senff- Leipzig- (ca.1850)*

*Schradiack, Henry - Exercises for Promoting Dexterity in various Positions, Exercises in Double Stops, Exercises in Different Methods of Bowing- G. Schirmer- New York- 1899, 1900*

*Flesch, Carl - Scale System for Violin- Wilhelm Hansen- Copenhagen- 1921*

*Hřímalý, Jan - Scale-Studies for Violin- G. Schirmer- New York- 1905*

*Sevcik, Otakar - 40 Variations op.3- Bosworth & Co- Leipzig- 1901*



- *Simon Fischer- The Secret of tone production, DVD*
- *Nathan Cole- violin: Spiccato coordination, <https://youtu.be/cP9cl0AC6wA>*
- *NY Phil Audition Challenge Week 11: Don Juan” <https://youtu.be/-PimDtlFQPs>*
- *Rodney Friend- RAM Masterclass: The Violin in 5ths Explained by Rodney Friend, <https://youtu.be/3MTE7aPDM3Y>*
- *Ricardo Odriozola, Associate Professor, Academic years 2018-2019, 2019-2020*
- *Setareh Beheshti, Assistant professor, Tehran University- Department of Music*
- *Richard Strauss- Don Juan- Dover Publications- New York- 1979*
- *Robert Schumann- Symphony No. 2- F. Whistling- Leipzig- 1864*
- *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart- Symphony No. 39- Breitkopf und Härtel/Orchester-Bibliothek- Leipzig- (1933-70)*
- *Felix Mendelssohn- A Midsummer Night’s Dream- Breitkopf & Härtel- Leipzig- (ca. 1880)*