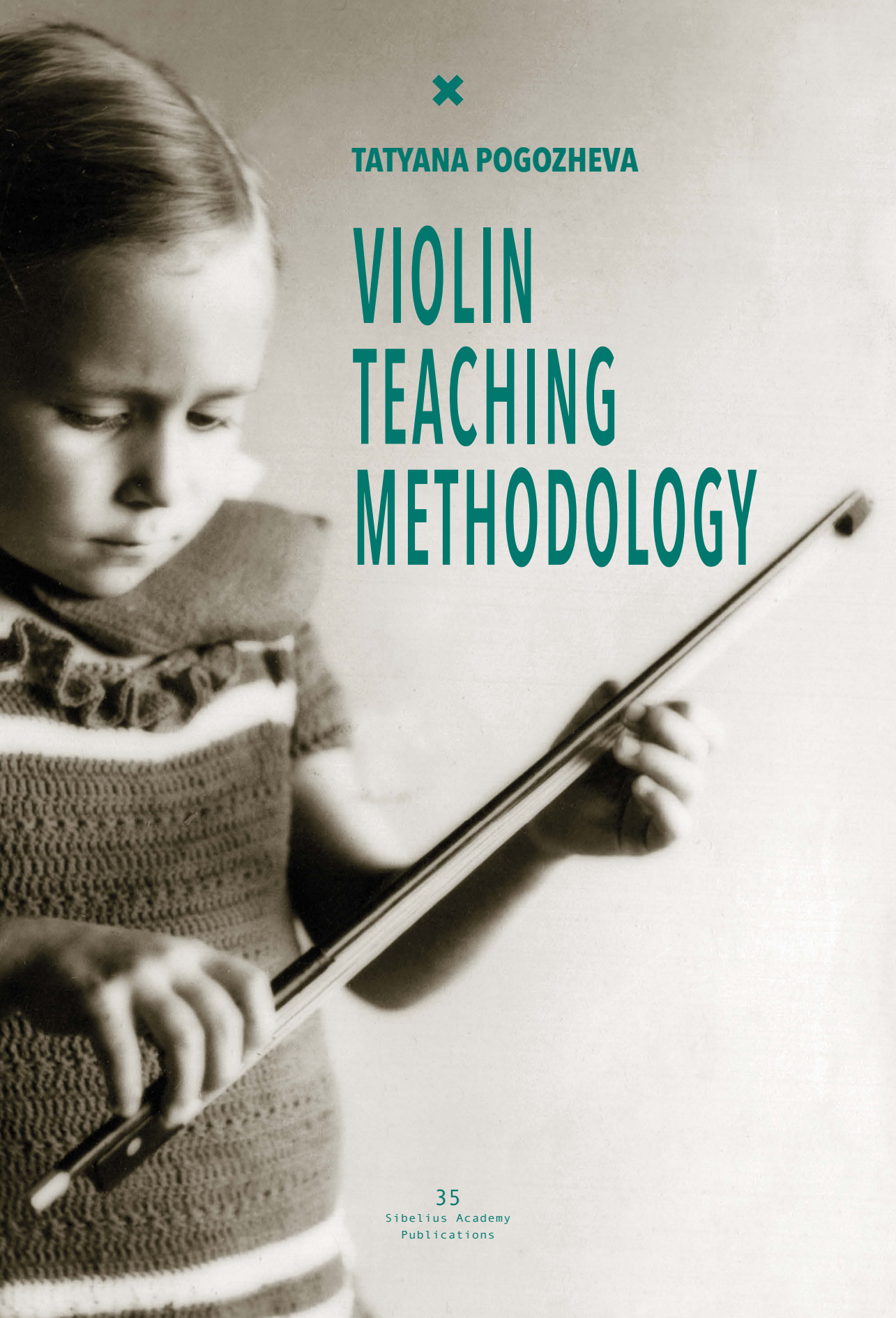




TATYANA POGOZHEVA

VIOLIN TEACHING METHODOLOGY



35

Sibelius Academy
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VOLIN TEACHING METHODOLOGY

Tatyana Pogozheva

VIOLIN TEACHING METHODOLOGY

Violin Teaching Methodology

Editor: Päivyt Meller

Sibelius Academy Publications 35

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Päivyt Meller

FOREWORD

Violin pedagogue Tatyana Pogozheva from Moscow, assistant to the legendary Abram Yampolsky, worked in Finland in the 1960s. She arrived in the northern city of Oulu in 1967, where she taught young violinists, including myself, and local professional musicians for two years. After this period, she returned to Moscow, yet came back to Finland over six summers to teach at various music camps. In addition to teaching, she was an avid lecturer in violin pedagogy.

Tatyana Pogozheva was born in Uman, in the Ukraine part of the Soviet Union, in 1912. She studied at the Tbilisi Conservatory in Georgia under Prof. Semyon Bezrodny, whom she later married. Their son, Igor Bezrodny, a world-renowned violinist and a professor at the Sibelius Academy and the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory, was born in Tbilisi.

After graduation, Tatyana Pogozheva pursued her studies in Moscow under Abram Yampolsky. Tatyana was celebrated as a virtuosic violinist whose tone was exceptionally beautiful and rich in nuance. As a young violinist, she held numerous recitals and performed as a soloist with orchestras. In 1937, the Bezrodny family moved to Moscow.

For twenty years, Tatyana Pogozheva served as Yampolsky's assistant at the Central Music School of Moscow. She then continued teaching at the Ippolitov–Ivanov Musical Institute, becoming their Head of Pedagogy. During the war, from 1941–1944, the Central Music School of Moscow operated in the city of Penza, where Pogozheva worked as a teacher and form master. She died in Moscow from a serious illness on 21 September 1980.

On 15 November 1992, the Sibelius Academy commemorated Tatyana Pogozheva's 80th birthday with a concert conducted by her son, Prof. Igor Bezrodny. The concert coincided with the publication of *Opi soittamaan viulua* ('Learn to Play the Violin'), the Finnish translation of a book written by Pogozheva in Oulu in the 1960s. The book focuses on teaching beginner violinists and forms part of the Sibelius Academy's publication series. Elementary education was particularly close to Pogozheva's heart. She photographed me, her 5-year-old pupil, to illustrate the first steps in teaching the positions to hold the violin and the bow. Some of those photographs are displayed in this book. Her great passion was sharing the knowledge of the best Russian violin schooling outside of the Soviet Union.

The book you are holding is an in-depth pedagogy manual for violin teachers, covering the basics from the 1st year all the way through to the 7th year. Considering the time it was written, her style may at times sound a little "old-fashioned". Yet, in many ways, Tatyana Pogozheva was well ahead of her time, combining psychological and physical aspects of violin playing and learning. As a person, she was warm and considerate and always put

the well-being of the child first. Some of the repertoire included in the study plan no longer exists, but I trust that today's violin teachers will easily find the right material to support the systematic method introduced herein. The positions and ways to hold the bow and the violin as ergonomically as possible have not changed.

The Finnish translation of this book was published in Prof. Igor Bezrodny's memorial concert at the Sibelius Academy in 2021. The English translation will be published in the FiESTA! – Bridging the Past and Future of String Pedagogy, 42nd international ESTA conference in Helsinki in 2026.

I would like to thank the estate of Igor Bezrodny for the publishing rights to this valuable book, the Sibelius Academy of Uniarts Helsinki for its digital publication and Diandra Flores for her support in financing the printing. Above all, I would like to thank Tatyana Pogozheva for her enormous contribution to Finland's violin pedagogy. Its impact is still felt today, and my own career as a violinist and teacher is primarily founded on the basis laid down by her teaching and guidance. ■

Helsinki, May 24, 2026,

Päivyt Meller

Senior Lecturer in Violin Music
Sibelius Academy of the Arts University, Helsinki
President, ESTA Finland



Tatyana Pogozheva and Päivyt Meller (née Rajamäki) in the spring of 1968.

VIOLIN TEACHING METHODOLOGY

Tatyana Pogozheva

FROM THE AUTHOR

This book provides a tool for teaching music pedagogy and the methodology of violin playing. It is intended for pedagogy students and novice teachers.

A lack of guidance and cooperation is something that significantly impedes the work of teachers of music pedagogy and the methodology of teaching. In the worst case scenario, these subjects are divided between teachers who disagree with one another on the methodological principles of elementary education. Such a contradiction undoubtedly downgrades the quality of teaching.

A course in violin teaching methodology lives up to its name when it provides a clear theoretical and scientific basis for practical examples. Attaining years of experience, every teacher gradually refines their own methods by choosing the means they consider to be most consistent and effective.

Teachers guide music pedagogy students by showing them ways to adopt postures and control the movements of beginner violinists. As long as the students are under the strict supervision of an experienced teacher, exploration of the necessary skills takes place naturally and correctly, and the student's role is mainly that of practitioner. For novice teachers, any deeper insights into the pedagogical process related to the student's individuality, physiology or psychology are at this point largely unfathomable.

When a young teacher earns their first placement in a music school, they immediately face a multitude of challenges. With plenty of students to teach and only one teaching method in their tool kit, they run into trouble, because every student is an individual and requires a different approach. This leads to various difficulties. Unable to take into account the individual characteristics of students, the teacher lets methodological errors slip through. These errors are something the students will come to regret later on.

When observing the independent work of novice violin teachers, certain shortcomings and defects can be detected. As a result, their students often suffer from tense muscles in their hands and indeed their whole body, incorrect postures, impure intonation and poor sound formation. A typical mistake among novice teachers is inconsistency in learning the educational material. All of this owes to the fact that the shortcomings or the reasons for them have not been analysed in-depth in the methodology classes of vocational colleges for violin teachers. The importance of correct and consistent

elementary teaching has not been sufficiently stressed. The teaching process itself has been covered only at a very general level. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that when working independently, novice teachers make many mistakes that limit the musical and technical skill level of their students.

The purpose of this book is to explain when and under what conditions the errors indicated above occur. It aims to complement the methodology of teaching and, at least to some extent, to help avoid mistakes. It also seeks to facilitate the work of novice teachers—those in charge of the primary education process that is the most difficult and comes with the most responsibility¹.

Students who are accepted into music schools are not equally talented. They are physically and mentally different. To cope with them all, the novice teacher should have a thorough understanding of all aspects of methodology. Not yet equipped with enough personal practical experience, they should be helped to understand the laws of physiological and psychological features that form the basis of all human activity.

Analysis of the teaching process of a beginner violinist based on these laws helps to highlight the vulnerabilities and difficulties inherent in the process. When a teacher is critical of every means and not a prisoner of pedagogical norms, it is easier for them to orient themselves towards choosing more suitable methods. Such additional information adds initiative and creative thinking to the process.

When music pedagogy and the methodology of violin teaching are based on scientific knowledge, uniform requirements can be achieved. The aim of the author is to bundle practical and theoretical pedagogical questions together based on the physiological and psychological characteristics of humans. Elementary education as the process that comes with the greatest responsibility is analysed in detail. The book also touches on the fundamentals of the physiological nervous system and the psychology of contribution in music.

The book examines the music school's seven-year learning process from entrance exam to final exam. At each stage, the author identifies the most common methodological errors and suggests ways to avoid them. She often refers to Soviet teachers and shares their tips and advice. To facilitate the first steps of novice teachers and to instil correct and consistent skills in students, the book suggests one possible set of materials in keeping with the violin syllabus of music schools. Some pieces are examined in detail to understand their technical challenges and ways of overcoming them. ■

INTRODUCTION

METHODOLOGY OF VIOLIN TEACHING AS A SUBJECT OF STUDY

When teaching someone to play the violin it is not enough that you play it well yourself – you also need to master the entire teaching process used in music school, from the 1st year through to the 7th year, and know how to teach each technical skill. Practical pedagogical training and the methodology of teaching included in vocational studies serve this purpose. The former is aimed at 3rd- and 4th-year students. During the course, the students practise with beginner violinists under the supervision of an experienced teacher. The methodology of teaching, on the other hand, complements the skills acquired in practice by reinforcing their theoretical aspects.

Over the two-year practical pedagogical training course, students learn about the processes used in the first two years (= elementary education) of music school. The syllabi for later years are only introduced in theory during methodology classes.

In music schools, each year follows its own curriculum and logical order in learning new skills. The methodology teacher introduces vocational students to materials and methods suited to teaching the violin.

The methodology of violin teaching consists of a set of pedagogical means used by teachers to pass on their knowledge to students. These means have been developed by many generations of teachers in their everyday work, and are constantly evolving and changing.

All new pedagogical means are founded on empirical experience. In primary education, most of the difficulties encountered when learning the required skills occur due to the completely different set of tasks that the left hand and right hand are expected to perform simultaneously. This is something teachers have noticed in their work. Accumulated experience has resulted in an established system where the posture of the left hand and the posture of the right hand are introduced separately. Bow hold is first practised with a pencil and only then with a bow. Fingering and the finger-board are introduced by playing pizzicato. The tasks of the two hands are then combined. Practice has shown that this method makes it much easier to learn the basics of violin playing. Additionally, our country uses patriotic instructional materials that are largely based on children's songs and folk songs, and which children find easy to understand. Music schools have also set up music theory and ear-training classes where kindergarten-age children can learn about intervals, intonation and rhythm.

The methodology of violin teaching is constantly evolving. Many pedagogues have considered it necessary to draw influences from physiology or psychology, for instance. In the words of A.I. Yampolsky, "In the areas of

pedagogy and methodology, the Soviet violin school has achieved excellent results both artistically and in the development of pedagogical knowledge and teaching methods. Judging by scientific achievements, the development of violin pedagogy on the basis of I.P. Pavlov's scientific research on the higher nervous system, for example, is something that is becoming increasingly topical."² In his works, Professor K.G. Mostras also emphasises the laws of the higher nervous system and the understanding thereof as a basis for learning: "It should be remembered that when playing an instrument, all movements originate from the higher nervous system that guides, controls and regulates this process."³

It is obvious that methods based on science are more effective and therefore more correct. When teaching the violin, the teacher wields influence on the student's nervous system and psyche as per their principles. The fact that students of an experienced teacher progress faster than those of an inexperienced teacher is no coincidence: an experienced teacher has been doing practical work for a long time, and by monitoring the students has found better ways of teaching. If the work of an experienced teacher is analysed from a psychological or physiological perspective, it is seen that all of the means of influence they use touch on the laws of the higher nervous system. The teacher has empirically and experimentally alighted on principles already known and confirmed by science.

Often a student is unable to adapt to the violin or to learn the correct posture. It would be wrong to say that the quality of the posture depends on talent. In practical pedagogical work, there are numerous examples of talented students with poor posture and stiff hands, whereas a mediocre student may demonstrate good posture with no extra tension. In fact, anyone – regardless of their musical abilities – can be taught a correct, natural posture in which the hands remain free. It all depends on the methodology of elementary teaching. Students who struggle to learn good posture must be offered a method that makes the process easier. Since it has been proven that technical skills are easier to learn separately rather than simultaneously, the teacher must be able to divide the difficult technical skill (e.g. hand posture) into the parts that make up the whole, and teach them individually. Only then can the parts be combined. Practice has shown that in this way, postures are actually learned much more quickly and much more effectively.

Some teachers obviously lack knowledge of the causes of muscle tension, for example, or the circumstances required to achieve pure intonation. Whereas the methodology was previously based on many years of practical experience, it is now possible to justify the learning process scientifically. For this reason, the training of young violinist-teachers should address music-related questions, but also shed light on the scientific side of pedagogical problems..

THE TEACHER AS AN EDUCATOR

The environment in which a child grows up plays a crucial role in their upbringing. Family and school, the two most important contexts, should strive to shape the moral character of the child in a way that befits our socialist society.

Active interaction with students and their parents helps teachers understand the children's home lives and living conditions. Such contact also allows a teacher to influence a child's character, opinions and interests. The teacher can help the student broaden their knowledge and perspective through both music and discussions, and support the student's quest to understand goodness and beauty. Such an influence is possible only if the teacher exercises great authority over all aspects of the student's life. This authority must first be earned.

Teachers must live up to all of the ideas and aspirations they wish to develop in their students. Even the slightest pretentiousness or mismatch between the teacher's own behaviour and the expectations placed on students will not go unnoticed. Regardless of their age, children are able to spot weaknesses that diminish the teacher's authority⁴. Normally, the student listens carefully to the teacher's opinions and interests, mimics their behaviour and opinions, and can even unintentionally adopt some of their traits. A personal example set by the teacher is thus the most powerful means of education. "The use of one's voice, how one stands or sits... When you are a teacher, all these are very, very important. Every little detail carries meaning."⁵ Students must be treated the right way from the very first meeting.⁶ Even the youngest of children demonstrate healthy self-love and self-worth. These feelings must be respected and under no circumstances violated.

A sense of discipline is one of the cornerstones of a healthy teacher-student relationship. When educating a student, discipline is one of the most effective means.⁷ In discipline, every detail counts. Lessons begin on time, the practice diary is carefully filled in, every exercise and order is carried out (8) and high standards of conduct and appearance are maintained – all of which the students notice and adopt from the start.

Discipline is not the responsibility of the main subject teacher alone. Absolute discipline can only be achieved if all teachers apply the same requirements and strictly monitor compliance.

In each lesson, the teacher must give the student a concrete task to complete or a goal to meet, show them ways of achieving it and awaken the student's desire to explore unique means of artistic expression. This is possible only if the process interests the student. Artistic work cannot be forced. The student's interest largely depends on the teaching methods used. Lessons must be structured, interesting and varied. The success of the work thus depends not only on the student's talent, but also on the circumstances that the teacher creates for the learning process. This is meticulous work that calls for patience, good education, extensive knowledge and, most importantly, genuine love for the noble work of an educator.

MUSCLE FUNCTION AND CHARACTERISTICS IN VIOLIN PLAYING

Reasons for beginners' muscle tension. The most challenging thing in the process of learning the violin is to avoid the muscle tension that can easily take over the whole body from the earliest lessons. If not prevented, it can pose a serious obstacle to learning correct playing postures and technical skills. Tense hands are stiff and inflexible and look clumsy on the instrument. Tension in the hands has a negative impact on sound-making, intonation, vibrato, shifting and bowing techniques, limits finger velocity and causes the fingers to tire quickly.

What do teachers usually do in such a situation? They show the pupil what a relaxed hand should look like and diligently monitor that their advice is being heeded. With the gradual development of their skills, the pupil begins to 'liberate' their hands – at least to some extent. Sometimes, however, the tension remains despite the teacher's best efforts, becoming a habit that obstructs future development.

Are beginners' muscles always tense? Practice has shown that quite a few pupils can easily adapt to their instrument without extra tension, and adopt correct playing postures as early as in their first year. If tension occurs, the underlying reasons can vary, and these reasons are something of which every teacher should be aware. This in turn requires a basic understanding of the function and properties of muscles.

Muscle function and its properties. Muscle tissue consists of a large number of muscle cells, blood vessels and nerve endings that connect them to the central nervous system.

The term 'muscle function' refers to the alternating contraction and relaxation of muscles. When muscles contract, the nutrients carried by blood oxidise. This reaction releases energy, which the muscle uses for its next contraction. Oxygen entering the bloodstream through the respiratory tract is transported throughout the body and participates in the oxidation reaction. When the muscle is not working, only a small number of blood vessels are open for circulation. As soon as the muscle begins to contract, most of the vessels open up, accelerating circulation⁹. Muscle function is thus closely linked to metabolism, circulation, respiration and, above all, the central nervous system.

Muscles have three main traits: elasticity; contractility; and tension. Elasticity refers to a muscle's ability to return to its natural state after the release of external pressure. For example, if a muscle is pressed, it forms an indentation that returns to its original shape when the pressure is released. Contractility and tension mean different things: bending the arm slightly at the elbow will make the biceps contract, but the muscle remains soft and relaxed to the touch. The arm can remain in this position for quite a long time without getting tired. If, on the other hand, the arm is flexed from the

same joint to make the biceps appear as prominent as possible, the muscles of the arm tense up and become hard, just as when lifting a heavy weight. The muscle cannot remain in this state for very long, as it tires quickly.

Muscle tension of any kind consumes a lot of energy. The amount consumed depends on the force used and the duration of the muscle strain. Muscle tension is a physiological state that is proportional to the load exerted. The load is not always caused by physical activity, such as lifting a weight, but can also be psychological: fear, tension, despair and other negative feelings are known to cause involuntary muscle tension.

Poorly learned motor skills consume energy well beyond that which is necessary. When a child is learning to write, their entire body is tense all the way up to the tongue, although the muscles actually involved in writing are mainly located in the right wrist. The same applies to most children who pick up a violin for the first time. Although the violin weighs little, the child activates all the muscles in their body and expends a lot of extra energy, causing their hands to tire quickly.

Emotional excitement, fear, overexertion and the many demands of the teacher can also cause muscle tension in pupils. When working with beginners, teachers should consider teaching methods that can prevent the above-mentioned phenomena. In other words, teachers should be aware that these phenomena can occur in any pupil and be prepared to prevent them.

In practice, many teachers underestimate the timidity, confusion and nervousness that the first lesson and unfamiliar environment can evoke in a child. This state of mind may lead to general tension and ‘freezing up’, which causes all the muscles to be tense even before the child starts acquainting themselves with their new instrument. This is the first thing to be addressed by the teacher. The teacher may think that such a state is normal and will pass in time. And so, in an effort to save time, they jump to teaching postures straight away in the first lesson.

When the teacher hands the violin to the pupil, the grasp reflex, overexertion and clumsy handling of the instrument may add to the tension. Without paying due attention to this, the teacher begins to demonstrate the correct positions of the hands, fingers, head and feet. The pupil tries to internalise and implement all of this. Under this wave of back-to-back instructions, they struggle and tense up even more.

In this way, the teacher does not prevent the causes of muscle tension but rather intensifies them, and by so doing slows down – or even hinders – the learning of correct hand postures. When working with beginners, tension is often seen as a necessary evil to be addressed and combatted.

The biggest mistake an inexperienced teacher can make when teaching the postures is to focus solely on the stiff hand holding the violin or bow. The teacher puts all their effort into perfecting the hand when in fact the entire body (other arm, legs, back, front and back of the neck) may also be tense. Before starting the lesson, the child must be relieved of this general tension

– otherwise, there is a risk that the muscle tension experienced during the first lesson will become ingrained in their postures, creating a problem that is very difficult to solve later. Instead of rushing with the hand postures, the pupil should first be allowed to get to know the teacher and adjust to the new situation. Perhaps the first few lessons could be held entirely without the violin. From the onset, the lessons should evoke solely positive feelings, interest and enthusiasm in the pupil, never fear and anxiety.

Before teaching the postures, the teacher should give the pupil an impression of what a relaxed muscle feels like (so that they know their aim). The pupil is shown examples of how any movement can be performed with either tense or relaxed muscles. With a number of exercises repeated each lesson, the pupil will gradually learn to control their muscles and release tension. Arm and hand muscles should be active and relaxed, but not overly relaxed, since this makes them slow and sluggish. From the earliest lessons, the pupil is taught muscle control that gradually becomes a habit.

Releasing a violinist's muscle tension. The text above lists ways to prevent muscle tension in beginners. But what if tension is already present? How can you address it?

In practical pedagogical work, one often encounters pupils who have been studying the violin for several years and are still playing with rigid hands. Relieving muscle tension in such students is a much tougher task than preventing it at the beginning of their studies would have been. Over the years, the pupil has become so accustomed to playing with taut muscles that they no longer even notice it. As a result, they are unable to make a connection between the tension, the quality of their playing and other difficulties caused by it.

An experienced teacher will immediately notice the negative impact of muscle tension on the posture of the hands and the body as a whole, the quality of sound-making, vibrato and shifting, and the learning of new technical skills.

An inexperienced teacher, on the other hand, may miss the signs. Muscle tension is not always visible, but there are indicators to watch out for: the pupil may hold the violin or bow with a heavy hand; their hands, and especially their wrists, may be stiff; the fingers of their left hand grip the neck of the violin so tightly that it is almost impossible to get their thumb to move; the fingers of their right hand press into the wood of the bow, and their right shoulder is raised; and/or their neck may be tense, their teeth clenched and their breathing uneven, and their arm movements lack fluidity. In such situations, an inexperienced teacher can easily focus on things that differ from standard playing postures, such as the incorrect position of the fingers on the bow and fingerboard, or the fact that the pupil does not bend their wrist at the frog or extend it when playing a down-bow. The teacher assumes these flaws are the root of the problem and tries to fix them externally. They create an illusion of the correct posture by trying to instil

smooth, free movements in the pupil. However, movements that look right do not mean the hands are free from tension when all the other muscles that the teacher has overlooked remain tight. This tension has become latent, which is more dangerous than outwardly visible stiffness.

The muscles remain tense even if the flexion and extension of the wrist look correct. This confuses an inexperienced teacher, who looks for reasons for poor sound-making and other shortcomings in the wrong place.

In addition to the reasons listed above, muscle tension can be the result of an uncomfortable playing posture. Sometimes, simply finding a comfortable posture will do the trick. Releasing the hands alone is not enough; the release must extend to the muscles of the whole body. In violin playing, this is where everything should begin.

The teacher needs to guide the pupil to control the state of their muscles while playing. To this end, the pupil needs to learn to understand the difference between tense and relaxed muscles through comparison and palpation¹⁰.

If the pupil picks up the instrument with a rigid hand, squeezes the neck between their thumb and index finger and locks the violin between their shoulder and chin, the teacher can ask them to pause for a moment and 'listen' to their muscles and how they feel. This is followed by relaxation exercises with exhalations and inhalations to relieve muscle tension¹¹. The pupil is asked to stand relaxed with their arms hanging by their sides. The teacher places the violin on the pupil's shoulder and instructs them to lift their relaxed arm 'lightly' and to place their hand gently on the violin. After several repetitions, the pupil starts to apprehend their earlier tensions involved in lifting up the violin and gradually gets used to assuming the posture with relaxed movements.

A similar method can also be applied to the right hand: the teacher places the bow in the pupil's relaxed hand and observes how they draw it along open strings. As soon as the pupil grasps this feeling of freedom, they know what to strive for. With self-control, they are able to relax their muscles more easily and correct any flaws in their posture.

To relieve muscle tension, it is sometimes necessary to put the pieces under practice on hold. When teaching the pupil to draw the bow correctly and freely, the material should be as easy as possible, such as scales.

Muscle fatigue and the correct way of practising. Any activity unfamiliar to a muscle activates a large number of additional muscles. The resulting movement is clumsy and energy-consuming. Through systematic training, muscles become more skilful and specialised, and the person controlling them gains speed, precision and proficiency. The violin is a unique instrument, and a challenging one to learn, as it requires a very fine division of labour between muscles. In order for that work to be as effective as possible and not cause pain or fatigue, pupils must learn to use their muscles in an energy-efficient way, alternating between rest and work. Practice should be daily and regular, with special attention paid to breathing. Breaths taken

while playing should be even, without restraints in inhalation and exhalation. As muscle energy and its economy are closely linked to the work performed, one and the same muscles should not be exercised for long periods. Pupils often practise challenging passages over and over again, thinking this will help them more quickly overcome difficulties. This is not the case. A better option is to work on other exercises, revisiting the passage in between them. This way, it will be learnt more quickly. Muscles, like any living organisms, require proper alternation between work and rest. Contraction is their work; relaxation is their rest. The more correct this alternation, the longer and more sustainable the work. The best proof of this is the heart, which works non-stop throughout a person's life.

Active muscles should be allowed to rest as often as possible, including while playing.¹² If done properly, daily training will strengthen the muscles and gradually prepare them for longer, more sustained work.

If muscles suddenly grow tired or sore while playing, this means the violinist has not followed the routine. Perhaps they missed a few days of practice and wanted to make up for lost time by suddenly playing for several hours at a time, or forgot to rest due to their excitement. As a result, their hands become tired or even sore, making it difficult to continue playing.

Sometimes pupils get tired during a lesson but are too shy to say anything or take a break. The feeling passes and they continue with tired hands, which results in aches. Hands that have been 'overplayed' once will tire even more quickly the next time. For this reason, the pupil must become accustomed to controlling the state of their muscles from the very first lesson.

Any student who has come down with the flu or tonsillitis should be particularly cautious. Practice resumed during or very soon after an illness can cause complications in the muscles of the hands. This is something every pupil and teacher must remember.

In summary, muscle fatigue and soreness can be avoided through proper, regular practice and by developing pupils' self-control. Rest and work must be alternated and sensibly timed, depending on the difficulty of the material being rehearsed. For the left hand, double-stop exercises are the most tiring, especially in tenths, which involve considerable stretching of the fingers. For the right hand, a long and fast *détaché* causes the most fatigue. These should be practised slowly at first, then gradually at a faster tempo. Similarly, the time spent on them should initially be minimal; later, the practice time is gradually increased.

ANATOMICAL PREREQUISITES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE SKILLS (REFLEXES)

Learning any skill (or voluntary reflex) is circumstance-dependent: some circumstances contribute to rapid and confident learning, while others hinder the acquisition of skills. Learning processes involve an endless chain of

voluntary reflexes (skills), making it necessary for teachers to know at least some of the patterns and conditions on which they are formed. Regardless of the teaching method used, skills acquisition always involves the higher nervous system and the rules under which it operates. They form patterns which the teacher should always respect.

Human behaviour and almost all our movements are the result of stimuli from the environment or reactions to these stimuli. The reactions occur via a neurobiological mechanism. The most important part of this mechanism is the central nervous system, the structure of which can be described as follows: the brain and spinal cord contain a huge number of nerve cells, from which nerve fibres branch out. Nerves are like wires that connect the internal organs and the rest of the body to the central nervous system. There are two types of nerves: sensory neurons, which transmit information generated in the sensory cells to the central nervous system; and motor neurons, which transmit impulses from other nerve cells to muscles and organs.

Where do nerve cells get their stimuli? Humans have five basic senses: sight; hearing; smell; taste; and touch. Each sense has specific cells in the cerebral cortex from which nerve fibres branch out. These cells form nerve endings, i.e. points that receive information through the eyes, ears, nose, skin and tongue. These sensory organs react to external stimuli such as light, sound, chemical substances and mechanical factors. The resulting stimulus ends up in the central nervous system, most often in the (large) cerebral cortex. There it is analysed and linked to the synthesis of stimuli, after which the cells send an impulse along the corticospinal tract to the muscle group that is to produce the required movement. This movement is called a reflex, i.e. a reaction to the stimulus received.

There are two types of reflexes: conditioned and unconditioned. Let's take a simple example of a young child reaching out to touch a candle and burning their finger. In the blink of an eye, they pull their hand away. How is this possible? The nerve endings in the skin receive a sharp stimulus in response to the flame, after which the sensory nerve cells transmit this information to the central nervous system, which then sends an impulse to the muscles of the hand, which in turn contract in a defensive movement. Such reactions, which occur unconsciously, are called innate or unconditioned reflexes.

Unconditioned reflexes alone are not enough to keep the body safe, and need support from learned, or conditioned, reflexes. A conditioned reflex is triggered by any event or phenomenon that occurs simultaneously with an unconditioned reflex on one or more occasions.

To return to our example, the child who burned their finger now associates a candle flame with pain. The association between the senses is easy to verify: if a burning candle is brought too close, the child will make a defensive movement. The sight of the candle has become a signal for possible pain. Such a defensive movement is a conditioned reflex.

These types of reflexes, where orientation is driven by the characteristics and distinguishing features of things, are called conditioned reflexes type I.

One pre-existing reflex can form the basis of other conditioned reflexes. In animals, the number of such structures is limited, whereas in humans, our ability to speak means boundless possibilities. Words act as substitutes for tangible things, forming ‘signals of signals’ (conditioned reflexes type II) and causing similar reactions in humans as the things or phenomena they represent. Type II reflexes enable the conceptualisation and generalisation of type I reflexes, which serves as the physiological basis for human thinking.

Conditioned reflexes are temporal and temporary connections between nerve structures, which disappear if the unconditioned stimulus no longer reinforces the conditioned stimulus. These formations and regressions are based on the excitatory (activity-increasing) and inhibitory (activity-decreasing) processes of nerve cells, which are the basis of brain function. “Excitation makes the brain centre and connected organs operational. Inhibition, on the other hand, restrains and extinguishes their activity.”¹³ These processes occur simultaneously in different parts of the brain and balance each other out.

The pace at which nerve cells can switch from one process to another depends on the nervous system type, as does their strength and endurance. Nerve cells are very fragile and tire quickly. The working capacity of each cell is limited. If a nerve cell is stimulated for too long or too strongly, it stops functioning in order to protect itself from damage or destruction. During this pause, the cell does not react to any stimuli, but rests and gathers strength, after which it becomes open again to sensory stimuli.

Many things can contribute to nerve cell fatigue: excessive, albeit brief, stimulation (e.g. when a person’s vision is blurred for a short time after exposure to bright light); a large number of sensory stimuli (e.g. when one needs to pick up several new skills simultaneously); or prolonged exposure to constant, albeit not intense, stimuli (e.g. the ticking of a clock, the patter of rain, monotonous speech or any other prolonged, one-sided activity). The latter stimuli cause fatigue, triggering drowsiness and making a person less active. Here, it is worth emphasising that in all these cases it is the nerve cells that become tired, not the nerves themselves or the muscles involved in the work. As nerve cells wear out, a person experiences general fatigue. Their inactivity may be partial, transient or long-lasting. Sleep is an example of the long-lasting inhibition of nerve cell activity.

In the examples described above, the type of inhibition is always the same, i.e. protective. But there are other types of inhibition, which can be divided into two groups: internal inhibition and external inhibition. “Inhibition of activity that occurs only under certain conditions is called internal or conditioned inhibition. Internal inhibition acts as a physiological basis for forgetting skills when they are not practised for a long time, or for forgetting facts that have become irrelevant because they are no longer meaningful to us.”¹⁴

Another type of internal inhibition – often present when teaching – is divided inhibition. Teachers must acknowledge the laws of the nervous sys-

tem that affect their work. Above all, they must remember that stimuli or inhibition processes interfere with the learning of any skill, as does the inconsistent collision of these processes. In practical pedagogical work, such cases are all too common.

To enhance the quick and confident learning of skills, the teacher should create an environment that is calm, not intimidating, and arouses interest. The pupil's cerebral cortex should be optimally stimulated, allowing for quick and accurate reactions.

Each stimulus must be repeated many times under similar conditions, creating a neural pathway for the formed reflex. Practice makes this pathway stronger. Unfortunately, teachers often do not follow through with this: they keep changing the fingerings and bowings, replacing one technical means with another (e.g. when a pupil switches teachers) or altering the surroundings of the lesson. Such things, which seem trivial to most teachers, can hamper the learning of skills and the quality thereof.

A stimulus must not be strong enough to trigger protective inhibition. Shouting, the wrong choice of words, crass gestures, a sudden outburst of anger, threats or extensive punitive measures can all act as a trigger. If these are activated, the acquisition of skills is best discontinued.

If possible, the lesson should be free of unnecessary stimuli that could interfere with the development of skills. Teachers often try to remove all additional stimuli that could distract the pupil (e.g. noise, bystanders and extra items in the room), but do not realise that they themselves are a source of unnecessary distractions (e.g. an excessive number of remarks, loud foot-tapping to count the beat or singing along). All of this can have a negative future impact.

Each new skill should be practised separately for a period of time, where possible. Only when one skill has been firmly established can another be added. In this context, 'firmly' means that the pupil is able to consciously repeat the correct movement without their teacher's help. This is the cornerstone of pedagogical work. Most errors in methodology stem from insufficient adherence to this rule. If the pupil is asked to learn several skills simultaneously, learning is much slower and the quality of learning poorer, and the teacher cannot properly monitor each process. Focusing on one skill and its mastering means less attention is paid to any other skill developed simultaneously, and the pupil ends up learning things incorrectly due to their teacher's carelessness. Most disruptive habits (grimacing, lip biting, snorting, swaying and foot-stamping) are picked up when learning an essential skill and embedded so deeply that they later become almost impossible to break. Fighting such habits weakens the skill originally rehearsed – and even if the eradication of an unwanted habit succeeds, without it the pupil feels insecure and uncomfortable.

All this proves that if novice teachers follow the above-listed rules when working on new skills (reflexes), many methodological errors can be avoided, especially when teaching beginners.

PUPIL'S INTEREST AND ATTENTION SPAN

All teachers know how much easier it is for focused, attentive pupils who are interested in the learning process to absorb new information. From a physiological point of view, this means that their nervous system is able to react to all kinds of new and unusual stimuli. The academician I.P. Pavlov called this reaction the orienting or 'What is it?' reflex. In an orienting reflex, the sensory organs are fully mobilised to receive information about the reflex-evoking stimulus. In psychology, this is called attention and concentration. An attentive pupil can more quickly and confidently integrate all conditioned reflexes.

Orienting reflexes form the physiological basis of attention. They are also characterised by another feature: as soon as something new is observed, the intensity of the reaction decreases, acceleration gives way to deceleration, and the approaching deceleration process makes the acquisition of skills harder.

In order for the orienting reflex to continue working, the sense of novelty must be maintained. Presenting the aspects and characteristics of an object and phenomenon in a different light makes it more detailed and endlessly new. For this reason, one needs to present things in an engaging and multifaceted way. This goes for reciters, actors and performers, and above all teachers.

A teacher who is able to arouse and maintain a child's interest – and who knows how to exploit every moment in which the pupil's interest stems from within – will achieve good results.

How, then, can a child's interest be evoked from the very first lesson, bearing in mind that this interest should be professional in nature, not entertaining?

Interest. Teaching the violin to beginners is largely linked to postures, which most children find both boring and tiring – all they are learning is how to hold the violin and the bow. To make the process more interesting, the teacher should also rehearse and develop the child's other musical skills by e.g. singing, playing songs on the piano or learning musical notation. Such skills require the active involvement of the pupil and hold their interest. Instead of boring the child with monotonous exercises, the teacher maintains their attention by including a few new things in each lesson, which are alternated approximately every five minutes.

To increase interest, it can be very helpful to hold the lesson for two beginners at a time, with the pupils taking turns to play. When demonstrating a new skill to one pupil, the teacher also turns to the other pupil to make sure they are listening and watching carefully and can then repeat the same. Pupils absorb things much more quickly and willingly when there is a little friendly competition involved. Joint lessons are also useful because in some cases the teacher can influence one pupil indirectly via the other. Let's imagine a child called Petya, and that there are problems in his playing posture,

or that he has a mannerism he should loose. Petya is self-centred and easily offended. Any remark from the teacher is met with resistance. Knowing this, when teaching the other student – let's call him Misha – the teacher indirectly explains to Petya that certain shortcomings or habits can affect a violinist and should be avoided. Such an implied comment will have a much stronger impact on Petya. He unconsciously checks whether he is demonstrating such shortcomings or habits, and takes the teacher's words seriously.

In joint lessons, the most effective exercise is one where the pupils train each other under the teacher's supervision. For example, one pupil checks whether the other is holding the violin correctly. Any errors are corrected. In the next lesson, the roles are reversed. Such a method engages and activates the pupils, reinforces their knowledge, improves their observation skills and makes them approach each new skill carefully, critically and consciously.

Attention. Attention can be intentional or unintentional. Unintentional attention occurs when a child is interested in something and can easily shift their attention from one thing to another. In such cases, the teacher needs to help guide their attention in the right direction. The best way to do this is to engage the pupil in active, interesting work with a concrete task and goal. An enthusiastic pupil will concentrate and be attentive for longer. However, long-term work cannot be based solely on unintentional attention that arouses immediate interest. "Due to fatigue, the monotony and tediousness of individual phases, and all kinds of distracting thoughts, unintentional attention will inevitably weaken. Any work therefore requires a constant alternation between intentional and unintentional attention."¹⁵

Let's take a simple example: a beginner practises a familiar song on the piano, playing with one finger, keenly and focused (unintentional attention). In order to play the same song on the violin, they must overcome a whole series of challenges related to postures, which are of no interest to them. The pupil must try to concentrate. This requires intentional attention, which is based on the outcome of the work rather than the work itself.

In adults, intentional attention can be maintained with willpower, awareness and a sense of duty. Children need help in developing these qualities by setting them goals that are, as far as possible, interesting and easily achievable. Correctly set goals and the teacher's support in achieving them contribute to the more rapid development of voluntary attention in pupils.

Attention capacity. How many things can a pupil pay attention to at the same time?

Attention capacity depends on practice. A child learning to read tackles a text one letter at a time. Each letter catches the child's eye and is perceived as a separate entity. Adults do not read letter by letter, but immediately decipher whole words and sentences.

The same applies to playing sheet music. At first, the pupil reads each note very slowly. With practice, they no longer see just the individual notes,

but also their duration and pitch. Eventually they start processing the notes in groups.

This kind of multifaceted attention, in which a group of objects is perceived as a single entity, requires careful assimilation of each individual object. The development of such multifaceted attention is essential, especially when playing *prima vista*.

Focused attention and divided attention. Each new skill must be practised consciously and in a controlled manner using focused attention. As skills accumulate, the importance of focused attention gradually decreases, and the pupil learns to divide their attention. They start to control their movements as if from a distance, and eventually, as the skills become automated, they can free up their attention to learn more new skills. This feature of the nervous system allows us to accumulate a huge number of different skills that we can use flawlessly at the same time. If a mistake occurs, it means that one of the skills used has not been mastered sufficiently.

“Successful performance of two tasks at the same time requires that at least one of the skills has been mastered so well that it has become largely automatic and spontaneous. Such a skill only needs momentary control and adjustment.”¹⁶ Methodology, especially elementary methodology where the pupil is taught to use their hands for two very different tasks, should reflect this idea.

Increasing attention span. The first prerequisite for attention is a sufficiently broad and stable interest in things, and that the person is striving for something. A person who is not interested in anything cannot have a good attention span.

Attention span increases with practice. K.S. Stanislavsky trained his pupils’ attention span daily by having them concentrate on any given object at any given moment. They learned to work under unfavourable conditions and to fight distractions. This is extremely important, especially during public performances, and therefore a skill to be honed in pupils. When stepping onto the stage, the performer’s attention is divided between the audience and the stage. “In order to turn attention away from the audience, one must get excited about what is happening on the stage.”¹⁷ During the learning process, the performer consciously cultivates an attraction and enthusiasm for the piece they are rehearsing. On stage, this enthusiasm disappears, because their attention is divided. Stanislavsky taught his pupils, when on stage, to focus their attention first on a single point or a ‘small circle’ of attention so that nothing else would distract them at that moment. The circle was then expanded to a medium size and then even larger. Such exercises, tailored for a particular purpose, could also prove beneficial in music school lessons.

Absent-mindedness. People whose cortical nerve activity is not fast enough tend to be absent-minded. They find it difficult to concentrate and

are easily distracted even by weak stimuli. In children, this trait is very common. The level of absent-mindedness depends on the type of nervous system and, to some extent, on upbringing. In adults, absent-mindedness is more occasional and usually caused by severe fatigue or the destruction of nerve cells. There is also another type of absent-mindedness associated with attentive neural processes. For example, scientists and others whose work requires great intellectual effort can have one dominant thought that has 'taken over' their brain; everything else has disappeared. Such a person may cross a street without hearing cars' horns, or not respond to a greeting. Their attention is focused on their field of interest, which may lead to new ideas, bold projects or solutions to difficult theoretical or practical problems. This type of absent-mindedness is caused by the fact that the activity of the cerebral cortex is strongly inhibited, except in the area of optimal stimulus sensitivity, where brain connections are made. In children, absent-mindedness can also occur because they have not yet become accustomed to certain responsibilities that require independence and concentration. These qualities should be fostered from an early age, even if it causes the child temporary inconvenience. If they are not instilled in time by their family, doing so becomes the teacher's responsibility. An activity that is sufficiently interesting can even get a very distracted child to concentrate. A positive result from a small but interesting task gives the child pleasure, and they will tackle the next task with even more enthusiasm and concentration. With growing interest, their distractibility will gradually decrease and their concentration will increase. If, on the other hand, the teacher tries to combat the pupil's absent-mindedness by shouting at them and issuing threats, it will only increase.

The foregoing does not mean that absent-mindedness and attentiveness are character traits. One and the same pupil can be both attentive and inattentive. This is especially noticeable in groups: a pupil may be attentive in one teacher's lessons, learn the material well and be disciplined, while in another teacher's lessons they can be easily distracted and find entertainment off-topic, which is reflected in their behaviour¹⁸. The first teacher has therefore succeeded in getting the pupil interested in their subject, while the second has not.

Pupils entertaining themselves during lessons do not take their responsibilities seriously and/or are not interested in the subject. Sometimes their lack of attention stems from the teacher. A rushed lesson (where the teacher is in a hurry), the one-sided presentation of the topic, a vast array of remarks or even minor things like an unfortunate choice of words or something appearance-related (brightly coloured clothes or shiny jewellery) can distract the pupil. The tempo, tone and dynamics of speech, as well as gestures and facial expressions, are important to maintaining attention.

In order to arouse empathy, excitement and confidence in pupils, the teacher must be enthusiastic and interested, just like an actor on stage in front of a full house. This is the mastery of a teacher. In addition, teachers

must be knowledgeable about their subject and well prepared for lessons. Running back and forth to check the lesson plan and notes or hesitating over examples and methods will dull the pupil's attention.

All subjects involve difficult and uninteresting topics. The way in which such topics are divided and grouped is very important. Some teachers prefer to start a lesson with something challenging or boring and end it with easier and more interesting material. This approach is wrong. Taking attention span and its features into account, the pupil's receptiveness must first be unlocked, after which difficult material is alternated with easy material. At the very beginning of the lesson, the teacher can optimise the pupil's tonus by activating the cerebral cortex with an interesting thought or fact. Once the brain has been stimulated, its alertness can be utilised by tackling something difficult or uninteresting. With their cerebral cortex accelerated, pupils easily absorb information which they may now find interesting, even if this interest does not originate from the pupil themselves. Practice has shown this method to be effective.

MEMORY AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

As we know, humans perceive their surrounding reality via their senses. These perceptions are stored in the memory, which manifests itself in our ability to remember, store, recognise and recreate things or phenomena.

Memory can be e.g. visual, auditory or tactile, depending on the sensory organs (receptors) we use to process our surroundings.

As an example of visual memory, let's assume we have met someone new. If we found the encounter interesting, we will easily remember what the person looks like. If reunited, we can recognise them without difficulty. It is also easy for us to imagine them, i.e. to recall their image in our mind.

As an example of auditory memory, let's imagine that we have heard a good song, but we only remember it to the extent that we can recognise it as the same song the next time we hear it. Repeating it by singing or playing proves very difficult. This relates not only to our memory, but also to our ability to sing or play an instrument. In addition to the melody, the song has lyrics, which should also be remembered. If each of these aspects is familiar to us separately, remembering the entire song and repeating it correctly requires fewer repetitions.

The sense of touch encompasses a whole range of sensations which all aim at the same thing: an object takes on a distinct form and can be remembered, recognised and distinguished immediately after the first touch.¹⁹ For example, when touching fur, one immediately notices its warmth, softness and thickness. The sense of touch is strongly linked to muscle sensations and muscle function. Tactile memory is thus particularly important for violinists. When learning to play, this memory helps us align and adjust each new hand or finger movement on the fingerboard.

These examples show that our perception of things or objects is based on numerous sensations. Isolated sensations cannot provide a complete picture. In the first example, the sense of sight perceives a human figure, starting with what ‘catches the eye’, i.e. what attracts the most attention. At the same time, various other things, plus the environment in which the encounter takes place, also enter our field of vision. Our sense of hearing registers the person’s tone of voice and characteristics of their speech. Our sense of touch may also contribute to the creation of memory, for example when shaking hands.

All of these sensations feed perceptions and our understanding of them. When thinking back to the person, we imagine them against the same backdrop as on our first encounter. Every individual sensation can revive all others.²⁰ This explains how a seemingly insignificant, random phenomenon can bring back the memory of something significant. “When recalling shapes, thoughts, words, feelings or movements, we always remember them in a certain order. Without such consistent connections, they would be impossible to remember, recognise or reproduce.”²¹ The connections that form the basis of memory are called associations.

In the second example, we are able to recognise a song after one hearing. To remember it, we need repetition; to reproduce it, we need certain skills.

Proper use of all the features of memory requires a more detailed understanding of its mechanisms.

Remembering. Remembering can be intentional or unintentional. Unintentional remembering occurs without effort, usually when a person has experienced something interesting, unexpected or disturbing. It does not form the systematic connections needed for intentional actions. Unintentional remembering is always fragmental. A complete memory requires effort (just as with focused attention), and remembering becomes intentional, i.e. conscious.

Remembering can be mechanical or semantic. “Mechanical remembering is based on repetition... In semantic remembering, understanding is the key.”²² Remembering extensive musical tasks requires the use of all types of memory. New material is first analysed and then repeated. The musician must understand the nature of the material and the proposed means of presentation. This is possible when the new composition mainly relies on skills and knowledge already gained by the pupil.

Each new skill must be built on top of an existing, well-learned skill. In violin teaching, this is called consistency. Unfortunately, not all teachers adhere to this rule. They ignore the links in the chain of learned skills and are too quick to make the repertoire too difficult. Any new material becomes only loosely connected to the previous material, and the chain of associations breaks down. When playing, the pupil’s memory ‘collapses’ and they start making mistakes.

Poor memorisation skills can also originate from an incorrect learning process. Some pupils may practise a piece for a long time but are still un-

able to play it from memory without mistakes. In order to understand this phenomenon, one must first understand what the pupil actually needs to memorise about a composition: its melody, fingerings, bowings and dynamics. Where do pupils make the most mistakes? Mistakes usually occur in bowings and fingerings; less often in the melody itself. They occur because all the things to be memorised (with the possible exception of the dynamics, which can be practised later) were studied at the same time. The pupil plays from the score, familiarising themselves with the melody while also observing their fingerings and bowings. Their focus ‘slides’ along the notation, enabling them to play *prima vista*. If the piece is intended to be learned by heart, this method will not work, regardless of the number of repetitions. Instead of mechanical memory (repetition), the pupil should tap into their conceptual memory. First, they study and analyse the piece from beginning to end. They then concentrate on the melody, fingerings and bowings and practise them first separately, then together. This can be done in two ways: more advanced pupils can practise by reading the music on a conceptual level, without their instrument, by memorising details and impressions²³, while in the case of less experienced pupils, it is useful to learn the melody by playing (by sight) the entire piece a few times (paying attention to rhythm, intervals and interval relationships), after which they can proceed to learning the fingerings by playing the entire piece, where possible, on separate bows (without bowings). Here, the pupil should also pay attention to shifts (if there are any), because sometimes pupils use them mechanically, unaware of the position they are using at any given moment. Once the fingerings have been mastered, they can move on to bowings.

Once the pupil no longer needs to think about controlling the melody and their fingerings (i.e. they can be managed under divided attention), they can focus all their attention on bowings. Bowings are best memorised on the basis of the musical content. This gives each stroke a conceptual meaning and makes it easier to remember them than if played ‘automatically’. If memorised in this way, the pupil will be able to start playing the piece from any bar without making mistakes in their bowing.

The skills learned as described above gradually become automatic, freeing up capacity for learning other things while linking new skills to old ones.

Practice has shown that if new material is studied consistently, it does not need to be memorised separately. Memorisation, which is the result of the systematic mastery of each element of the whole, occurs automatically without difficulty. Novice teachers often ask about the best ways to memorise pieces. They clearly see learning a piece from the score as one task and memorising it as another, separate task, which is why they are specifically interested in memorisation. The question is not presented at random, and indicates a clear gap in the methodology. The teacher has not understood that conceptual memory has to be engaged from the very beginning and reinforced through systematic repetition, so that all the skills required for playing the piece are gradually combined.²⁴

Memory is developed through mental work and by memorising new texts, but in a music school, this part of the learning process is disregarded. Etudes and pieces are memorised solely for the purpose of level performances and examinations. The rest of the pieces are played from sheet music without being fully internalised. Memory is hardly practised, and pupils find it difficult to memorise musical texts. In addition, the way in which a piece is learned from sheet music is often wrong, with pupils absorbing all the details at once, not consciously one by one. As a result, they may play a piece without mistakes from a score, but make mistakes when playing from memory. When this happens, the teacher tries to give them a hint, or reminds them of the text, or places the sheet in front of them. None of these methods develop memory, and mistakes just move to different places. It is much more useful if the pupil is allowed to determine for themselves why the mistake occurred and what exactly they failed to remember, and then compare their own playing with the written score. After that, they repeat the passage attentively. Such a method teaches pupils to pay attention to all the details, especially when practising at home.

Some pupils have a good musical memory and are able to play a new piece by heart as soon as the next lesson. This is not as positive a trait as it might seem. Because the pupil remembers the melody quickly, the fingerings, positions and many other details do not get properly internalised. Skills are learned through mechanical memory, i.e. repetition, without mastering the details in advance. One of the laws of memory is that anything which is poorly learned is also quickly forgotten, and this adds to the uncertainty. Skills that a performer has not systematically mastered can fail them at any time.

In practical pedagogy, this trait of memory is rarely given much weight. Many teachers disregard the laws of memory, since they feel it makes no sense to memorise an extensive amount of fingerings or remember which position to use in which passage. One should not forget that the entire playing process gradually becomes automatic and that consciousness rarely controls skills. When learning a new piece, it is important to be aware of all the details (what is where) so that while playing, the performer does not suddenly encounter something completely new and unfamiliar. Let's assume that the pupil has never before looked at their fingers while playing, or thought about which fingers they use in which position. Suddenly, during a public performance, they unintentionally glance at their fingers and begin to doubt whether they are using the correct fingering or placing their fingers in the right places. Hesitation turns into delayed control, which acts like a brake. Doubt leads to uncertainty ("Do I really know which finger and which position to use?"), which in turn leads to blunders, mistakes or pauses.

If all the details have been consciously absorbed through sight, hearing and touch, and then combined with confidence, there is no need for risky experiments during a performance. And even if consciousness takes over and begins to control the playing, the memory reacts calmly and correctly.

AN INDIVIDUALISTIC APPROACH TO PUPILS

In practical pedagogy, no two pupils are ever the same: every pupil has their own character and behavioural traits, and they react differently to comments and remarks. Some of them quickly and easily complete the tasks they are given, while others need more time.

In order to teach pupils correctly and to help shape their aesthetics and morality, the teacher must be aware of their personality traits.

The teacher observes the pupil's individual characteristics and plans their work accordingly. Above all, the teacher seeks to determine the pupil's musical abilities, i.e. their hearing, memory and sense of rhythm, as well as their physical traits. They note how quickly the pupil is able to learn new things, and assess their intelligence, concentration, memory capacity, patience, interest in practising and other such characteristics.

Based on these observations, the teacher draws up an individual study plan for each pupil. Taking the child's abilities into account, the teacher gradually gets them to perform the assigned tasks. At the same time, the teacher monitors which methodological and ethical approaches are producing the best outcomes when interacting with the pupil. The teacher's approach to each pupil is formed gradually and individually, and the methodology aimed at mastering the necessary skills develops in an organic way.

If teachers always used the same method and treated all pupils the same, the results would be poor. What is beneficial to one pupil may be harmful to another.

So what causes these individual differences? This question is particularly interesting for novice teachers who, due to their lack of experience, can find it difficult to orient themselves in each case and choose the best teaching methods.

Below, I outline the different types of nervous systems and their features, as this may help teachers understand the individual characteristics of their pupils.

As explained above, our behaviour is controlled by our nervous system, whose key characteristics are determined by those of the higher nervous system. We know that strength, balance and the processing speed in the cerebral cortex vary from person to person. The type of nervous system (strong/weak, balanced/unbalanced, mobile/slow) is determined by these characteristics and their relationships. In a balanced person, the processes of excitation and inhibition are equal in strength. If one of these processes dominates the other, the nervous system becomes unbalanced. If a person's nerve cells are able to withstand strong and prolonged stimuli, their nervous system is described as strong and resilient. A weak system cannot tolerate strong or long-lasting stimuli, as the nerve cells quickly tire. People whose excitation and inhibition processes change at a rapid pace respond quickly to stimuli. If, on the other hand, the processes alternate slowly, the response is also slow.

Based on these characteristics, nervous systems can be divided into four types (temperaments):

- Lively: Strong, balanced and agile; sanguine
- Calm: Strong, balanced, non-mobile (inert); phlegmatic
- Driven and unrestrained: Strong but unbalanced; inhibition processes comparatively weak; choleric
- Weak: Weak processes of excitement and inhibition; melancholic²⁵

Each of these types has its advantages and disadvantages. To ensure that people with different nervous types achieve the best results in their work, the conditions created for working must correspond to the characteristics of their specific type.

For sanguine people, favourable conditions are those in which impressions change frequently and repeatedly, and the work is active and fast-paced. If the work is slow and monotonous, their productivity drops significantly. A phlegmatic person, on the other hand, can tolerate and is inclined to precise, meticulous work. They understand and remember things slowly but thoroughly. Rapid and frequent changes in phenomena, skills or habits challenge them much more than they challenge sanguine people. Choleric people are strong and driven, and can tolerate large numbers of powerful stimuli. They find it difficult to control themselves even when necessary. Melancholic people lack perseverance and can only tolerate weak stimuli, and even then only in very small doses. Even a small overload will lead to long-term inhibition. Anyone working with this nervous system type should exercise great caution.

The types listed above are rarely found in their pure form. We all possess traits from all four, and different characteristics are displayed in different life situations. Furthermore, a person's temperament is not solely determined by innate characteristics, but is also influenced by their upbringing and the environment.

Upbringing can largely mask the innate characteristics of the nervous system. Therefore, a person's outward behaviour often does not correspond to their innate predispositions. In pedagogy, this can lead to unfortunate mistakes. However, by careful observation (including experiments and conversations), it is possible to identify characteristics that are specific to their inherent nervous system type. These characteristics are most prominent in situations where the student's interest is at its highest, since this is when they display their personality most clearly. To investigate, the teacher can use various games and activities, including musical ones, that call for quick reactions, intelligence and memory.²⁶ In addition, the learning process itself opens up possibilities for monitoring and determining the pupil's reactions step by step. Some people grasp things slowly, others quickly. Some can maintain their concentration over extended periods even when doing repetitious exercises, while others cannot even if they understand their useful-

ness. Some older pupils find it difficult to relearn fingerings, while others are able to change them without difficulty, sometimes even 'on the fly' during a performance. This speaks of the pupil's resourcefulness and the rapid functioning of their nervous system.

Once the key characteristics of the pupil's nervous system have been roughly defined, the teacher needs to decide which conditions will yield the desired results as quickly and easily as possible. The optimal conditions to be created vary from one pupil to the next. Conditions that are particularly difficult for pupils of a certain nervous system type should be avoided and never misused. For example, every teacher working in primary education knows how differently pupils react to drawing the bow on open strings: one draws the bow with concentration and shows no signs of fatigue, while another manages a couple of up- and down-bows before announcing that they are tired (or at least that is how they analyse their state). This tiredness is not the kind which everyone unaccustomed to practising will encounter at some point. Slow, monotonous movement simply bores the pupil, and they get tired of standing still. If the teacher stubbornly continues with the exercise, the child submits, but will unconsciously begin to shift weight from one foot to the other, move restlessly and look at things around them. Such lessons are of no use to anyone, and soon the pupil's interest in playing the violin wanes.

Based on this example, one might assume that the pupil is a sanguine type. Such a conclusion is, however, premature. It is also quite possible that the pupil is simply spoilt, undisciplined and unaccustomed to any kind of work.

Parents' comments are often very revealing. They may say that their child is loud and restless at home as well. The child works quickly, is interested in everything and does well in school, but is often reprimanded for talking in class or playing pranks. Their writing is sloppy, as they are too impatient to produce letters and numbers slowly and with precision.

This confirms the original sanguine assumption, but also indicates that the child's character has not been properly cultivated. Their innate traits have been accepted rather than developed. The sanguine type is characterised by a liveliness that disturbs even themselves, instability in work, and the quick but superficial 'on-the-spot' acquisition of information. With correct and skilful upbringing, these traits can be refined into valuable qualities.

When teaching such a pupil, the objects of learning are frequently changed. The pupil is given the narrowest possible goal so that they see the results of their efforts. All tasks must be performed carefully and in an organised manner. In this way, they gradually learn to take responsibility for the quality of their work.

Let us take another example. Suppose a pupil draws the bow on open strings calmly, but their movements are passive and sluggish. The teacher encourages the pupil and makes comments, correcting both hands in turn. The pupil grows increasingly indifferent. Their gaze becomes fixed and

they seem unresponsive. The teacher raises their voice and the pupil bursts into tears. Stimuli that are quite normal for other children are too much for this pupil's nervous system. Their tolerance of discomfort is poor and leads to collapse. However, this does not mean that the child is incapable: many melancholic children are genuinely gifted, feel deeply and are impressionable. Honing their skills requires great caution, restraint and tact on the part of the teacher.

The examples above illustrate the personality types that can easily deceive novice teachers and lead them astray. In the first case, they tend to overestimate the pupil's abilities. The pupil seems to understand and memorise things with ease. Delighted by such qualities, the teacher accommodates the pupil's aspiration for something new, giving them more and more etudes and pieces to practise. The pupil develops quickly, but the repertoire is too difficult and the work careless and superficial, not systematic. The teacher is unable to resist the pupil's tendencies and fails to see the adverse consequences of such rushed and cursory learning. For the pupil, this means greater instability, carelessness and disorganisation. With each passing year, with no behavioural constraints from the teacher, they find playing harder and harder.

The abovementioned innate characteristics of the nervous system can be either improved or worsened through education. In the situation described, due to inexperience, the teacher misses the opportunity to develop the pupil by nurturing – slowly but steadily – their non-inherent traits such as patience, diligence and a sense of duty.

At the other extreme, there are teachers who want to 're-rear' such a pupil. They force the pupil to practise the same thing over and over again until they succeed, and do not give them anything else to work on. With adults, such a method is acceptable, because they have sufficient willpower and understand the necessity of the task. Children, on the other hand, especially those with a sanguine temperament, rarely tolerate such coercive measures. They may appear submissive and do what is asked, but the outcome usually falls far short of their true potential.

By adopting an individualistic approach, the teacher allows each pupil to make use of their talents and can find methods that inspire a burning desire to reach goals. With this awakened interest and will, pupils can harness all of their artistic powers and live up to their full potential. ■

LEARNING PROCESS

Year 1

The learning process begins with entrance exams. The teacher testing the child needs not only to master the entrance exam system used to determine children's musical abilities, but also to understand the psychological and physiological challenges that children face at school age or even younger.

ENTRANCE EXAMS

Using the existing entrance exam assignments, examination boards in music schools and institutes test the child's musicality, ear, memory, sense of rhythm and physical characteristics.

Musical ear. Usually, the child is asked to sing a song they know, and the presence or absence of musical hearing is observed based thereon (i.e. whether the child sings correctly and with the accurate intonation). However, imprecise singing does not necessarily mean the absence of a musical ear: the song may have been taught incorrectly, or the child may have heard it sung out of tune. As such, it is better to ask the child to repeat single notes or simple progressions²⁷. For example:



Note example 1.

When singing, the child is asked to use *ta* or *tu* syllables, as this will help them articulate each sound clearly. To an untrained ear, it is easier to distinguish sounds that are quite far apart (thirds, fourths and fifths) than sounds that are close to one another (small and large seconds). For this reason, it is a good idea to start with notes of larger intervals before gradually moving on to those separated by a whole tone or semitone. If the child is able to intonate notes a half-step apart, they clearly have a well-tuned ear.

There are different ways of testing the child's ability to hear harmonies. One is to play them intervals or chords, ask them to determine how many pitches they hear and then to repeat them in sequence. Not many music schools or institutes use this test in their entrance exams, as it is only suitable for children whose hearing has been pre-trained. Sometimes children cannot control their voice (e.g. producing a hissing sound, or their vocal cords

are closed). In such a case, you can ask the child to listen and remember a note played on a piano and then to find the same note on a keyboard.

Memory²⁸. To test memory, the child is played a melodic phrase they have not heard before. The child needs to both remember and repeat the phrase. The melody must be simple enough, harmonically stable and short (no longer than two bars), and preferably with lyrics. For example²⁹:



Note example 2.

Sense of rhythm. A sense of rhythm is tested by the child's ability to repeat the rhythm of a given melody. They can be asked to clap along to the song they just sang or to a different melody played to them. Sometimes a sense of rhythm is tested without music with the help of rhythmic patterns, such as:



Note example 3.

This is not the best way, because it is important to observe musical sense of rhythm, not just a sense of rhythm in general.

Physical characteristics. Children who study in music schools also go to regular school. Studying in two places at the same time places significant physical and mental strain on the child. This can prove overwhelming for some, which is why music school entrance exams should always include an exam to determine the child's health.

From the point of view of violin-playing, the most important physical characteristic is hand structure. Hands best suited for playing the violin have a wide, elastic wrist and sufficient elasticity between the fingers. 'Pads' on the fingertips are a plus. The little finger should reach up to or above the third joint of the ring finger. Hands with poor elasticity between the fingers and a short little finger make it difficult to learn the violin and are considered professionally unsuitable. Similarly, pupils with deficiencies in the structure of their hands (stiff joints, deformed fingers, etc.) are not fit to learning to play the instrument.

Entrance exam system. The current entrance exam system needs to be updated and reformed, because all children are tested in the same way without consideration to their individual psychological and physiological traits and musical abilities.

If a child can sing in tune, clap rhythm assignments correctly, remember and repeat a short melody and do all of this quickly and effortlessly, the exam board considers the child to be musically gifted. They are awarded excellent points and admitted to the music school. If, on the other hand, the child lingers over the assignments, the board may begin to doubt their musical abilities, the child may fail the test and the doors to musical education may be closed to them. All this can be decided very quickly, in just 5-7 minutes. Such a system can lead to grave errors, as it does not take into account candidates' nerves or pre-existing musical abilities.

The entrance exam environment does not tend to encourage children to showcase their musical abilities. Rather the opposite: unfamiliar surroundings, long waiting times for one's turn, their parents' nervousness, the board sitting at a big red table and the pressure to do well make the child nervous. Children who sing confidently and uninhibitedly at home are suddenly unable to do the same in the exam. They might forget the lyrics or fail to produce the correct key, resulting in indistinct sounds. The child's dissatisfaction with their performance adds to their stress and makes them feel even worse. This happens frequently, making it difficult to determine the level of the child's musical talent.

Some children overcome such difficulties with relative ease, but that does not mean they are more gifted than their peers. In addition to innate talent, a child's upbringing and the environment in which they grow up play a significant role³⁰. Can the results of a child who has been coached to do well in the entrance exam be compared to those of a child who sees a piano for the first time in their life, or who does not even understand what they are supposed to do? Of course not. These children should not even be tested under the same criteria.

In order for children's musical talent to surface, similar conditions should be created for all of them and their activities monitored over longer periods of time³¹.

Presumably, in time, music education will become a subject that is taught in ordinary schools in our country similarly to art and languages, and compulsory entrance exams will be abolished. At present, however, it is impossible to amend the entrance exam system so that candidates would find it significantly easier to showcase not only their musical talent, but also other traits such as sensitivity, activity, attentiveness, concentration and reactivity. For this reason, children must be given time to adapt to the new environment and not rushed into individual testing³².

Most importantly, the atmosphere in the entrance exam should not be overly official. Instead of sitting at a table covered with a red tablecloth, the board members should be scattered around the room, with assignments being done in groups. These can include moving to the rhythm of the music, marching to unexpected tempo changes, learning an interesting song together, listening to music and determining its character (happy or sad), recognising their 'own' melody (each child being assigned a different melo-

dy they need to recognise among other melodies) and special musical games to test reaction speeds, quick-wittedness and other aspects. All of these will pique the children's interest and help them relax. Once this occurs, the board members can gradually proceed to individual testing.

In the second round of tests, the focus is on memory (for example, how well the child remembers the song learned in the first round or during group assignments) and other individual traits.

Such encounters provide teachers with a huge amount of material and information for the assessments. Instead of being shy or nervous, the children are happy to complete the assignments and to demonstrate their skills and competence.

Selecting an instrument. In some cases, the teacher may give parents tips on instruments that will suit the psychological and physiological characteristics of their child. The child must always be allowed to see and hear the instrument they are to study. Prior to the entrance exams, it is a good idea for a music school to hold a concert at which either teachers or advanced pupils demonstrate the available instruments to the children attending the exams and to anyone else interested.

The concert and demonstrations will help the children gain a better understanding of each instrument and choose the one they like best. At the same time, they serve as an 'advertisement' for less popular instruments, such as woodwinds and percussion instruments.

FIRST MEETING WITH THE TEACHER

The teacher must carefully prepare for their first meeting with a new pupil, because this is a major event for the child.

Beginners attending their first lesson expect to experience something interesting and out of the ordinary. Their minds are focused, and they observe every new detail. There is a lot to take in, which is why the first lesson is usually very memorable.

Kun vasta-alkaja tulee ensimmäistä kertaa soittotunnille, hän odottaa kokevansa jotain mielenkiintoista ja tavallisuudesta poikkeavaa. Hänen mielensä on terävöitynyt huomioimaan uudet vaikutelmat, joita ensimmäisellä soittotunnilla on yleensä paljon. Tästä syystä ensimmäinen tunti jää yleensä hyvin mieleen.

Depending on their impression (whether it is positive or negative), the pupil forms a certain relationship to the teacher and the lessons. As we well know, emotions can be a powerful incentive in any activity. From the first meeting, the teacher should therefore try to create a positive atmosphere in which to study music for the child, who should feel free, not forced, and take an active interest in their studies.

What ways of learning are suitable for the first lesson? As strange as it sounds, exercises which involve the violin itself should be avoided at this point. The child does not yet know how to hold the instrument correctly and therefore cannot produce sounds with it. Some teachers start with an introduction to the violin (how it is constructed and what the different parts are called) before proceeding to hand postures. However, such a lesson will not be particularly inspiring to young pupils and will not instil in them any sense of obligation for the next lesson, as there is usually no homework involved.

One must remember that the child has come to study music and will not wait patiently for a month or more to learn the skills necessary to produce sound from a violin. That is why they need to become interested in the musical process itself and allowed to take an active part in it.

Children get used to new surroundings and are more open to the teacher if they work in a group. This should be utilised by organising a class for all beginners at the same time. In group lessons, the children can be asked to march to varying tempos and play music-themed games. They can learn short songs, sing them together (while clapping along to the rhythm) and then take turns trying to locate the corresponding notes on a piano.

If for some reason the first lesson cannot be held as a group lesson, such an approach is also recommended for private lessons. In addition to singing and picking out tunes on the piano – with one finger, if necessary – the teacher must immediately turn their attention to developing the pupil's ear and to teaching them to read music. If the pupil has brought their violin to the lesson, the teacher can briefly explain its structure. Playing postures are not addressed at this stage.

The first lesson is also important in terms of encouraging appropriate behaviour: the atmosphere should be benevolent, but at the same time the pupils should be made aware of certain expectations they are required to meet. It is imperative to align their focus correctly from the beginning, and to make sure they are aware of the behaviour that is expected of them.

The teacher must try to spark interest in the prospects that the lessons open up and help their pupils to see the possibilities that lie ahead if they master their instrument. The teacher may play the violin themselves, or even better, ask more advanced pupils to demonstrate it. This will stimulate the beginners' interest in playing and makes them appreciate every lesson for bringing them closer to mastering the instrument. Pupils' interest should be maintained in all lessons, since their progress in violin-playing largely depends on it.

Unfortunately, sometimes pedagogy students in pedagogical training offer other kinds of 'first encounters'. If there are several children who are having their first lesson at the same time (which is perfectly possible before the actual timetable is drawn up), the teacher practises with one pupil while others wait outside for their turn. The next pupil comes in already tired of waiting and with significantly less interest. The teacher, who perhaps was not present at the entrance exam, tests the pupil's talents and, if the child

does not yet have a violin, explains to the parents what kind and size of instrument they should obtain for them, what else is needed (the kind of shoulder rest to stitch and what sheet music to buy) and then schedules the next session. This concludes the first lesson. If the pupil has a violin with them, the teacher goes over the names of the different parts and then immediately proceeds to teaching postures. The pupil grasps the instrument, with the teacher seeking to relax their hand and place their fingers in their correct places.

In a matter of moments, the pupil is already tired. The teacher takes a short break and starts over. Bored, the pupil glances around the room and lets out deep sighs. This signifies fatigue. At this point, the teacher should have the sense to move on to other activities, which they often fail to do. The lesson in postures continues, because the teacher wants to achieve something in the first session. When the time is up, the child suddenly becomes lively again and rushes out. The second and third lessons are equally boring. The child is allowed to hold the violin, not play it.

If the teacher ‘takes pity’ on the pupil and allows limited experimentation with open strings, the number of remarks about the posture of both hands immediately increases. Pupils find such lessons uninteresting, and after a month or two of agony, they stop playing and never set foot in a music school again.

Playing posture and learning about it is the most boring, tiring and difficult period in the life of beginner violinists. As such, the teacher must carefully plan out the entire methodology of teaching from the first meeting and lesson onwards in order to maintain the child’s willingness to learn and to make the learning process itself interesting for them.

CONVERSATION WITH PARENTS

A good relationship between the teacher and the parents is a prerequisite for the pupil’s development. From the outset, they must agree on the pedagogical requirements and make sure they are observed at home exactly as they are in class. This relationship is based on mutual respect. A rude or commanding tone of voice and a condescending attitude towards the parents will negatively affect the child’s upbringing at school and at home. The first conversation takes place with the child present. The teacher and the parents check the schedules and go over things to buy for the lessons.

Violin. Most 7- and 8-year-olds play a $\frac{1}{4}$ size violin. The correct size of the instrument is determined as follows: when the left hand holds the instrument in the first position, the hand must be at a right or acute angle to the instrument; an obtuse angle relative to the violin means the violin is too large for the child. The correct size can also be defined in another way, with the

pupil extending their arm forward and grasping the scroll with the palm of their hand. The bow must be light and match the size of the selected violin. A rosin is a must.

Shoulder rest. When holding a violin, there is a gap between the shoulder and the back plate of the violin. A shoulder rest will prevent the child from filling this gap by raising their shoulder. The rest must be of the correct thickness in relation to the length of the child's neck and the inclination of their shoulders. Without the rest, the shoulder will rise, placing unnecessary strain on the shoulder and neck muscles. Over time, playing without the rest can lead to the deformity of the shoulder joint.

The shoulder rest (pad) can be sewn from any thick material apart from silk and satin, which are slippery fabrics. It must be rectangular in shape, approximately 7 x 12 cm, and filled with cotton wool. Ribbons sewn on the long sides of the pad and tied around the pupil's neck will hold the rest in place.

Instrument care. A violin should be stored in its case. A case also contains a rosin, spare strings and a clean cloth to wipe rosin residue and dust from the fingerboard after each session. The bow hair is loosened, the violin is wrapped in a piece of fabric or similar and both are placed in the case.

The pupil must come to their lessons with clean hands and short nails.

At home, when not in use, the violin and the bow should always be in their case (not left on a table or other potentially dirty surface).

Diary. Keeping a practice journal is a tried-and-tested method of early education. In each lesson, the teacher notes down their instructions and observations clearly and in detail for the next lesson. The journal may also contain an individual half-year plan and schedules for daily practice.

Encouragement, criticism and other incentives, as well as practice hours, are recorded using numerical grades or in writing.

Clothing. The clothes the pupil wears to their lessons should not restrict their movements. Sleeves and collars must not be too narrow or tight. Instead of school uniforms, male pupils should also be dressed in softer materials. Collars with zippers or buttons can resonate with the violin and must be avoided.

Long socks must not have tight elastic bands. Bringing the left arm up into playing position will tighten these bands, and during early lessons especially the left hand can quickly grow tired. (*t/n: In the 1960s, many Soviet children wore sleeveless undervests to which long socks were fastened with elastic bands*).

All of the above is explained to the parents and the pupil during the first conversation.

LESSON STRUCTURE WITH BEGINNERS

Beginners' lessons are very different from those of more advanced pupils due to their age, shorter attention span, tendency to grow tired more quickly, lack of skills, incompetence in handling the instrument and many other factors.

To achieve the best results, violin-teaching to beginners must pique the pupil's interest in a learning process where each new skill is mastered consistently, and where learning takes place on the conceptual level. Lessons are planned on this basis. Furthermore, each child's individual attributes should be taken into account. While their personalities may differ greatly, all children have one thing in common: at the age of 6 or 7, a child can concentrate on any given thing for an average of 5–6 minutes, after which the likelihood of them absorbing information decreases sharply. If, within this time, the teacher changes the assignment, the child's interest and attention will be maintained. The structure of the most effective beginner lesson depends on each child's nervous system and its qualities.

The first few lessons focus on four key areas:

- Left hand position
- Right hand position
- Aural skills
- Reading music

For as long as time needs to be allocated to these areas separately, around five minutes per area per lesson is advised. This way, the entire lesson will last no longer than 20–25 minutes. Practical experience has shown that such time allocation most effectively enhances skill acquisition.

Standard 45-minute lessons are far too tiring for beginners and therefore ineffective. It is much better to divide the time, and for the first few months to practise not twice, but four times a week, 20 minutes per session.

By dividing each lesson equally between the above-mentioned areas, the teacher will achieve two goals: the children will constantly have new and interesting things to do; and they will not grow tired so easily. Both of these promote consistent and rapid acquisition of skills.

In addition to time allocation, it is important to determine a suitable pace of work for each pupil. A novice teacher may not clearly visualise how to build new skills on top of old ones. For example, the pupil may already know how to hold the violin correctly while the teacher is still trying to recall the best approaches to teaching the fingerboard. To avoid such delays, the teacher must prepare for each lesson beforehand and think of suitable ways to train each pupil. Of course, not everything can be predicted in advance. During lessons, one inevitably encounters things which need to be addressed. Pointing out two different things at the same time will not lead to the desired result. Thus, during the learning process, the teacher must determine which of the issues are primary and which are secondary at any given moment, then address them in order, not at once.

HAND POSTURES

How to achieve an ideal playing posture? For pupils, learning the correct posture is the most difficult and least interesting stage of their studies. Yet their future musical and technical development rests on mastering this skill. The teacher must plan the first lessons in a way that makes these dull and difficult things interesting and easy to learn.

Novice teachers often make the mistake of rushing through postures so that pupils can start playing sooner. Simultaneous use of two hands results in tension, and the teacher must repeatedly correct the positions of the hands. This slows progress and may even throw pupils off, as they are unable to control their poorly learned playing positions. Misalignments and resulting errors in posture are particularly common when practising at home. The teacher must be consistent and able to determine the most important thing for each pupil to learn at a particular moment. Teaching must be unstandardised.

Correct playing posture means that the hands and the whole body are sensibly and rationally positioned and able to adapt to playing the violin. All elementary teaching materials contain pictures of the positioning of the body – the hands, legs and feet – arrived at with years of teaching experience and considered the best for beginners.

During the learning process, however, the posture of each pupil changes a little due to the structure of their limbs and body. The pupil adapts to the instrument, alignments and the necessary bowing and fingering movements alone or together with the teacher. Sometimes teachers fail to acknowledge unique human anatomy and insist on a ‘standard’ posture, or amend it based on their subjective perceptions, feelings or experiences. Anything related to posture should always start with listening to the body and its needs. “In the majority of cases, imposing a standard posture without taking into account the pupil’s physiology not only causes a major obstacle to learning the violin, but also hinders both technical and musical development, limits options and contributes to the emergence of work-related health problems,” K.G. Mostras writes.³³

Most newly graduated teachers find unique hand structures difficult to take into account. They struggle when teaching even the general, tried and tested postures. This is because they fail to remember the most important thing: “Before starting to learn the left hand, one should make sure that the whole body is in a natural, relaxed position.”³⁴

The teacher must understand that the first prerequisite for good posture is the relaxation of all muscles, not how the hands look. When their entire muscular system is relaxed and released, pupils are able to find the most natural positions and movements with ease.

The teacher’s first task is to teach the beginner to relax their entire body. Over the first few lessons, most novice teachers focus on the relaxation of

the hands and fail to notice other tension in the body. Relaxing the hands is difficult if all other muscles are tense. The child is taught to relax and release the body through physical exercises (wave-like movements). One way of doing this is by swinging both arms up to shoulder height while inhaling, then releasing the arms while bending at the waist and exhaling. The swinging is continued as if the arms are in water. Usually, a few cycles is enough to release most muscle tension. The pupil can now picture what a relaxed body feels like.

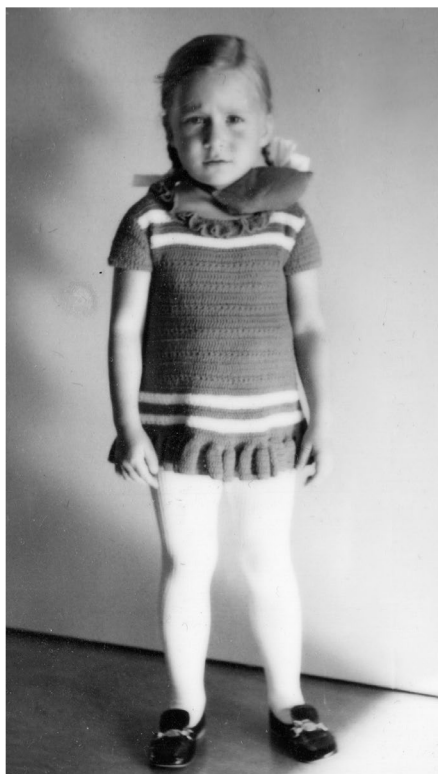
Next, the teacher checks whether the pupil understands the concept of muscle relaxation so as to be able to apply it independently, if needed. Finally, the pupil is trained to control their muscles when they play and to release any tension.

Muscular self-control is a skill which takes time to understand and master, but the idea of it must be rooted from the very first lesson by giving the pupil various exercises to do not only during the lessons but also at home – including ones that have nothing to do with violin playing. Pupils must listen to their body: which muscles are working when they hand a book to the teacher, sit on a chair, pick something up off the floor or relax their muscles immediately after?

The exercises are first carried out with the teacher. Gradually, self-control becomes a habit retained and used when learning new skills.³⁵

In most cases, the wave exercise described above is enough to help the pupil relax in their first lesson. Only once the teacher is sure that all muscles are free of tension is it time to proceed to practising postures.

Left hand position. The positioning of the left hand begins with the correct stance of the body, including the feet. The heels are turned slightly inwards. The feet are separated for a more stable posture.



This is something the pupil needs to master.³⁶ Preparatory exercises are then carried out: the left hand is raised up to fingering position with the elbow bent, the fingers round and the elbow slightly to the right under the violin.



Such exercises activate the muscles in small groups without making them tense. The hand-raising exercise is repeated multiple times. Once done, the teacher places the violin on the pupil's shoulder (on the shoulder pad tied around the neck). The beginner is given time to get used to the posture. The head is effortlessly tilted with the teacher's assistance toward the violin without pressing down on the chin rest.



The left hand is raised smoothly – the same as before – and placed on the neck of the violin in the first position: the index finger rests on one side on the ‘threshold’ (*t/n: the ebony band on the fingerboard*) tilting to the neck from the first joint. The thumb rests on the other side with the joint slightly bent. The teacher pays close attention to the thumb and index finger and makes sure that they do not lean towards each other under the neck of the violin. There needs to be some space between them – a small ‘window’. The thumb is usually positioned opposite the index finger or between the index and middle fingers. The remaining fingers are rounded and placed above the strings. The palm does not touch the neck of the violin. The teacher makes sure that the shoulder holding the violin is not pushed upwards, and that the pupil’s head is slightly tilted towards the chin rest but not turned to the right.



The above positions are first practised with the teacher holding the violin. When the pupil is able to do the exercises flawlessly, the teacher lets go of the instrument and lets the pupil hold it for a few seconds. The exercise is repeated and the length of time for which the pupil supports the violin independently is gradually extended.

All elements of posture are repeated in every lesson in the same order in which they were learned. This teaches the pupil to repeat them consciously.

Next, the child picks up the instrument themselves by gripping its right side with their right hand, placing it on their shoulder and positioning their left hand on the neck of the violin.

Once the pupil is sure that their left hand is in the correct place, they release their right hand and continue holding the violin with the left while counting aloud to 10, for instance. The exercise is repeated by extending the count first to 15 and then gradually further without tiring out the child.³⁷ This also makes for very good homework.

Introducing the fingerboard. The fingerboard is not introduced until the pupil knows how to hold the violin correctly. The introduction begins by placing fingers on a string and then intonating the sounds produced (first by plucking).



Since the introduction to finger placement and intonation begins at the same time, it is best to start on the D string, which offers the easiest range for the child to sing the tetrachord under study.

The teacher places the pupil's fingers on the fingerboard one by one in a way that allows the whole hand to rest naturally and comfortably. For example, if the pupil's fingers are short, their elbow and the entire hand, including the thumb, are turned more to the right under the violin so that their 4th finger can easily reach its place. If the pupil's little finger is long, there is no need to turn the hand.

Next, the pupil is taught to lift each finger off the string in order, starting with the 4th finger. The fingers are lifted actively, but not very high, so as to keep them round and close to their original place.³⁸

This exercise begins with the teacher placing the pupil's fingers on the string and the pupil lifting them off it. Next, the pupil places and lifts their fingers themselves without producing a sound. The string should always run in the middle of the finger and not touch the nail. It is also useful to practise each finger separately to achieve more precise and accurate movement. The exercise is paired with rhythm, for example one-two (finger down) and three-four (finger up). The other fingers remain rounded above the string.

Strings are pressed down with moderate force. The pressure exerted is easy to check: if there is too much force, the thumb muscle on the left-hand side of the palm becomes rock-hard.

Once the pupil knows how to place their fingers on the string, they should also be able to name the notes and sing the tetrachord in C major in tune. The next step is pressing the fingers and producing sound at the same time, and thus making a connection between the ear and the actions of the left hand.

If the teacher prefers a whole step between the 1st and 2nd fingers, the ear must be prepared for major keys in order for the pupil to sing the tetrachord in tune in D major and then repeat it on the violin. This preparation is carried out as follows: The child plucks the open *D* string and then sings the following *E*. The child places their (1st) finger on *E* and plucks again to check the pitch. If the *E* is out of tune, the teacher explains in which direction the pupil's finger needs to be moved to make the pitch lower or higher, and asks the pupil to start again from an open string. This way, intonation is addressed from the very first note played.

If the fingers are placed with the 1st and 2nd fingers a half-step apart, C major, already familiar to the pupil, can be used. The teacher plays the tonic (*C*) on the piano, after which the pupil plucks the open *D* string, sings an *E* and puts their 1st finger in the correct place.

This process is repeated until the pupil masters the entire D major or C major tetrachord. These tetrachords form the basis of intonation and the correct positioning of the fingers on the fingerboard. Everything the pupil learns must be reinforced first on a single string by playing exercises and songs with alternating fingering. Only then can you proceed to the next string. This is of vital importance.

The fingerboard is introduced by plucking, mainly because the left hand is being taught new skills while the right hand is not yet ready to work with the left. Plucking allows the child to learn to position their fingers on each string, to switch between strings and to master new scales, songs and small pieces.

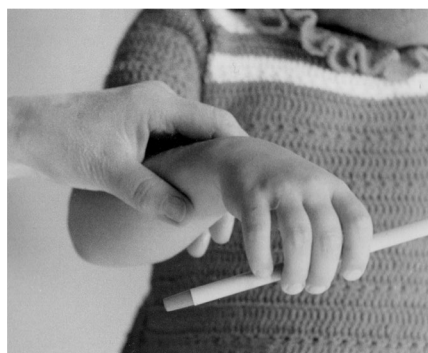
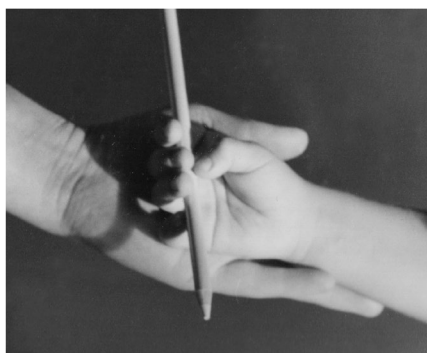
Right hand position. The right hand should be free but active (not completely relaxed). The fingers rest on the bow more or less as follows: The little finger curves on top while the index finger rests on the bow at around the middle of the second joint. The middle and ring fingers hang down so that the middle joints of all four fingers are more or less level and have a roundish shape. The thumb (also rounded) sits below the bow more or less opposite the middle finger, but does not touch it.

How does a pupil adopt the correct bow hold? To facilitate learning, Soviet teachers have started using a pencil, for example, to demonstrate the placement of the fingers. A pencil is light weight and can be held in any position effortlessly and without squeezing. Although the usefulness of such exercises is obvious to all, there are still teachers who, out of habit, immediately place a bow in a beginner's hand.

The pupil should not yet hold the bow, as its weight may cause tension in their hand. Nor should they try placing the bow on the strings, because this will complicate learning. Holding the violin and the bow at the same time

tires out young pupils, divides their concentration and results in faults in both hands. This slows down the adoption of postures and can contribute to incorrect learning. Novice teachers should be very consistent when teaching new skills and follow the process as they did with the left hand.

Before placing their fingers on a pencil, the pupil needs to be able to control the position of the fingers in relation to one another. To this end, preparative exercises are carried out. The right hand is turned palm up, which prepares the fingers for the position in which they will rest on the bow. If a bow were used, the learning of the hold would take place outside the child's field of vision, whereas in this exercise the child can see their hand and quickly pick up the correct position.



Once the child is familiar with the position of their fingers, they are given a pencil to hold (palm up). The hand is then turned palm down. The teacher checks the hold and makes sure that it appears correct. Although this is almost always the case, the skill needs to be reinforced with a multitude of exercises.

In the next exercise, the pupil is asked to place their fingers on the pencil first in a vertical and then in a horizontal position – first by looking at the pencil, and then by closing their eyes and feeling the correct placements. The child can first look at the positions and then try to record them in their muscle memory by touching. This helps the child to effortlessly adopt the hold on the actual bow. (In the meantime, the weight of the bow rests on the teacher's hand.)

The fingers can first be placed further away from the frog to make the bow lighter and shorter. Drawing the bow on the strings is not recommended at this stage, as the pupil must first learn the correct movement and alignment without the violin. To do this, the child is asked to form a circular support for the bow between the stick and the hair by pressing their left thumb and left middle finger together:



This position does not place any pressure on the hand, and all movements are relaxed and active. The fingers of the bow hand remain elastic and stable.

Following this exercise, the bow is placed on a string with its centre point (mid-bow) resting on the string. The child is taught to hold the violin and the bow at the same time – initially perhaps only a few seconds at a time, but with several repetitions. The correct placement of the bow halfway between the bridge and fingerboard is explained at this point.



Next, the bow (only the middle section) is drawn on the *A* string³⁹; the frog is slightly turned towards the fingerboard and all of the hairs rest evenly on the string.

The teacher can assist a little at first: The pupil draws the bow from the frog to the tip (down bow) independently. After the change (up bow), the teacher can help with the alignment while guiding the pupil towards independent, conscious bowing. Hand movements should be effortless and smooth, and produce a sound that is clean and free of scratches or squeaks. Sound quality should be controlled from the very first note. That way, the pupil learns to adjust the movements of their hand to the sound produced.

Bowing should immediately follow a specific rhythm, such as two quarter notes per bow (at this point, only the middle section), i.e. not very slowly. When the pupil masters playing with the middle bow, the distance the bow travels is gradually expanded in both directions. Avoid going all the way to the frog: the frog is heavier, which may cause tension in the pupil's hand or change the position of their wrist and bowing fingers.

A down bow is played by bending the wrist slightly and with the elbow hanging free. Bowing is started on the *A* string and, once mastered, is followed by the *D* string.⁴⁰ *On the D string, the elbow rests slightly higher than on the A string. Other than that, all of the exercises described above remain the same.*

Right hand/left hand coordination. Cooperation between the left and right hands can be introduced with the following exercises:



Note example 4.

The teacher makes sure that the bow change occurs at the exact moment the left-hand finger lands on the string. Fingers are added one at a time until the pupil knows the entire tetrachord. The order of the pieces played follows the order in which they were plucked on the *D* string. After the *D* string, the pupil is asked to repeat the exercises on the *A* string.

Changes from one string to the other should be smooth and free of any twitches of the wrist. The bow is first placed on two strings and drawn a few times, after which both notes are played in a slow legato with the teacher guiding the pupil on how the bow should approach the next string before crossing:



Note example 5.

The string crossing described above also needs to be learned on open strings without legato. Once mastered, the pupil is asked to play the familiar D major. Here, the teacher must make sure that the bow changes do not cause pauses between notes.

The next thing to learn is a scale in a two-note legato. The bow is divided evenly between the notes. All pieces originally learned by plucking are now played with the bow. The *E* string is introduced following the same method. When playing the *E* string, the elbow is down. *The E string is paired with the neighbouring A string with the A major scale. For the best results, the material should include pieces that use all three strings (D, A and E) in different combinations. The G string is the last to be learned, with the elbow of the bow arm held highest.*

The methods presented in this chapter and the common methods used by teachers differ in the approaches and difficulties associated with the learning of the postures. For example, some teachers view the correct posture and its teaching as a unit or entity, while others believe that each request or observation presented to pupils regarding the way they hold the violin represents a different skill. The requests, which generally amount to 10 or more per hand, all form elements of posture. Teachers who show all of them at once end up repeating the same requests from one lesson to the next. Some pupils remember everything without difficulty and easily adapt to the requirements of the instrument; others need constant reminders and posture corrections. Often, the teacher makes these corrections manually by ‘moulding’ the pupil’s hand into the correct position, and in most cases, does so quietly. But with no explanation, the pupil does not understand what is happening. Such a method does not encourage pupils to work independently or actively, or help them understand what is required of them.

Furthermore, novice teachers are not patient enough and burden their pupils with more and more things, hoping that everything will fall into place in time. Such pupils tend to learn more slowly, as most beginners are unable to concentrate on many different things at once.

The technique thus achieved is built on shaky ground. The method put forward in this chapter will help novice teachers avoid this problem, is consistent and makes both the teaching and learning of postures easier. Each posture-related element is first independently recognised and mastered, after which they are combined and refined.

In order for pupils to understand what is required of them, the teacher must explain and demonstrate, carefully and in detail, each and every request, and then allow the pupil to repeat it on their own without assistance. If the pupil fails, the request was probably not fully understood. The teacher must then patiently explain everything again from the beginning until the pupil understands what is being asked, is able to carry out the request independently and masters the skill permanently – regardless of the number of lessons needed. Only then is it time to move on to the next topic.

Teachers should not be disheartened if it takes pupils a long time to learn postures. Patience at this point will pay off later when the pupils begin learn-

ing the fingerboard and start playing. Their postures will have become automatic, and instead of going back and correcting the same flaws again and again, the teacher can then move on and let the pupils focus on new things and skills without paying attention to the way they are holding the instrument. This will speed up their progress considerably.

Another benefit of this proposed method is that the teacher does not have to struggle with the pupil's muscle tension, because no such tension develops. Furthermore, pupils who are now capable of independent thinking and able to follow the teacher's instructions in class can also avoid mistakes when practising at home and will master each subsequent skill more quickly than if faced with multiple simultaneous requirements. By concentrating on one thing at a time, rather than many things at once, the teacher can also monitor progress and ensure quality learning.

In Year 1, teaching materials should be used consistently. The tetrachords in D and A major (the *D* and *A* strings) that the pupils have learned can be enforced with Russian folk songs like *Khodit zayka po sadu*, *Kak pod gorkoy pod goroy* and M. Magidenko's *Petushok* (The Cockerel). If the pupil also knows the tetrachord with a semitone between the 1st and 2nd fingers, they can play songs from T. Zaharina's book such as *Ne letay, solovey*, *Kak poshli nashi podruzhki* and *Slavka i Grishka*.

The D major one-octave scale is learned by combining two tetrachords on the *D* and *A* strings. This combination of tetrachords, using two strings in the key of D, can be practised with N. Potolovsky's *Okhotnik* (The Hunter) and W.A. Mozart's *Allegretto*.

To standardise the whole step and the half step between the 1st and 2nd fingers, one can use Russian folk songs such as *Vo sadu li, v ogorode*, *Vo pole beryoza stoyala* and *Oy Dzhigune*, *Dzhigune* and pieces such as J.B. Lully's *Song*.⁴¹

The tetrachords on the *E* and *G* strings are learned concurrently with the above pieces. This prepares the pupil for learning the G major scale first in one octave (from the *G* string) and then in two octaves.

Depending on their intonation and the internalisation of hand positions, the pupil can start learning easier minor scales (e.g. E minor and A minor) as well as flat keys (F major and B major in a higher octave from the *A* string). If intonation and hand positions are not yet standardised, it is better to keep working on major scales (e.g. A, D and G major).

EAR TRAINING

Hearing is one of the most important skills in music. Are hearing and an ear for music special qualities that not everyone has, or can they be improved through practice? We are all innately inclined to have a musical ear; the question is whether we utilise it or not. When it comes to children and directing their interests, the environment in which they grow up and by which they are influenced plays an important role.

In almost every family in Russia, music is part of everyday life. From an early age, children hear music on the radio, on television and in films and recordings. The acquisition of musical instruments and the efforts of parents to enrol their children in music schools indicate a boost in the cultural interests and richness of our population.

When a child is brought to music school to take an entrance exam, teachers mostly test their musicality and hearing. To do this, the child is asked to sing a song. If they do not know any songs, they must be able to reproduce the notes played to them on a piano in the order they hear them. Recognising the pitch of notes is not enough to determine the presence of a musical ear. Instead, the child must also reproduce them by singing. Where does such a skill come from? As a rule, learning new skills requires practice, i.e. training. Training can involve frequent listening to music – imitating the sounds heard and retaining and singing melodies.

If musical hearing is developed and practised in ways which the child finds interesting and easily approachable, it will be easier for them to showcase their musical abilities in the entrance exam. This is why children from musician or singer families often demonstrate a more developed ear for music than other children. One should not forget, however, that pupils' musical talent only surfaces through the process of learning.

Is it the duty of instrument teachers to also train their pupils' aural skills and musical ear?

Many think these skills are better left to theory lessons. Violin teachers should only teach the violin, and guide children to pure intonation during the playing process. This is wrong, since pupils admitted to music schools have different abilities in terms of hearing and their musical ear. Besides, theory lessons are usually group lessons with pupils who are studying different instruments, which of course eliminates all things related specifically to string instruments.

A novice pianist does not have intonation problems: relatively quickly, the keys of the piano aid the pupil in establishing a connection between their muscles and the notes they hear. Pianists can sit down at their instrument and immediately create sounds with accurate pitch.

For violinists, the issue is more complicated. They must learn the correct note locations on the fingerboard with no external visual aids, and this in itself requires far greater aural skills than when playing the piano. Violinists' only help comes from open strings, which assist in navigation and finding subsequent notes.

Professional musicians with a well-developed ear perceive notes through melodic and harmonic hearing in relation to tonal keys. In order for a pupil to imagine the required note in their head and then find it on the fingerboard, they must grasp tonal relationships and learn to determine melodic and harmonic intervals. Therefore, before playing the violin, the teacher must develop the pupil's musical hearing to the required minimum level. This is the easiest way to ensure clean intonation during early education.

The most important thing is to determine the beginner's auditory abilities and, depending on the results, to decide which methodological methods to use with the pupil.

Pupils with a poorly developed ear do hear that the notes played to them (on the piano) represent different pitches, but are unable to remember, reproduce or find them on the piano themselves. Alternatively, they can recall them and even locate them on the keys, but cannot reproduce the sounds accurately⁴². In such cases, it is useful for the child to sing glissandos up and down and to learn to understand the difference between high and low notes. Such exercises usually increase both vocal cord mobility and the child's understanding of the height differences of pitches. Sometimes pupils react to different pitches with their voice, but out of tune. In this case, it is recommended to play the note on the piano and repeat it a few times until they learn to sing it in tune.

Although children who are admitted to music schools generally have an above-average ear, their hearing must be systematically developed to meet the requirements of violin-playing in terms of clean intonation.

Insofar as it is necessary to base lessons on the pupil's musical ear and its ability to identify different keys, the pupil must first be introduced to a major key – most children are comfortable with a melodic pattern of the C major scale in the first octave – and using children's songs to help them understand consonances and dissonances.

The most elementary skill is to reproduce a note (played on the piano, for instance) by singing it. The pupil is played notes from the C major scale in varying order with dissonances resolving to consonances. Exercises where the pupil has to determine the number of notes played simultaneously on the piano (e.g. third, triad and sixth chord) and repeat them by singing are also useful.

Next, the pupil is taught an easy song (1–2 bars) which is first sung together, then with the piano, and finally by the pupil alone with the lyrics but with no support from the piano. Playing on the piano and adding lyrics to the song help to maintain the pupil's interest and attention.

The pupil is asked to sing a tetrachord in C major. Children find it most difficult to distinguish and reproduce notes that are only half a step apart, as this requires more precise differentiation in terms of both hearing and vocal cord function. This too can be learned with persistent and patient practice. Once the child can sing a half step, their range can be gradually expanded.

The next thing to sing is the C major scale. The pupil is asked to sing the scale up and down with 'ta-ta' or 'tu-tu' syllables, and taught the melodic order of notes. Each note has its own name: *c*, *d*, *e*, *f*, *g*, *a*, *b* and *c*.

Once the child knows the order of notes in C major, it is time for intervals. Singing intervals in the same key (*c-d*, *c-e*, *c-f*, *c-g*, etc. depending on the child's range) adds to the flexibility of their singing voice and helps them get used to melodic intervals.

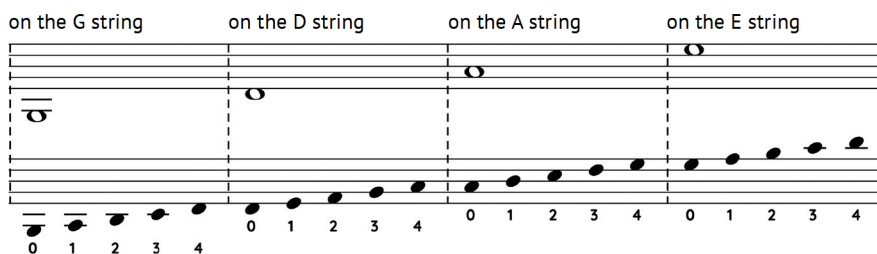
To develop melodic hearing more quickly, it is useful to transpose previously learned songs or to sing major scales ('*ta-ta*' or '*tu-tu*') starting from any note.



Note example 6.

The pupil must learn to imagine what the next note will sound like. To do this, they are given a starting note, *C* for instance, and asked to sing an *E*. They sing *D* silently in their head and then *E* aloud. Once they are able to imagine notes correctly, they are ready to start learning the fingerboard: the pupil plucks an open *D* string, sings *E* silently, places their 1st finger on the fingerboard on the note *E* and then plucks it. The entire tetrachord is learned in the same way. This method makes achieving pure intonation much, much easier.

The pupil continues until they know all the notes in the first position and can write them on the staff.



Note example 7.

The song which the pupil sang earlier with words can now be sung with absolute note names. To do this, the song is written on the board or a sheet (if not included in the study materials). Once the child knows how to do this, it is time to add hand movements, which count quarter notes in 4/4 or 3/4 time.

In Year 1, each new piece (etude or song) is first sung with the note names and only then played on the violin. This supports not only accurate intonation, but also faster learning.

Although the pupil has now started playing the violin, ear training exercises continue. The child is able to sing, from music only, melodies they have learned and already know. With new, unfamiliar songs, sight-singing is only possible when they can picture the relationships of keys and intervals in their mind. To practise, they are asked to sing e.g. the following melody:



Note example 8.

The first two notes are immediately difficult, because the pupil must first imagine what the sixth sounds like in order to sing (or play) it in tune. To do this, they must master dissonances and consonances, learn to sing – first aloud, later silently – the tones between two notes (for example $C - D - E - F - G - A$) while counting the notes with their fingers, reproduce only the first and last notes ($C - A$) and remember what the interval in question is called and what it sounds like⁴³. Such exercises can be done with or without a score. Both familiar songs and very easy unfamiliar ones are sung from music. When singing by ear (without notation), pupils are given as diverse tasks as possible, for example being asked to sing a third from G and a fourth from C, or provided only with the name of the lower note and asked to determine the interval, and finally doing the same without naming either of the notes. Gradually, the pupil begins to recall the names of the intervals and what they sound like, and can then easily imagine them without singing or counting the notes⁴⁴.

If this example is given to a pupil with a mediocre ear to play on the violin without prior ear training, they will probably play the notes if they already know on which string and with which finger they are played. There is no need for the pupil to know the intervals, because they have other information which allows them to play the notes, albeit without *accurate intonation*. This is why many violin teachers see no point in demanding that their pupils know the intervals: they feel it is much simpler to correct any out-of-tune notes by saying “higher” or “lower”, and trust that the child will learn to play in tune over time⁴⁵. Pupils with a well-developed ear and enough understanding of tonal relationships may not understand all the intervals they play, but will be able to hear and correct their intonation themselves. To acquire this skill, pupils with mediocre hearing must first understand the melodic tone of each interval, then the harmonic one, and expand their knowledge of tonality. For violinists, it is of vital importance to train the ear so that, while playing, they can hear each subsequent note in advance and thus check their intonation.

INTONATION

Inaccurate intonation is one of the most common problems for violin pupils. It is a flaw which usually emerges at the early stages of learning and persists for years to come. It goes without saying that deficiencies in intonation lower the quality of musical performance and hinder a pupil’s musical and technical development.

In the case of novice violinists, the quality of intonation largely depends on other skills they have, and whether those skills have been properly mastered. The pupil must be able to imagine in their mind the note they are about to play, master the left-hand position, know how to place their finger on the string and finally know which exact position on the fingerboard corresponds to that

particular note. All of these skills are best learned little by little, by practising them in a consistent order.

Most novice teachers do not follow a consistent sequence of learning, but instead try to get the pupil to learn all of the above almost simultaneously. Pupils who are at the beginning of their studies can seldom imagine what a played note should sound like. Their ear and their knowledge of tonalities are not yet developed enough, which makes clean intonation very difficult to achieve. Training the child's internal hearing before they start playing the violin is therefore vital. Unfortunately, many teachers do not do this, showing great negligence on their part. "Work on intonation can only be started once the pupil has an understanding of the pitch of the played notes," Professor K.G. Mostras writes⁴⁶.

Learning of postures must start in parallel with the training of the ear. Once the pupil's musical ear has been sufficiently developed, they can start working on pure intonation, i.e. placing their fingers on the strings and plucking notes without forgetting to first sing them silently in their mind. If the plucked note is out of tune, the teacher must show the pupil in which direction to move their finger to make the note higher or lower. Then the entire exercise is repeated from the beginning. Similar exercises are done with every finger. A firmly learned tetrachord on one string guarantees accurate intonation on all strings. The placing of the fingers must therefore be practised without haste and by singing each note before playing it. The exercise is repeated until the pupil can perform it flawlessly. This promotes pure intonation by strengthening the connection between the note imagined in one's mind and the muscle memory of the fingers, which is at the core of accurate intonation.

The importance of internal hearing as the main source of intonation and the strong link between muscle memory and finger movements are demonstrated by the following:

- When writing fingerings, teachers sing the melody in their head and move their fingers accordingly, guided by instinct.
- New pieces can also be learned without the instrument by simply looking at the music. Here, one's inner hearing perceives the melody and causes conditioned muscle contractions that are almost invisible to the eye, but enough to internalise the piece.
- If the ear is well trained, violinists are able to play in tune even with an out-of-tune violin, as their internal hearing controlled by their physical hearing helps them react quickly and correct their fingering.
- If the violin has been tuned higher or lower than normal, violinists with a good ear will play out of tune, although (as with any instrument tuned in fifths) their finger-spacing on the fingerboard will not have changed. They will be confused, because the notes they hear and the positions of their fingers, imprinted in their muscle memory, no longer match.

All of these things prove that learning accurate intonation must begin with the development of inner hearing. Only after that can the violinist proceed to playing the notes they hear in their mind⁴⁷.

Such a teaching method creates a conditioned reflex between the imagined sound and the muscle memory of the fingers (i.e. placements on the fingerboard), enabling the pupil to easily learn to correct any wrong movements of the left-hand fingers. Gradually, this skill becomes automated, and accurate intonation develops into an accustomed, conditioned reflex.

How can accurate intonation be achieved if the teacher moves straight on to studying the fingerboard before developing the pupil's inner hearing?

The pupil places their 1st finger on a string and usually produces an out-of-tune note because it is played in isolation without any connection to other notes. They do not know how to fix this issue themselves, so the teacher helps them⁴⁸ by physically shifting the finger in the desired direction or by saying "higher" or "lower". The pupil passively follows these instructions, sliding their finger in said direction without any ear control of their own, and fails to understand the difference between the first note and the corrected note. The muscle memory of the finger is deprived of the necessary auditory experience. Sometimes the teacher plays the corresponding note on the piano and the pupil adjusts their finger to match it.

Practice has shown that such a method is very slow and essentially hopeless in achieving pure intonation. The process runs almost in reverse order, from finger muscle memory to ear control, without any direct involvement of inner hearing. The pupil hears the note only after playing it.

Reference pitches from the piano only hinder the development of the pupil's inner hearing. Instructions to play "higher" or "lower" must also be avoided. Violinists need to be self-controlling. As such, it is very important to develop the pupil's inner hearing and their understanding of keys and intervals in tandem so that they learn to correct their playing themselves.

Unfortunately, when it comes to teaching intonation, the incorrect methods described above (using the piano and helping by saying "higher" or "lower") are common. Such methods lead to a passive attitude towards intonation, with the pupil remaining dependent on their teacher's tutelage. This situation gets worse year by year, with more technical problems amassing all the time. The pupil does not know how to use their ear to improve their intonation because they have not been taught to use inner hearing to hear notes in advance.

During the learning process, the pupil may also encounter other issues which prevent them from achieving pure intonation. One is incorrect left-hand positions: if the palm bends towards the neck of the violin and the thumb is in a near-horizontal position, the gap between the thumb and the forefinger narrows. As a result, the fingers lie incorrectly on the strings, limiting their elasticity and interfering with intonation.

In downward progressions, when the player goes from one string to the next, they often fail to rotate their left elbow. This rotation would ensure the pure intonation of the shortest 4th finger on the *G* string.

All of the above flaws emerge immediately, in Year 1. Later, impure intonation often manifests itself in shifting causing excessive tension in the hands and thus preventing smooth, unhindered shifts.

As for pure intonation, double-stops are particularly difficult for violinists, especially while shifting. Therefore, all potential disruptions to intonation need to be removed before studying double-stops.

INDIVIDUAL STUDY PLAN

The teacher draws up an individual study plan for each pupil for the whole year. The plan includes a brief description of the pupil, a detailed list of learning materials (one for the autumn semester and another for the spring semester) and a summary of the implementation of the plan. Before compiling the plan, the teacher must get to know the pupil, their musical abilities and their character traits. After 3-4 weeks of meetings and violin lessons, the teacher draws up a brief characterisation of the pupil, based on which they decide which materials to use during the first six months. Naturally, pupils with mediocre musical abilities will cover less material than gifted ones. Music schools also have a normative and standardised minimum repertoire that to which teachers must adhere. It lists example requirements, recommended materials and the exam syllabuses that need to be passed at the end of each year before proceeding to the next one.

As studies progress, the plan can be adjusted and pieces replaced with others, if needed. The pupil must be kept informed of the plan and any changes to it.

Repertoire selection. A pupil's musical and technical development largely rests on the right material being selected for each pupil. When choosing the repertoire, the teacher must take into account the pupil's technical and musical capabilities: the skills they have already mastered and the skills that need to be modified, improved, developed or learned. The teacher must also ensure a consistent sequence of learning from the simplest to the more complex.

Typically, it is with repertoire selection that novice teachers struggle the most. They have limited understanding of each year's repertoire, cannot objectively assess the potential and abilities of their pupils (usually overestimating them), or they select pieces which allow pupils to display what they already know best (e.g. a good trill, a specific bowing technique or a beautiful vibrato). This way, skills that need developing are not developed. Pieces are chosen in view of public concerts rather than the systematic development of musicality and technique.

Novice teachers often claim they have no choice in the matter. There are three academic concerts a year at which pupils are required to perform, plus the annual exam and potential music-school concerts. As a result, they only

have time for three sets of repertoire, although it is recommended that all pupils be taught 8-10 etudes, 7-8 short pieces, two larger works and more from Year 2.

The reason why pupils learn a repertoire slowly is because of their teacher's poor planning. Material is learned in an inconsistent order or is too demanding. Instead of one overly challenging, time-consuming work, it is better to have pupils learn a few etudes and short pieces, which require as much time but are of more benefit to them. Too difficult a repertoire is a classic mistake for novice teachers. Sometimes a difficult piece can serve as an incentive, spark interest or help improve a technique, but while practising it, the pupils should also work on useful, easier etudes and pieces from among which one is then selected for public performance. Pupils must be allowed to consistently develop all of their musical and technical qualities, which is impossible by playing just one composition.

When drawing up individual study plans, the teacher should always emphasise music education and musical development. "Finding the focus in teaching (for each pupil) relates to bringing out the pupil's individual qualities and developing the two things needed in performing arts – technical and musical qualities – in equal measure. This principle should be observed from the very first violin lessons."⁴⁹ By sticking to such a system, novice teachers can more easily plan their work and choose materials which best correspond to each pupil's level of skill.

REQUIREMENTS AT THE END OF YEAR 1

At the end of Year 1, the pupil must know basic hand positions, string crossings and proper bow movement on all strings, and be able to play the pieces assigned to them with accurate intonation. They must master the previously mentioned scales on all four strings in half notes and quarter notes at a slow tempo. Additionally, they must be able to play some songs and shorter pieces using *détaché* and *legato* bowing (two notes over one bow / 2 *legato*) and with the simplest combinations thereof in the same keys in which they play the scales.

IMAGINATION IN VIOLIN-PLAYING

If a child is told a fairy tale like *Little Red Riding Hood* and then asked to retell the story in their own words, the child will effortlessly explain the plot, because they can vividly envision Little Red Riding Hood herself and the evil wolf in their imagination. Imagination is aided by familiar words and things the child has seen in everyday life or, for example, in paintings. The same thing happens when they read a book: they imagine the hero and the setting described in the book based on the information they have and the

feelings they have experienced.

Children cannot imagine things they have not personally seen or experienced. Things they have seen and experienced leave a mark on their consciousness and they can picture them again at will.

Our imagination can weave ideas and influences into combinations that do not actually exist. This feature of the imagination is called fantasising. The more influences a child accumulates, the more interesting and limitless their imagination will be, and the fuller and deeper their perception of the world around them.

Musical art is based on artistic depictions reflecting moods, thoughts and feelings.

Every human experience is enriched with emotional tones with external manifestations. In music, the tones are expressed with melody, rhythm, harmony, dynamics, bowing techniques, bowing and more.

Compositions are conveyed to the listener via their performer. The more talented the performer, the more profoundly they can convey the composer's artistic intent. Performers also contribute their own vision to the composition, which is why a composition sounds different when interpreted by different performers⁵⁰. Before a pupil can perform anything, they must master the necessary technical and artistic means of expression.

It goes without saying that before even one correct sound can be produced, one must learn how to properly hold the violin and bow, how to move the bow across the strings and how to press and lift one's fingers on the string. Consecutive sounds only become music if they are played thoughtfully and carry some content.

From the very beginning, the teacher must establish symmetric links from any new technical skill to concrete artistic tasks.

But what kind of artistic tasks are suitable for Year 1? How can you set about honing a pupil's artistic development when they are only just getting to know the instrument itself?

Accurately intoned notes, correct sound-making and a sense of rhythm form the basis here. Once these are in place, the child can be introduced to simple dynamic levels that will help them perceive contrasts in sound the same way they perceive different moods. To do this, one can choose songs (with lyrics or even illustrations for deeper understanding) with contrasts such as good and evil or happy and sad⁵¹. Many children's songs and Russian folk songs included in all books and collections of sheet music for beginner violinists fit this purpose. Several goals are achieved simultaneously: firstly, the texts and words pique the interest of the child, which is very important from a learning perspective. Secondly, from the very first lessons, the pupil gets used to Russian folk music and its musical expressions, which form the basis of their musical ideation and creativity. Thirdly, lyrics make the song easier to understand and serve as a kind of stepping stone from verbal content to producing musical content and fostering imagination. The text gives the pupil an idea of the nature of the piece and sparks a need to

match the moods with dynamic changes⁵². The pupil takes control of their movements and finds them much faster and easier than if merely following the teacher's instructions to play "louder here and quieter there".

Of course, the teacher must correct the pupil's movements and help them attain the necessary techniques, but the initiative should always come from the child. It is even better if the child first sings the song with the lyrics and then tries to find the correct mood by playing it.

As an example, below is a Ukrainian folk song about a goat and a hare. One and the same melody sounds different across three different moods.



Note example 9.

The first description is narrative:

Our goat went for a walk in a green forest and met a grey hare.

Second mood – frightened goat:

Ah, beast, tell me your name! Will you be the death of me, will you eat me?

My death! ou'll eat me!

Third mood – gentle hare:

No, I won't be the death of you. No, I won't eat you. I'm just a hare, grey. A hare, grey.

It is of paramount importance that the child understands the lyrics and the mood changes therein and expresses them with different colours of tone. Most children can easily grasp all three moods and portray them very convincingly in their interpretations.

At this point, only *forte* and *piano* are mentioned. Once the child begins to capture the tone of concrete characters, they can gradually be introduced to genres such as lullabies, marches and dances. A child's imagination is fuelled by figments and associations. Let's imagine a child rocking a doll and singing a lullaby to it: the lighting level is low and the room quiet. A slow melody matches the tempo of the rocking. The image and the melody itself help the child to identify the corresponding mood and the right tone, and to find a way of conveying these through the music. The same applies when learning a march or dance. The child can easily understand the differences in their rhythm and character.

When learning new means of expression, children use their imagination, however primitively, but already adding some of their own artistic ideas and expressions. The transition from concrete musical thinking to a conditional one happens unnoticed.

As they get older, children are enriched by their surroundings and external influences, which give them new information and experiences. Gradually, they start forming an individual approach to the reality around them, which is then reflected in their performances.

General education, knowledge of music and the development thereof are very important to pupils. When it comes to pupils' music education, violin teachers bear a great deal of responsibility. Good taste and a sense of style must be developed from the first years of training, gradually instilling an interest in and love for listening to music, attending concerts and talking about them. Furthermore, pupils must be encouraged to play in different ensembles (within the limits of their technical abilities) and, of course, to give solo performances.

The teaching materials chosen play an important role in a pupil's development. Their sense of style must be developed with the best examples of classics from Russian, Soviet and Western music, which can be played depending on the pupil's technical abilities and musical understanding. "In the early stages of learning, the teacher must certainly take a prominent role when it comes to style, interpretation and such. At the same time, it is essential to listen to the pupil's playing very carefully and to catch even the briefest glimmer of individual creativity."⁵³

Just as each narrator tells a story differently, the interpretation of musical works should and does vary depending on the pupil's educational background, sentimentality, musicality and other individual characteristics. Even in the first year of study, when their means of expression are still limited, children find ways to express their personal relationship with a piece. ■

Year 2

PRIMARY TASKS

During the second year, pupils strengthen and improve the skills they learned in Year 1. Good sound quality becomes a focal point. Two bowing techniques, *détaché* and *legato*, are studied in detail as well as their alteration. Work with accurate intonation and the first position continues. Scales are already played in quarter, eighth and sixteenth notes in 4-8 note *legatos*. Bowings and bow division are improved with simple rhythmic combinations. Using musical imagery, the pupil is introduced to basic dynamics and the variation therein.

FIRST LESSONS AFTER THE SUMMER VACATION

Over the summer, pupils tend to forget much of what they learned in Year 1⁵⁴. For this reason, they are first asked to recall everything they previously learned, starting from the playing postures. The pupil is asked to draw the bow across open strings, then to play a tetrachord on all four strings, and to repeat the previously learned scales to check the intonation. If they seem to remember everything, work with new materials can begin. However, if the teacher notices even the slightest error in playing postures, bow use or other basics, it must be corrected by playing scales or pieces learned in Year 1.

It is not recommended to use new study materials in correcting the flaws, as this will not produce the desired results. Focusing immediately on two different things (i.e. learning new skills while fixing existing technical problems) will delay the pupil's progress.

The first materials played should only require things that are already within the pupil's skillset. Once the existing problems have been fixed, it is time to gradually start learning new keys, time values and bowing techniques.

REPERTOIRE FROM SCALES TO SHORT PIECES

First, all scales played in the previous year are repeated, but this time with higher requirements of sound quality, bowing and string crossings (at a faster tempo in 4-8 *legato*). After that, the pupil can start learning scales in new keys.

If Year 1 ended with the F major and A minor scales, the pupil may, for consistency, continue with scales with flat key signatures, starting from B-flat major: first the one-octave scale starting from the upper octave, then the lower octave, then combining the two. Next, the pupil may proceed to the one-octave D minor scale, then G minor (first in one and then in two octaves), then one-octave E-flat major. Of the scales with sharp key signatures, E major can

be played. This way the pupil will already know 11 different keys.

The learning of each new key needs to be strengthened with corresponding etudes and pieces. Scales are played on separate bows and in 2-4-8 legato (arpeggios on separate bows and in 3-legato). If the pupil played songs and small pieces during their first year of study, then in Year 2, existing skills are strengthened and sharpened with exercises and etudes in addition to scales and songs, starting from the easiest. Recommended etude materials include books by K. Rodionov, N. Baklanova and A. and N. Yanshinov, as well as the “Selected Etudes for Violin, Part I” collection.⁵⁵

In terms of technical difficulty, the songs and short pieces played at the beginning of Year 2 should match those played at the end of Year 1. If the pupil finished the year with W.A. Mozart’s *Allegretto* or J. Lully’s *Song*, the second year can be started with M. Starokadomsky’s *Song*, N. Baklanova’s *Children’s March*, J. Haydn’s *Song*, L. Bekman’s *Christmas Tree*, N. Potolovsky’s *Thunderstorm*, N. Potolovsky’s *Hare*, V. Kalinnikov’s *Cat* or N. Rimsky-Korsakov’s *The Pine and the Palm*.

Following these, the repertoire must become more challenging by including, for example, W.A. Mozart’s *Spring Song*, R. Schumann’s *Melody*, N. Baklanova’s *Lullaby* (after learning the D minor scale) or F. Schubert’s *Waltz* (after learning the B-flat major scale), and then G.W. Gluck’s *Merry Dance*, J-P. Rameau’s *Rigaudon*, D. Shostakovich’s *The Day of Joy*, W.A. Mozart’s *Song of the Little Shepherd* or N. Baklanova’s *Mazurka, Romance, Round Dance*⁵⁶.

From the works listed above, the pupil plays as many as they have time for. In order for each pupil to make the most possible progress, the teacher must select pieces which best cater to their specific technical needs at that time. At the end of Year 2, pupils must take on a larger composition, such as O. Rieding’s *Concerto in B Minor*, 1st movement.

DÉTACHÉ

Détaché is a bowing technique where each note is played with a separate up or down bow. The bow must travel on the string at an even speed and pressure. Bow changes (at the tip  and at the frog ) must be effortless and smooth, without stops or accents.

Détaché learning begins in Year 1 in its most basic form and continues forever after, as it forms the basis for good sound-making and all other bowing techniques.

As the pupil develops, the requirements for a good détaché increase depending on the repertoire played.

In basic détaché learning, it is important to pay attention to the following: the bow must travel in the middle between the fingerboard and the bridge perpendicular to the string, i.e. parallel to the bridge. Détaché is played with a flat hair, except near the frog, where only the right side of the hair touches the string.

The quality of sound depends on the speed and pressure of the bow, i.e. maintaining good contact with the string from frog to tip. Insufficient pressure results in a hoarse, whistling sound. If there is too much pressure, the sound becomes creaky and stuffy. When increasing the bow pressure, the fingers of the left hand must react and apply more pressure as well.

Pupils must be taught to control their quality of sound from the very beginning – right from playing the first open strings.

The requirements listed above must be met already in Year 1, first with easy study material.



Note example 10.

In the example above, the simultaneous changing of the bow and placing of the fingers is strictly observed. Next, different bow divisions and their combinations add to the challenge:



Note example 11.

This is followed by *détaché* combined with string crossings, which requires coordination between both hands and their movements:



Note example 12.

In Years 2 and 3, *détaché* becomes more difficult due to faster rhythmic patterns (eighth and sixteenth notes) played with different parts of the bow.



Note example 13.

In later years, *détaché* must be mastered with all parts of the bow and with different nuances and tempos. In addition to faster tempos, *détaché* is paired with shifts, double-stops and different dynamics (*forte*, *piano*, *crescendo* or *diminuendo*). In *forte*, *détaché* is played closer to the bridge, and in *piano*, closer to the fingerboard.

A properly mastered *détaché* forms the basis for *spiccato* and *sautillé*, which are learned later.

LEGATO

Legato means playing successive notes over one bow without pauses. It is introduced after *détaché*, i.e. once the pupil has mastered drawing the bow correctly, is capable of bow changes at the frog and tip, can demonstrate smooth string crossings and understands the basics of bow distribution. Learning legato starts about halfway through (or towards the end of) Year 1.

When learning legato, good sound quality rests on even bow division, smooth bow changes and string crossings, and accurately timed left-hand finger placement on the fingerboard.

As with every technical challenge, legato must be learned by progressing from easier elements to more difficult ones. The easiest form of legato is to tie two open strings:



Note example 14.

In the example above, the pupil divides the bow evenly in half and connects the notes without a break. If the legato is immediately played on one string with the left hand involved, the stroke may be interrupted and the sense of continuity is lost. In legato, both hands are at work simultaneously, which divides the pupil's attention, and the fingers of the left-hand do not land on the string in time.

Once the pupil is able to tie two open strings in an accurate rhythm and with precise bow distribution, joining two notes with the fingers of their left-hand is much easier. This is first learned on one string with a tetrachord (in 2 legato):



Note example 15.

Next, the pupil is asked to play a one-octave scale, e.g. in D major:



Note example 16.

A smooth crossing from one string to another (when going up the scale) is achieved by slightly lowering one's wrist and elbow, and thus preparing for the change by having the bow hairs come closer to the next string. In Year 1, pupils can focus on two-note combinations and pairing them with *détaché*:



Note example 17.

In Year 2, legato is played by connecting more (4-8) notes per bow at a faster tempo and with multiple string crossings. From Year 3 onwards, more elements, such as shifts, double-stops and vibrato, are added.

In this way, legato and its technical demands become more difficult and develop year by year. However, the fundamentals of good legato – i.e. continuous sound, precise bow division, exact rhythm and smooth string crossings – remain the same.

SIMPLE DYNAMIC NUANCES

An introduction to dynamic nuances is best started with materials the pupil already knows, e.g. songs they have previously performed. The goal is achieved by comparing louder and softer sound qualities matching the moods a song portrays. For example, the beginning of G.W. Gluck's *Merry Dance* is decisive and thus played in forte:



Note example 18.

The soft and gentle melody played in piano creates a surprising contrast:



Note example 19.

In forte, sound quality is regulated not by pressing the bow harder into the string, but by making the stroke wider and denser. In piano, the number of hairs on the string is slightly reduced. The bow is placed closer to the fingerboard and moved with less pressure, but with enough width to retain good sound quality. In piano, the activity of the fingers on the left hand should not diminish (as is often the case with pupils).

Crescendo (gradually louder) and diminuendo (gradually softer) are transitional nuances from piano to forte and back.

The intensification of sound, crescendo, is achieved by gradually increasing the pressure and broadening the bow stroke. A gradual decrease in volume, diminuendo, is achieved by reducing pressure and bow speed.

O. RIEDING: CONCERTO IN B MINOR, 1st MOVEMENT AND ITS TECHNICAL CHALLENGES

This concerto is one of the first large-scale compositions in a pupil's repertoire. It is usually introduced towards the end of Year 2, when the pupil has already mastered a number of musical and technical skills and means of expression. Before tackling the concerto itself, the teacher and the pupil go over its technical challenges with the help of scales, etudes and other support materials.

The concerto is in B minor, which is a difficult key to intonate accurately. In many cases this concerto is the pupil's first encounter with the B minor key, making it difficult to play in tune. Mastering the key first by playing scales and etudes is therefore essential. Etudes by A. Komarovsky and H. Kayser (57) serve this purpose well. The latter is played by omitting any passages played in the third position.

The beginning of the concerto requires precise bow division, smooth bow changes without stops and accents and, of course, good sound quality.



Note example 20.

Smooth legato and good bow division needed at the beginning of the phrase can be practised with any etude played with quarter notes at a slow tempo⁵⁸:



Note example 21.

Towards the end of the phrase, bow division becomes more challenging, making it difficult to play it in exact rhythm. This challenge is tackled by playing an etude with a similar character⁵⁹:



Note example 22.

The following bars are the most difficult ones to play in tune:



Note example 23.

The pupil must place their 1st finger (*A-sharp*) as close as possible to their 2nd finger (*B*), and their 3rd finger as far away from their 2nd finger as possible. This is practised by playing the B minor scale with an additional note (*A-sharp*):



Note example 24.

Next challenge:



Note example 25.

In such a context, many pupils find it difficult to distinguish pitch changes with a half-step up. For this reason, transitions from minor thirds to major thirds must be practised using specific exercises:



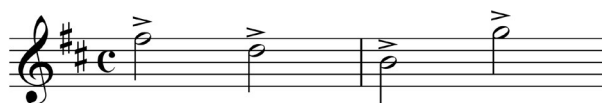
Note example 26.



Note example 27.

Now both the pupil's aural skills and their alertness will have developed to a level where it is possible for them to play the passage in tune.

The secondary theme begins in bar 33. Its fundamental difficulty lies in the accented half-notes on both up and down bows:



Note example 28.

This bowing technique must be learned separately by playing either a scale or a familiar etude with half-note:



Note example 29.

When the accented note is started at the frog, one makes a fast down bow with slight deceleration at the tip. The accent is produced at the tip without stopping. The bow is then drawn quickly back to the frog with a minor reduction in speed at the end. When playing the accent, tone production should not be sharp, and the stroke must remain straight without allowing any sideways movement.

If all the technical challenges listed above are addressed in advance, the pupil will learn the concerto faster and play it well. Facing the concerto's challenges unprepared, possibly for the first time, will make the process considerably slower and significantly degrade the quality of the performance.

PUPIL'S INDEPENDENT LEARNING

Homework. With beginner violinists, the success of their development largely depends on proper at-home practice, i.e. their ability to take the teacher's advice from lessons and follow it at home as effectively as possible. For the pupil to be able to practise at home, the teacher must clearly and concretely explain the content of each assignment, demonstrate anything potentially new, repeat their explanation of the content and make sure the pupil has understood everything. After this, the assignments are noted in the practice journal.

Homework must be appropriate to the pupil's age, pace of learning and other commitments in regular school and music school. In Year 1, homework should be kept to a minimum, but with high standards. This will teach the child to work with discipline.

Beginners should not play the violin at home, because without teacher supervision, they may pick up incorrect playing postures. In the early stages of learning, postures are only practised during lessons. Home assignments can include note names and their locations on the staff, lyrics to songs sung in lessons and different posture-related elements, such as ways to relax tense muscles or practising the correct right-hand position with a pencil. Only when the pupil has demonstrated correct postures in class are they allowed to practise them at home as well.

Depending on the pupil's ability to control the postures, new home assignments are added to strengthen their skills: left-hand finger-spacing on the fingerboard, plucking the strings, developing accurate intonation by first 'singing' a piece silently and then playing it with an attentive ear, and constant control to relax their muscles. Until the pupil is able to draw the bow correctly in lessons, it is not recommended that they play using their bow at home.

Beginners' home practice is best divided into two or three daily sessions lasting 10–15 minutes each.

From Year 2, these sessions are gradually extended. Practising twice a day for 45 minutes at a time is sufficient. Time can be allocated, for example, as follows: in the first session, scales for 5 minutes (no more), technique exercises for 10 minutes and etudes for 20 minutes; and during the second session, 20 minutes rehearsing a piece (or concerto) and the remaining 20-25 minutes practising passages in etudes and pieces which are technically challenging.

From the outset, the pupil is taught to achieve the best possible results with as little practice as possible. They must work consciously, not just mechanically repeating one thing or another. The teacher supports this process by reviewing the materials with the pupil: which things are primary, which are secondary and what kind of home practice will best serve the purpose. In order to achieve this, each year the teacher should hold a lesson in which the pupil is taught how to divide their time at home between materials and is given tools for tackling each technical issue. One whole lesson should be dedicated to the pupil practising, in front of the teacher, as if they were practising at home. This will establish a good basis for the pupil's independent learning.

Summer homework. No summer homework should be given at the end of Year 1. Pupil's playing postures and accurate intonation are not yet established enough to withstand new materials. For this reason, it is better for them not to play the violin during the summer holidays.

From Year 2 onwards, summer homework can be assigned. This should include works which contain technical elements the pupil already knows. The teacher carefully marks the fingerings and bowings on the music, and before the holidays reviews the most difficult passages with the pupil.

For the best results, a weekly plan is drawn up for the summer (for example, from the 1st of June to the 1st of September). First, a general plan is made for the entire period (scales, technique exercises, etudes and pieces), after which the plan is periodised over different weeks. Each assignment is given a rough timeframe. This will provide work structure and ensure that the pupil practises systematically instead of jumping randomly from one thing to another. Such a plan is useful for all pupils regardless of year: it is not just for novices.

After the summer, due to the lack of lessons and the controlled work done in them, a deterioration in playing postures may be seen. The child may not have used a music stand or may have practised by placing the music on a low chair or windowsill. As a result, their left arm will now be lower, palm edges towards the neck of the violin, and the bow drifts towards the fingerboard.

If such alterations take root, a lot of time will be wasted correcting them. Therefore, the teacher must stress – both to the pupil and their parents – the importance of the correct way of playing when practising over the summer holidays.

Checking summer homework. In the first lesson after the summer, the teacher checks the results of the work the pupil did on their own during the holidays. In the case of more advanced pupils in particular, it is important to be patient and to listen benevolently and without interruptions to all the materials they have prepared, saving any remarks until the end. The pupil may have attempted to learn a composition independently over the summer and have imbued it with their own emotions. For this reason, it is important to let them play the piece their way from start to finish. Sometimes, despite mistakes, the teacher may find something new and interesting in the pupil's interpretation. If the teacher interrupts at the first mistake and immediately starts making corrections, the pupil will be disheartened. They will feel helpless and unmotivated to take on further assignments, especially if they are proactive and 'boisterous' in nature. With such pupils, the teacher must be particularly flexible: "Psychological pressure on a pupil under the pretext of teacher authority is not helpful and can lead to a complete loss of contact between the pupil and the teacher. An 'unruly' pupil may have a point. One must try to understand them, and identify the positive and valuable qualities they have. When teaching a challenging pupil, finding a common language is essential. The teacher must point out the positives in their playing, but at the same time address any negative things that prevent them from realising their intentions. Carefully and tactfully, the teacher can progress to a point where a 'stubborn' pupil is open to instructions and advice because they do not feel cornered, belittled or hurt for expressing their own personality"⁶⁰. ■

Years 3 and 4

PRIMARY TASKS

In Year 3, pupils continue learning the first position and scales in all keys (in two octaves, or if they are unable to play a two-octave scale in first position, in one octave), improving the quality of *détaché* and *legato* in all parts of the bow, working on bow division and exact rhythm, and improving finger velocity by playing scales at a faster tempo. In addition to the first position, pupils study the second and third positions and shifting between them. By the end of Year 3, they should have mastered all three positions and know how to combine them freely and accurately.

LEARNING POSITIONS AND SHIFTING

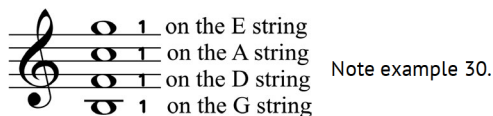
Work on the second and third positions can only start once the pupil has attained basic skills in the first position. These include the postures of both hands, freedom in their movements, accurate intonation and sufficient finger velocity. Only when these have been learned can one proceed to positions and shifting.

In principle, it makes no difference which position (second or third) is studied first, as long as it is done diligently. In many schools, the third position is taught thoroughly, but the second position only “as needed”. Some teachers think it is better to start with the third position, because there the position of the hand is supposedly more stable than in the second position. In reality, a “more stable” hand is an illusion, and such an approach is unjustified. In the third position, as in the second, there is no additional support for the hand. The teacher should never allow the pupil to rest their palm and thumb on the bout of the violin, because this is wrong: “Such support alters the position of the wrist, which in turn alters the angle at which the fingers land on the string in the third position: they become more inclined. This results in a kind of contradiction in posture, which has a negative impact on finger velocity and intonation.”⁶¹

However, learning the third position before the second can have one advantage: it is technically easier to link to the first position. The distances on the left hand are wider and it is easier for the muscles to control them. Apart from the shifts, the positions themselves are learned in exactly the same way.

Second position. Practising the second position is best started with the one-octave F major scale. The left hand’s new placement on the fingerboard is easier to understand if the pupil can compare it to the first position hand placement they already know. To do this, they play the F note with the 2nd

finger in the first position, and then reposition the 1st finger together with the entire hand and the thumb to the same place in the new position.

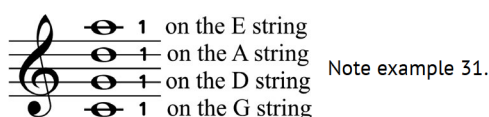


In the first, second and third positions, the shape of the wrist and the fingers of the left hand (in relation to the 1st finger, the 4th finger and the thumb) remains unchanged. To better remember the fingerings, it can be explained to the pupil that in the second position, the fingering is one unit lower than in the first position: the 4th finger is replaced with the 3rd finger, the 3rd with the 2nd, and the 2nd with the 1st. The only exception is the 1st finger, which is replaced with the 4th finger. Most pupils are able to play the one-octave F major scale without difficulty. Next to be played are triads and their second inversions. The pupil plays the C and B-flat major scales by transposing the F major scale one fifth up or down. To achieve the best intonation in the second position, it is recommended to play one-octave scales in all possible keys, but by starting the scales with different fingers: for example, F major, F minor, F-sharp major and F-sharp minor (starting with the 1st finger); G major, G minor and G-sharp minor (2nd finger); A-flat major, A major and A minor (3rd finger); and B-flat major, B major and B minor (4th finger).

These are followed by two-octave scales starting with different fingers on the G string: B-flat major, B major, B minor, C major, C minor, C-sharp minor, D-flat major, D major and D minor. If scales started with the 3rd or 4th finger become shorter, i.e. do not reach their tonic in the higher octave, this is fine. Mastering accurate intonation within the limits of the second position is the priority (62).

Scales are paired with technique exercises and etudes from the collections of K. Mostras and A. Komarovsky and from “Selected etudes for violin, part 2”. Once the pupil is comfortable with the second position, it is time to proceed to the third position.

Third position. As with the second position, the introduction to the third position can be started with the one-octave C major scale. The pupil plays *C* with the 3rd finger in the first position and then, by moving their hand, replaces the 3rd finger with the 1st finger. This is the third position:



In the third position, the palm and the thumb must not touch the bout of the violin. Similarly to the second position, the third position is practised by playing one- and two-octave major and minor scales as well as triads in all possible keys and starting with different fingers (64): for example, C major, C minor and C-sharp minor on the G string (starting with the 1st finger); D-flat major, D major and D minor (2nd finger); E-flat major, E major and E minor (3rd finger); and F major, F minor, F-sharp major and F-sharp minor (4th finger). The two-octave scales are played in the same way as in the second position.

In addition to scales, third-position skills can be enhanced using H. Schradieck's finger exercises and suitable etudes from "Selected etudes for violin, part 2". Etude No. 31 by F. Wohlfart (63) also works well. Once the pupil is comfortable with the second and third positions, they can start systematically improving their shifting technique, i.e. combining the first and third positions.

Studies of shifting. First, the pupil is taught to slide their whole hand freely along the fingerboard. While drawing the bow across open strings (in a quarter note pulse), the pupil slides their left hand rhythmically (in quarter notes) up and down the fingerboard. The thumb and the base of the index finger must not squeeze the neck of the violin, and all movements should be unrestricted and smooth. The violin stays in place. After such a preparatory exercise, the pupil can start practising shifting from the first position to the third via an open string:



Note example 32.

This kind of exercise will help the pupil find notes and positions quickly and with accurate intonation, because hearing, sight and muscle memory are all involved.

Shifts between the first and third positions via an open string are reinforced with suitable etudes⁶⁶.

The next shift type to tackle is to slide on one finger between the positions:



Note example 33.

In this type of shifting, the pupil must pay attention to finger pressure: when commencing the slide, the pressure is slightly reduced to allow for a soft, singing glissando without a 'meowing' sound. Unnecessary and excessive finger pressure on the string disrupts smooth shifting⁶⁷.

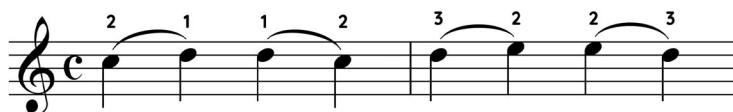
Next, the pupil is taught to shift from their lower finger to their higher finger (and back again):



Note example 34.

It is explained to them that the finger that is currently on the string slides into a new position. In the example above, the 1st finger slides to the third position (D), after which the 2nd finger lands on E. When shifting down, the order is reversed, and the hand returns to the first position. The intermediary note (in brackets) is only necessary in the early stages of learning: further into the process, the note can be gradually omitted⁶⁸.

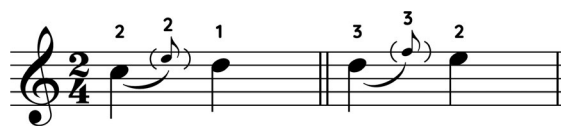
The shift from the higher to the lower finger is the most difficult shift to perform.



Note example 35.

Here, the principle is almost identical to that of the previous example: the finger that was used to play the last note in the old position before the shift now slides to the new position. Once the whole hand is in this new position, the sliding finger is discreetly replaced with the finger below it. This shift type requires plenty of practice and is particularly important in scale-like passages.

Smooth shifting can first be practised with the help of an intermediary note:



Note example 36.

When learning this type of shifting, it is especially important to reinforce the process with etudes⁶⁹, scales and pieces.

Later on, shifting will not only be a useful technical skill (the hand moving on the fingerboard), but also one of the main pillars of artistic expression. The nature of a composition and the violinist's personal preferences affect the way they produce different colours of sound while shifting.

In practice, however, shifts executed by students applying for vocational studies are not only expressionless, but also poorly executed: heavy, slow, with an unpleasant glissando, with the wrong finger and sometimes "jumpy" or disjointed. Common mistakes such as these indicate grave methodological errors which have not been duly addressed in the learning process.

Playing with tense muscles, squeezing the neck of the violin with the left thumb and index finger, and learning shifts too early (when the left hand is not yet strong enough in the first position) or in an illogical order can all result in a poor shifting technique. In most cases, however, it is caused by the teacher's unfamiliarity with the fundamentals and rules of shifting.

There have been cases where teachers have demonstrated shifting with the C major scale without any preparation, i.e. in the most difficult way. Some teachers have made their pupils play arpeggios, sometimes even up to the fourth or fifth position, without any prior familiarisation. Such random and unsystematic scrambling between positions harms intonation and negatively impacts the pupil's overall development. If there is a pupil in the class who demonstrates poor shifting technique, the teacher must identify the element in the chain of positions and shifts which has been carelessly learned, and then systematically and consistently work on that element.

In addition to shifting, in years 3 and 4 pupils continue developing their finger velocity and good sound-producing, working on expressiveness and musicality by playing exercises, etudes and pieces in the first position. For example, H. Schradieck's exercise No. 1 from the first book can be used for strengthening fingers and improving finger velocity. It is composed as an exercise for one string and can be practised on any string, in a variety of ways: in 1–2–4–8 legato and at any tempo, from slower to faster. Playing it with dotted rhythms greatly strengthens and develops the finger muscles.



Note example 37.



Note example 38.

Playing at a slow tempo fosters the quick and accurate placing of the fingers on the fingerboard. For this purpose, the pupil can also play etudes No. 41 and No. 44 from "Selected etudes, part 2". To practise bow division, etudes Nos. 36–38 and No. 43 from the same book are useful.

Other compositions which prove useful at this stage are J.S. Bach's *Gavotte*, A. Yanshinov's *Concertino* and P. Tchaikovsky's *Old French Song*. Of more extensive works, the 2nd and 3rd movements of O. Rieding's *Concerto in B Minor* are recommended. *Moto Perpetuo* and *Melody* by N. Baklanova are useful in standardising the second position. To combine the first and third positions, pupils can play e.g. N. Baklanova's *Sonatina* and the 1st movement of F. Seitz's *Concerto in G Major*.

WORKING ON A NEW PIECE

When given a new assignment or piece, the pupil is told that before playing, they need to examine the music and determine its key and time signature. Then, with the help of the teacher, they define the main task or function of the piece as well as its technical challenges, and plan the order and methods for tackling them. If the pupil is taught to do this from the very beginning, they will be able to orient themselves correctly within all new study materials.

In any year, when introducing new material, precise rhythm, accurate intonation and following the recommended fingering and bowing options are the basic requirements. When a pupil starts practising a new piece, the tempo should be adjusted to give them enough time to think about its requirements and to fulfil them all. Due to the number of requirements, it is hard to remember them all right away. This task can be made easier, for example, by skipping the bowings and playing all notes at first on separate bows. Depending on the structure of the piece, the pupil must determine the beat they find the most comfortable to count during the practice phase – whether quarters or eighths.

The following etude by H. Kayser is written in sixteenth notes⁷⁰:



Note example 39.

Here, the focus is on practising a good legato (sixteen notes on a bow) with frequent string crossings at a fairly fast tempo.

Kayser's etude is very difficult for third-year pupils, even though it is played entirely in the first position. If the legato is played too soon, at the first attempt, using 8-legato for instance, the tones will emerge muffled, un-rhythmic and out of tune. Therefore, the etude must first be played using separate, broad détaché strokes at a slow tempo, with correct rhythm and good sound, by counting in quarter notes. This way the pupil will be able to produce every note with good sound quality and accurate intonation.

Next, the tempo is doubled so that each note is an eighth (counting in 8/8 time). After this, depending on their progress, the pupil can pick up the tempo even more and play the etude in 2-, 4- and 8-legatos by observing precise bow division (although most Year 3 pupils do not proceed beyond the 8-legato).

Another example is Wohlfahrt's etude:



Note example 40.

This etude challenges pupils for its positions and shifting between them, as well as its sound-making, legato and difficult rhythm. The indicated time signature (2/2) is unnecessarily difficult for 3rd year pupils to play *prima vista*. To avoid mistakes, they can first count 8/8 and play the etude slowly from beginning to end with separate bows. Once they know the notes and rhythms, they can start practising the piece, paying attention to its technical challenges.

The first two bars feature shifts from the first to the third position and back again. The pupil is asked to pause here and play the following exercise:



Note example 41.

Processing each shift this way meets the primary objective of the etude. Once the pupil has mastered the rhythmic structure of the etude, they can play it using the indicated time signature (2/2) while focusing on the quality and expressiveness of the sound.

F. SEITZ: CONCERTO IN G MAJOR, 1st MOVEMENT AND ITS TECHNICAL CHALLENGES

Despite being written in the first position, this concerto contains many technically challenging elements: double-stops, chords, trills and combinations of bowing techniques. In addition, it requires considerable finger speed without forgetting its rhythmic challenges. All of these skills should be practised in advance with the help of supplemental materials.

To read the music in the correct rhythm, the pupil must first count 8/8 instead of the original 4/4 time signature (with the exception of the triplets at the end of the 1st movement).

When performing the concerto, most pupils “cheat” with the rhythm of the first phrase due to incorrect bow division:



Note example 42.

The dotted note is not counted for the full duration, and there is either too much or too little bow left for the last eighth note (*D*). It becomes ‘bulged’ or is ‘swallowed’, i.e. it will not be heard at all. In order to understand the correct bow division and to achieve accurate rhythm and good sound quality, the pupil must first play a scale in a similar rhythm:



Note example 43.

The next rhythmic challenge of the concerto is this:



Note example 44.

It can be tackled with an exercise where the dotted rhythms are used in legato in the G major scale:



Note example 45.

The cadence is often ruined by attempting to play it as fast as possible instead of creating room for expressiveness. To practise, the pupil should first play it slowly with separate bows, giving them enough time to watch their intonation on each note, and then in 4- and 8-legato.

Proposed bowings will help in organising the movements of the fingers and the bow, and in playing the cadence expressively:



Note example 46.

The next four bars present a significant technical and rhythmic challenge:



Note example 47.

If the pupil immediately plays everything as written (i.e. in 4/4 time signature with trills), this usually leads to rhythmic inaccuracy (an uneven triplet, and too long a trill). For this reason, it is better to start counting the passage in eighths (12/8) and to change the trills to mordents or omit them altogether. Once the pupil is able to execute the rhythm comfortably, they

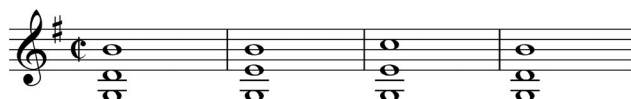
can replace the mordent with a trill practised in advance with the help of supplemental material. After this, the pupil will have no difficulties playing the concerto with rhythmic precision and in 4/4 time.

The final challenge is the double-stops:



Note example 48.

Double-stops must be practised without legato. A suitable etude of double-stops or chords is used to aid learning, for example⁷²:



Note example 49.

This etude is played with double-stops, not chords, and with the same bowings marked in the concerto::

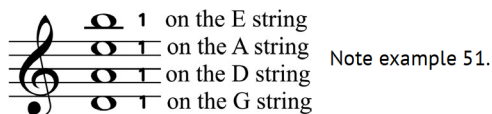


Note example 50.

By practising new pieces with the help of supplemental materials, pupils can address each technical detail with much greater care and will learn the pieces more quickly. The piece will not “dry out”, and the pupil will have more time to work on its artistic side.

FOURTH AND FIFTH POSITIONS

Fourth position. An introduction to the fourth position can begin with the D major scale starting from the G string. First, the pupil plays *D* with their 2nd finger in the third position, which they already know, and then replaces the 2nd finger with their 1st finger:

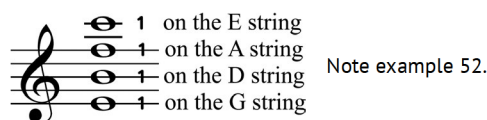


Note example 51.

In the fourth position, the hand lightly touches the bout of the violin. “As the hand moves upwards, the elbow is gradually moved to the right. The wrist bends and the distance between the thumb and the fingers on the fingerboard begins to grow.”⁷³

Similarly to previous positions, the fourth position is studied by playing one- and two-octave scales with triads in all possible keys, starting with each finger. There is no need to fear keys with many sharps or flats: in one-octave scales played in the same position without shifts, pupils handle them without great difficulty, and can improve their ear and intonation. The scales are paired with exercises, etudes and pieces which strengthen the skills needed while playing in the fourth position. After this, all four positions learned so far are combined⁷⁴.

Fifth position. Most pupils find the fifth position easier than the others because the fingering is the same as in the first position: only the strings differ. For example, the *E* played in the first position with the 1st finger on the D string is now played with the same finger, but on the G string:



An introduction to the fifth position can commence with the E major scale. The first *E* note is played on the G string in the third position with the 3rd finger. This finger is then replaced with the 1st finger in the fifth position. The wrist adopts a rounder shape and the elbow moves even further to the right than in the fourth position.

As with the previous positions, the fifth position is practised by playing one- and two-octave scales with arpeggios in all possible keys, starting with each finger.

Once mastered, it is combined with the other positions using suitable exercises, scales and etudes⁷⁵.

INTRODUCTION TO DOUBLE-STOPS

Double-stops cause tangible difficulties for both hands. For this reason, it is better to focus on the right hand before gradually including the left hand and its challenges.

When playing double-stops, the bow is drawn with even and consistent pressure immediately on both strings. For good sound quality, it is important not to press one or both strings too hard. This simple, seemingly straightforward skill does not always lead to the desired results, particularly when the technical challenges of the left hand are thrown into the mix. Often, when pupils are unable to play two strings simultaneously, they compensate by pressing both strings too hard. To remedy this, they are given exercises on open strings with different tempos and parts of the bow⁷⁶:

a) $\square$ $\vee$

b) $\square$ $\vee$ $\square$

c) $\square$ $\vee$ $\square$

d) $\square$ $\vee$ $\square$ $\vee$ etc.

Note example 53.

After practising open string exercises, one string is left open and the fingers are placed on the other. This way, the right hand performs the exercise with the double-stops, while the left hand follows a simple and consistent order to control intonation:

Note example 54.

Double-stops are difficult for the left hand, particularly due to intonation. The difficulty lies in arranging the fingers simultaneously on different strings and in varying combinations.

An introduction to double-stops starts in the first position. The pupil's internal hearing must be well trained by this point, as this will make the challenges of double-stops on accurate intonation easy to overcome. In addition, the pupil must be able to visualise the movements of each finger of

the left hand in order to play the double-stops consistently. From an intonation standpoint, it is very useful to play the notes of the interval under study separately at first (i.e. one after the other, but with both fingers immediately on the string) and then together:



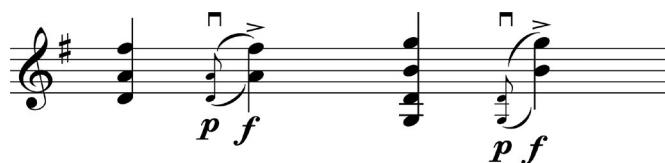
Note example 55.

Training on the double-stop in the first position must be reinforced with suitable exercises, etudes and pieces⁷⁷.

CHORDS

A pupil's first meeting with chords – which in its simplest form means playing two of the three notes on open strings – can take place as early as in Year 2. From this first encounter, it is important that the pupil knows how to play chords correctly.

Pupils often try to play all three notes simultaneously by pressing the bow firmly on the string, producing a sound which resembles a screech. This happens because they have not learned the correct technique. It is explained to the pupil that no matter how many notes there are in a chord (whether three or four), it is always split in two. The two bottom notes are regarded as a grace note played with a short amount of bow in piano and without an accent by placing the bow softly on the string (not by throwing it). The second half of the chord is played with an accent by moving the rest of the bow rapidly towards the tip:



Note example 56.

MARTELÉ

Martelé is a sharp bowing technique performed by playing detached notes with small stops. Martelé can be played with a full bow or in different parts of the bow, most often towards the tip. Contrary to *détaché*, martelé does not involve smooth bow changes or even bow pressure.

The Martelé stroke has three phases: the attack or accent; a fast bow stroke with a release of pressure; and a stop. The attack and stroke must take place simultaneously, without preparing the bow for an accent in advance.

The attack – which is one of the vital elements of martelé – is practised with the easiest possible scale in the first position by playing all notes first at the frog with down bows and then with up bows. Next, the same scale is played in the middle of the bow with alternating down bows and up bows. Finally, martelé is practised near the tip and reinforced with suitable etudes⁷⁸.

In addition to the exercises and etudes used for practising the fourth and fifth positions, double-stops, martelé and vibrato (see above), the pupil's musicality and sense of style are developed with pieces like P. Tchaikovsky's *Chanson Triste*, J.S. Bach's *Gavotte* and Gabriel-Marie's *Aria in an Old Style*. Of larger works, they can play A. Yanshinov's *Concertino*, Dancla's *Variations No. 1* or the 1st movement of A. Vivaldi's *Concerto in G Major*.

VIBRATO

Vibrato is one of the most important means of musical expression. Ideally, it will take root naturally once the pupil has established some kind of musical and technical foundation. This means good playing postures, the ability to play in three or four different positions and to combine them freely, and most importantly, good sound-making and quality of sound, accurate intonation and the ability to produce different colours and dynamics.

When a pupil's sense of style is systematically developed, they wish to start expressing their emotions in a more colourful way. Sometimes this manifests itself in a need to use vibrato before the teacher has instructed the pupil to do so. The pupil finds their playing colourless, and by imitating other violinists tries to make it more vivid with some experimental vibrato. In such cases, the right kind of vibrato comes naturally. All the teacher needs to do is to assist the pupil in aligning the motion correctly (taking into account the individual characteristics of the pupil's hands) and to closely monitor the development of their vibrato.

If vibrato learning commences on the initiative of the teacher rather than the pupil, its concept is best demonstrated using an artistic example. To do this, the teacher plays a piece already familiar to the pupil, e.g. P. Tchaikovsky's *Chanson Triste*. This will get the pupil interested and stir up an emotional response to the music. After this, the teacher proceeds directly to teaching vibrato. There is a wide array of methods you can use. For example, a silent, preparatory exercise can unfold as follows: the pupil places their 2nd finger on a string and slides their hand about one third forward and backward. Gradually, the movement of the wrist is accelerated and shortened until the finger moves back and forth at only one point on the string. During this exercise, the thumb stays in place. Practice has shown that pupils find the correct movements more quickly if they are allowed to hear the result of the movements, i.e. the vibrated sound.

One of the simplest ways to demonstrate vibrato is as follows. With their hand in the third position, the pupil places their 2nd finger on the A string

and draws the bow slowly across the string. The teacher holds the scroll so that the pupil does not need to support the violin by squeezing it with their thumb. Then, with their own hand, the teacher moves the pupil's 2nd finger and wrist back and forth, first slowly and then more quickly, creating a beautiful sound. Following this, the pupil attempts to imitate the movements on their own with the teacher still holding the scroll.

Their movements will be clumsy at first, but this is fine so long as their hand is free of tension and their movements are in parallel to the string, not sideways. Vibrato should be practised sparingly, without spending too much time on it and making the muscles tired.

When practising vibrato at home, the pupil can first support their scroll against a wall. That way, their thumb will only lightly touch the neck of the violin, without restricting the movement of their wrist. Over time, the feeling of free movement becomes a habit, and there is no need for additional support.

Once the pupil can manage the 2nd finger vibrato, they will have no difficulty doing the same with their 1st or 3rd finger. Vibrato with the weakest finger, the 4th finger, is left until last.

At first, vibrato is used only when playing long and melodically expressive notes. The teacher monitors the pupil's technique and makes sure vibrato starts at the beginning of the note, not in the middle, and does not stop until the end of the note.

Vibrato must be neither too small nor too slow if it is to retain its artistic value. One needs to know how to use vibrato in different ways depending on the nature of the composition. Vibrato can be broad, calm and majestic, or small, narrow and frail.

The ability to use vibrato is a true art! It must not be misused under any circumstances. Auer writes: "Excessive use of this effect (i.e. vibrato – T.P.) annuls the reason for which it is used."⁷⁹

Work on vibrato continues with every new composition requiring new means of expression.

Once older, the pupil can practise and cultivate their vibrato with special exercises in addition to pieces. Practice with long notes in different dynamics is very useful: when the tone intensifies, vibrato becomes faster; when the tone softens, vibrato also fades away. Next, the note is initiated in forte with wide vibrato, and when applying diminuendo, vibrato is gradually made faster.

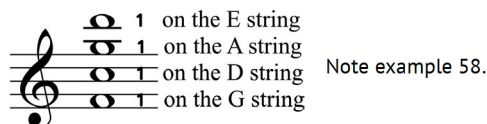
If a pupil arrives in a class with an ugly and incorrectly learned vibrato, the teacher must first investigate the reason for its poor quality before it can be corrected. Poor vibrato can be caused by an incorrect playing posture, for example if the palm touches the neck of the violin. In this case, the vibrato is usually produced by the fingers only, and the resulting sound is thin and bland.

Often the cause lies in tense muscles. If the pupil played with tense muscles before, practising vibrato will double this tension. Therefore, when cor-

Years 5 and 6

SIXTH POSITION

In the sixth position, to find the correct hand position, the hand must first be moved to the previously learned fifth position, play on the G string note *F* with the 2nd finger, and then replace the 2nd finger with the 1st finger. The wrist moves slightly higher in the correct position:



After this, the F major scale can be played. As with all other positions, learning the sixth position should begin with playing scales and arpeggios in all possible keys, starting with different fingers from the G string.

In addition to scales, arpeggios and exercises, the sixth position is strengthened with suitable etudes.

WORKING ON TECHNIQUE

Scales. First, the pupil revises two-octave scales with shifts from the first position to the third and fourth positions: E-flat major, E major, E minor, F major, F minor, F-sharp major and F-sharp minor. After this, it is advisable to play scales and arpeggios in the sixth position without shifts, as instructed above. These are followed by two three-octave scales (G major and G minor) with shifts from the first position to the third position, and then to the sixth position.

In addition, the pupil is asked to slowly play scales in double-stops (C and D major) with shifts up to the third position on separate bows.

Exercises. To strengthen the sixth position, one can play exercise no. 16 from H. Schradieck's *Die Schule der Violintechnik*. Exercise no. 17 from the same book ties all six positions together.

Etudes. The strengthening of the first five positions is continued by playing etudes 62, 63, 65, 66 and 69 from *Selected Etudes, Part 2*. Etudes 70 and 71 from the same book are good for practising double-stops.

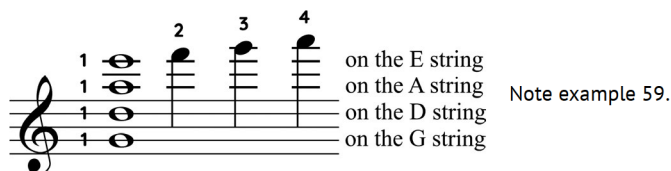
In addition to the etudes from *Selected Etudes, Part 2*, etudes from Mazas' first book can be played to improve different technical elements: no. 4, no. 5 and no. 6 (*détaché*), no. 19 (*legato*), no. 10 and no. 11 (*martelé*), no. 13 (*trill*, preparatory exercise), no. 7 (*cantilena* and *vibrato*), no. 2 (combining different bowing techniques) and no. 25 (*double-stops*). The order in which

these etudes are studied depends on what is most necessary and important for each pupil.

Musical pieces. Short pieces can include Spendiaryan's *Lullaby*; Tchaikovsky's No. 21 from his *Children's Album*, Op. 39; Rameau's *Tambourine*, Auber's *Presto* and Haydn's *Ox Minuet*. Suitable larger pieces include Glazunov's *Easy Sonata* (arranged for violin and piano by K. Rodionov), Corelli's *Sonata in E minor*, A. Komarov's *Variations on a Russian Theme* and Vivaldi's *Concerto in A minor*, 1st movement.

SEVENTH POSITION AND BEYOND

Fingering in the seventh position is the same as in the third position (i.e. notes are played with identical fingering, but on different strings):



In the seventh position, the highest note is the 4th octave *A*, while the lowest note is the 1st octave *G* played with the 1st finger on the *G* string. The seventh position is practised from this *G* note up by playing one- and two-octave scales with triads in all possible keys, starting with different fingers.

Scales. To master the seventh position, the pupil first plays scales solely in that position (without shifts), starting with different fingers. These are followed by three-octave scales in A-flat major, A major and A minor, which are located in the range of seven different positions on the fingerboard. These keys are also useful in introducing the pupil to double-stop scales at a slow tempo.

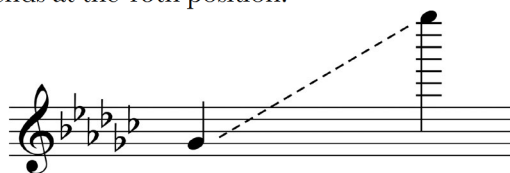
Exercises. To reinforce the seventh position and link it to the previous positions, the pupil can play *No. 18* and *No. 19* from H. Schradieck's *Die Schule der Violintechnik*.

The first seven positions are the primary positions to be studied in detail. In addition to them, almost the same number of positions can be counted upwards. These positions are mainly played on the *E* string.

Once the pupil masters the seventh position and has strengthened their skills with scales and appropriate exercises, systematic study of the three-octave scales can begin.

There are only five three-octave scales that can be played in the range of seven positions. They are practised in a chromatic order: *G* major, *G* minor, A-flat major, A major and A minor. In all other scales, notes in higher

positions are added to the end of the top octave. The last three-octave scale (G-flat major) ends at the 13th position:



Note example 60.

When playing three-octave scales, it is important to make sure that the fingers of the left hand also remain in the correct form in the higher positions. The fingers should be round and not extended flat. This goes for the little finger as well: instead of laying flat on the string, the entire fingertip rests on the string with the last joint slightly bent. This gives the finger stamina and stability.

In high positions, the thumb (or at least the area between the fingertip and the last joint) must be supported against the neck of the violin. With the exception of pupils with small hands, the thumb should never leave the neck and rest on the ribs of the violin. Under no circumstances should the thumb be left ‘hanging in the air’ without any support. When ascending from high positions, the thumb should gently curve around the neck of the violin while maintaining contact at all times.

When playing on the G string in higher positions, the violin is held higher and the work of the fingers is facilitated by moving the left elbow a long way to the right. The elbow of the right arm is raised high enough to allow free bow movement. Practice in which the violin is turned at every note to ‘catch’ the G string under the bow must be avoided.

IMPORTANCE OF SCALES

Most violinists’ technical skills are grounded in scales and arpeggios, which are practised from the first year and thereafter throughout the course of study. Notable pedagogues including L. Auer, A. Yampolsky, K. Mostras and B. Struve have all emphasised the importance of studying scales: “There is one, and only one, means to acquire the necessary left-hand technique that allows freedom, strength and flexibility of movement, i.e. the training necessary for the fingers. This means is the scale...”⁸⁰

In music schools, the quality of scale-playing is often poor, which indicates that too little attention has been paid to this area of technique by pupils and teachers alike. Scales are studied superficially or, at best, used as a means for learning positions and shifts. They become a tedious, dull and mechanical thing which pupils are not interested in practising.

On the other hand, if scales are presented as a concrete task and tied to the artistic repertoire the pupil is playing, they are no longer seen as a dry or dead technicality. There is now a goal, which catches the pupil’s interest and

makes them concentrate: “The significance and undeniable usefulness of scales become evident when the pupil understands the direct link between them and the artistic material they are playing, and when the exercises are varied to the necessary extent – varying keys, fingerings and bowings, as well as rhythmic, dynamic and other changes.”⁸¹

In music schools’ seven-year curriculum, scales are introduced in Year 1 and studied, without exception, until the seventh year, gradually increasing in difficulty every year.

Whatever the year, scales must be played with 1) accurate intonation, 2) precise rhythm, 3) good sound-making, 4) bow division and 5) smooth string-crossings and bow changes without stops and accents.

In addition to these general requirements, specific tasks and scale-related challenges are added each year. For example, if the D major scale played in Year 1 (single octave, slow 2-legato) is compared to that played in Year 3 (two octaves, in third position and 4- to 8-legato) or Year 7 (three octaves with shifts, 8- to 12-legato), the difference is striking. To make the transition from the first to the second and on to the third version, the pupil must attain all the technical skills needed to tie them together. The incorrect playing of scales means a breach of this rule.

Often, pupils playing three-octave scales demonstrate flaws which should have been addressed long before. Each such flaw and resulting comment from the teacher signifies a deficiency in their skills, which at this point is much more difficult to correct than it would have been earlier.

What are the most common pedagogical oversights in studying scales?

1. Scales should be played consistently throughout the year, not just when preparing for an exam, as is so often the case in music schools. (To make matters worse, such preparations tend to include only the easiest scales!) For this reason, most pupils do not have time to familiarise themselves with all the keys during their seven years of studies. When learning every position, it is necessary to play all the scales and arpeggios that can be played in those positions in all keys and starting with different fingers. This way, the pupil will gradually learn all the keys, even if only as one- or two-octave scales.
2. Rhythmic possibilities are rarely used. Pupils usually play scales in 4-, 8-, 12- and 24-legato, although the variety of rhythmic combinations is much wider in the artistic repertoire. Scales should therefore be played (in upper years) with both an odd and even number of notes on a bow (6-, 8-, 10- and 3-, 5-, 7- and 9-note legato) and by mixing the odds and evens. This will improve the pupil’s understanding of rhythm and their bow division skills.
3. Ideally, pupils should be able to play three-octave scales and arpeggios applying different fingerings. All scales can first be practised using the



Note example 66.

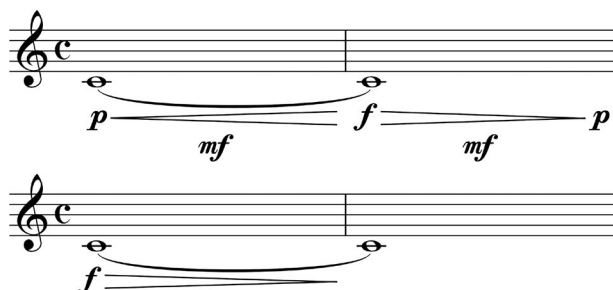
To ensure that the internalisation of the fingerings is not automatic but conscious, the pupil is asked to play triads from the top note to the bottom note:



Note example 67.

Such exercises help the muscles of the left hand get used to the different positions and how they ‘feel’ on the fingerboard. The pupil first finds the top note with the bow, checks the pitch via an open string and, by using their visual memory as a reference, locates the note on the fingerboard. Gradually, the muscles begin to remember the distances, and the finger starts to hit the correct note accurately, without having to search for it with the bow. Such orientation on the fingerboard is particularly important when playing *prima vista*.

5. When playing scales, fingers should not be lifted high above the fingerboard and should not make a knocking sound when landing on the string. Despite its increasing popularity among pupils, scales should be played without vibrato.
6. Scales should also be used to improve sound-making, i.e. drawing the bow, checking the evenness of sound, and developing vibrato and dynamic complexity. For example:



Note examples 68 & 69.

In the first example, when playing in piano (softly), the vibrato is calm and slow. With crescendo, the vibrato becomes a little faster and more intense before slowing down again. In the second example, the forte nuance can be started with a slow vibrato, gradually increasing in speed.

discreet and executed by nimbly easing the finger from one string to the next. If lifted, the open string will sound, which is not the intention.



Note example 71.

For this reason, sixths should be learned by first focusing on this particular skill and practising it with a preparatory exercise.



Note example 72.

Once mastered, the pupil can proceed to practising the scale in sixths, for example in C major, first in a single octave with one shift to the third position.

The pupil is reminded in advance that a sixth is a variant of a third, in which the lower note is one octave higher:

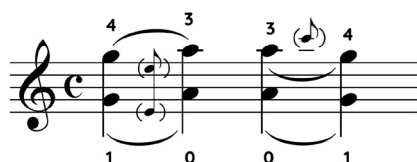


Note example 73.

As a result, the root note becomes the higher note (pupils often try to form a sixth in C major starting from C).

Scales in octaves. Octaves are played by sliding two fingers (the 1st and 4th) quickly and simultaneously. The whole arm, from the elbow up, supports the movement and brings the wrist and the thumb to the new position. The free fingers (the 2nd and 3rd) are round above the string, not stretched upwards, as this can cause extra tension in the muscles. During descending movements in particular, it is important to ensure that the shifts are executed with the thumb next to the neck of the violin, not detached from it, as is often the case.

When playing octaves, shifts are carried out with the help of intermediary notes. If the shift coincides with a string crossing, the slide is implemented by the finger on the connecting string.



Note example 74.

If the shift is made via an open string, the finger slides toward the next position without leaving the string.

In scales in octaves, the bow rests mostly on the lower string. When

playing legato, the bow change and the octave shift should perfectly coincide. The bow should travel evenly and not stop, or even slow down, at the change of octave.

Scales in tenths. Although scales in tenths fall outside of music schools' seven-year curriculum, they are essential for technically advanced pupils to practise. If Spohr's *Concerto No. 2*, for example, marks the pupil's first encounter with them, the violinist is in trouble. For this reason, the pupil should be taught to master tenths, with the help of auxiliary learning materials, prior to using them in pieces.

Decimi are formed by combining a third with an octave. On the violin, tenths are played with the 1st and 4th fingers in two different positions, e.g. the first and third position, second and fourth position, and so on.

The D-major scale offers a good starting point:



Note example 75.

The first tenth, with an open string in the third position, is easy to play. The next one is more difficult, because the 1st finger must reach *E* in the first position while the 4th finger plays *G* in the third position.

To make this reach easier, the 4th finger is first placed on the *G*, then the whole left arm is turned slightly to the right. The thumb, which remains in the third position, is lowered a little and its upper joint is anchored on the neck of the violin, while the 1st finger stretches down and hits the *E*.

This hand posture serves as the starting point for all subsequent tenths. During shifts, both fingers move simultaneously, but with different half-step or whole-step distances between them, depending on the key of the scale. The thumb remains stationary at all times.

Tenths are first practised slowly by playing the notes separately (see Example 76), but placing both fingers on the string at the same time.

When descending after the open string, the 1st finger is placed first, as it is in the third position, and the 4th finger is then stretched:



Note example 76.

To achieve accurate intonation from the beginning, the pupil must be able to 'hear' the notes of the next tenth while playing the preceding interval, and understand which finger needs to be moved by a half-step and which by a whole step. Such a timely 'order' sent to the fingers helps them locate their correct places.

Usually, pupils play tenths by moving both fingers and then trying to tune them in relation to each other without a reference point for an interval. This results in inaccurate intonation.

As the 1st and 4th fingers are greatly stretched, tenths should be practised carefully without tiring the hands and without spending too much time on them. At any signs of tiredness, the pupil should rest.

Chromatic scales. In music schools for children, the introduction to chromatic scales is limited to playing them within the bounds of the first position.

The scales below can be played with two fingering options. In the easier one, studied first, the fingers slide from one note to the next:



Note example 77.

Then the same scale is played with alternating fingers (without slides):



Note example 78.

The difficulty of these scales, depending on the fingering, is the accurate intonation of the half-steps, either with rapid slides or alternating fingers.

To achieve pure intonation, the scale should first be played slowly on separate bows, checking each semitone. Once the pupil is able to play the scale with accurate pitch, they can gradually increase the tempo.

In slides, the fast and precise movement of the fingers is achieved through specific exercises. The scale is first played very slowly in 4-legato. The finger must feel the slide – not from the duration of the previous note, but from the exact moment the next note sounds – very quickly and without audible glissando.

If the chromatic scale is immediately played at a fast tempo, it will become sloppy and out of tune, because the pupil will not have time to control the intonation and the movement of their fingers from one semitone to the next.

PRIMA VISTA SKILLS

Among the many musical and technical skills required of violinists, prima vista plays an important role. Skilful prima vista means the ability to play music one has not seen before without stops, with the correct rhythm and with accurate intonation, within the limits of one's technical abilities.

Pupils do not always succeed in this task. Good music-reading skills are important for every music student, regardless of their major: soloists, conductors, orchestra or chamber musicians, teachers and amateurs. It is therefore of the utmost importance to pay attention to the proper development of these skills and to investigate why some pupils play *prima vista* with ease while others struggle.

A pupil's talent should not be regarded as an indicator of how well or poorly they play *prima vista*, or vice versa: many otherwise brilliant performers are not as well equipped at *prima vista*, while some mediocre pupils excel at it. Practice alone does not yield the desired results. Teachers often find that in Year 1, some pupils read music better than others. This suggests that there are causes and circumstances which have a direct bearing on the development of *prima vista* skills. To identify these, it is important to monitor the maturing of the skills. This requires one to first observe and internalise the elements of a musical score, to understand the technical means needed in reading them, and to analyse which of these elements usually cause difficulties for pupils.

Notation is a set of conditional symbols that form musical phrases in the same way that letters in a book form words. The phrases are presented in a particular melodic, rhythmic, harmonic and dynamic form, and accompanied by a series of additional markings (bowings, fingerings, dynamic changes, etc.).

In order to quickly internalise such a large number of symbols, a violinist needs to have a solid foundation of musical and technical skills – a well-developed inner ear, a sense of rhythm and the ability to group notes of varying durations – and knowledge of key signatures, bowing techniques and different positions.

A beginner playing *prima vista* must have enough time to understand the connection between each symbol and their other skills, and at the time of playing, to merge them together. This unique combination of analysis and synthesis forms the basis of *prima vista* playing. Persistent practice sees the reading process speed up and the pupil begins to recognise note groupings, rather than individual notes, just like words in a book.

To avoid mistakes and pauses between notes, the brain must be given time to plan the necessary movements, i.e. the pupil must read the music a little ahead. The skill of reading ahead is the foundation of *prima vista* playing and should be developed from the first year of study.

The speed at which a pupil is able to perceive musical text depends, up to a point, on their nervous system and its speed, on the correct teaching of the technical skills instilled in the pupil from Year 1, and on practice. Thus, *prima vista* skills largely relate to elements which hinge on the teacher's teaching methods.

Upon examination, we notice that *prima vista* is usually hampered by the same elements: one pupil is troubled by the counting, another by the many sharps or flats in the key, while another is unable to choose the best

fingering to use and ends up opting for the most absurd one out of fear of leaving the safety and comfort of the first and third positions. These are the three most common challenges in prima vista playing. Why?

The first challenge relates to pupils' inability to group (i.e. counting) notes. The introduction to basic note groupings starts in Year 1, and pupils are taught to perceive and internalise the duration of each note – whether a whole, half or quarter note – first separately and then gradually in alternation.

In practice, most beginners do not play whole notes, because very slow bow strokes are difficult to start with. Half notes are also rarely used; usually only in scales, because elementary etudes and small pieces are not written in half notes. Thus, sight reading starts directly from quarter notes and possible accompanying eighth notes. Pupils do not have time to address each note systematically and consciously, and end up playing them mostly by ear with the teacher's assistance – as opposed to independently, consciously and counting each part of the bar.

To add to the challenge, a beginner's playing postures and intonation are yet to develop, and spark constant comments from the teacher. As a result, the pupil's attention is not sufficiently focused on minding and mastering the duration of each note and their combinations. If the teacher succeeds in focusing the pupil's attention, positive results will be achieved, and the pupil will learn to group notes as early as Year 1. This serves as a secure and solid foundation for any future prima vista skills.

Teaching must be consistent. Just as a child first learns to utter isolated words, and only then to read and write them, so in music the pupil must first learn to sing in tune without music before singing from music. Learning can start from whole notes using the 4/4 conducting pattern, thus establishing a link between the pattern and the duration of the note the pupil sings. The duration of half notes is learned in the same way, and only then are the time values mixed up, e.g. first bar – whole note, second bar – two half notes, and so on. The C major scale, for example, makes good singing material. Quarter notes are best learned by using sheet music and songs the pupil already knows, such as M. Magidenko's *The Rooster*.

Since Year 1 is packed with skills to learn, it is no great loss if the teaching concentrates solely on three values: the whole note; the half note; and the quarter note. Only when these three have been properly learned can the pupil be introduced to eighth notes. This is a rule many novice teachers fail to follow. They bring eighth notes in too early, do not emphasise the thorough learning of each note value, and let pupils play from sheet music without asking them to sing the notes first. No wonder the pupils have difficulties counting!

At first, pupils should always play the violin without reading the music until they are sufficiently familiar with the playing postures. Even without sheet music, they encounter basic counting simply by drawing the bow across open strings. The teacher adjusts the pupil's movements using time

by counting two even quarter beats on a bow, i.e. one half-note's worth. Only when the pupil has mastered the playing postures of both hands and is able to play tetrachords with accurate intonation can they be introduced to sheet music by playing songs they have already learned by singing. Melodies written in half-notes work best for this purpose. The pupils will be able to play them without difficulty, since they are already used to drawing the bow during two quarter notes.

Once all of these essential skills have been learned, it is time for slow quarter notes. These pose no difficulties, as they are played evenly and slowly, only a little faster than half notes. Difficulties emerge when the half notes and quarter notes are mixed together in one bar⁸².

The simplest way to compare the duration of these time values is to choose a piece which begins with a half note followed by two quarter notes. While the pupil is playing, the teacher very rhythmically counts all four quarters out loud and observes that the quarter notes and the pupil's hand movements coincide exactly. Gradually, the pupil develops a reflexive understanding of time and is able to make a connection between the note-specific notion of sound, pitch and placement on the fingerboard with the note's duration and the alternating time values. Using the same systematic method, the pupil is familiarised with each new time value and their different combinations using carefully selected learning materials.

Similarly, it is very useful for pupils to learn – quickly, with a pencil – to group the rhythmic notation so that the quarter note beats within each measure are separated from one another, according to the time signature.

Rhythmic errors made in Year 1 can be due to a variety of reasons: inconsistent learning of skills; uncertainties about each new time value; an overly demanding repertoire; unmindful reading; or not knowing how to read music ahead. The result is an unstable foundation for *prima vista* skills.

The second challenge in reading music is the many sharps or flats in the key signature. Pupils often start playing new material without looking at the signature or figuring out the key, relying on their own melodic hearing alone. Mistakes slip through. Responsibility for teaching pupils to determine the key before playing rests with the teacher.

Nor is it any secret that many music school teachers do not go through all of the keys with their pupils by playing scales, let alone etudes. This explains, in part, the difficulties in *prima vista* playing.

The third and final challenge relates to fingering. Why do pupils prefer the first position when playing *prima vista*? Because they know this position much better than the others, which have not been studied thoroughly enough. If every position is given the same attention, pupils can freely use them all in their *prima vista* playing. The issue with fingering thus relates to mastering positions and shifts. In addition, teachers often make the mistake of writing down fingerings. In an effort to make the pupil's work easier, they end up inducing passivity: if the fingerings are not marked, the pupil runs into trouble because they are not used to independent thinking.

It makes more sense to note the positions, not the fingerings. Positions marked by the teacher oblige pupils and boost learning. Using positions instead of finger numbers ensures that positions are practised daily. As a result, it becomes much easier for pupils to choose the correct fingering when playing *prima vista*.

To summarise, if each new skill is learned in a sound manner, in consistent order and with the greatest of attention from the very beginning, *prima vista* will not be a problem, but rather bring together all of the skills mastered up to that point. Before playing a new composition, pupils must always determine its key, time signature and tempo, and do a quick scan of the piece and its structure. Only then should they start playing it.

TRILLS

Trill exercises not only serve the end goal, i.e. mastering one of the most common ornaments in music, but also support the development of other technical aspects of the left hand: velocity, effortless and the rhythmic precision of the fingers⁸³.

The smaller the number of muscles involved in a movement, the faster and more successful it will be.

The trill is the fastest of the finger movements. It is a technical skill that is only possible because the work involved is limited to one finger and its muscles, while all other muscles remain inactive.

So when can a pupil start practising the trill? For beginner violinists, it is difficult to place the fingers of the left hand on the string even at a slow tempo without the whole hand contributing to the movement. Without practice, people tend to use more muscles than are needed.

In the first year of study, the focus is, as far as possible, on teaching the fingers to move independently of one another without the muscles of the other fingers inhibiting the movements. At the same time, the extra muscles (i.e. muscles that are at rest) 'switching off' without tension is also monitored. This work is done slowly, without accelerating the natural tempo of the fingers. In Year 1, natural tempo means alternating the fingers at, for example, quarter-note tempo:



Note example 79.

In the second year of study, with the right kind of training, each finger will already function more freely. The independent and dexterous movement of the fingers on the fingerboard is achieved by a smaller number of activated muscles. However, this stage is still too early to do specific trill exercises, as the hand postures have not yet been stabilised, and the pupil's attention is divid-

ed among more important things like intonation, bowing and sound-making. In addition, the speed at which fingers drop on strings is still only equivalent to an eighth note. Sixteenth notes are played at a leisurely tempo:



Note example 80.

Preparatory work on trills continues in Year 3. The fast and independent movements of each finger are important, as these qualities are necessary for the overall development of the left-hand technique. Almost all etudes played in Year 3 support this task. They work as preparatory exercises because they employ structures that resemble the trill, i.e. use alternating adjacent fingers with a slur⁸⁴.

In later years, the fingers become more agile and the pupil can already play trill-like runs with thirty-second notes.

If all of the intermediate steps aimed at increasing finger velocity and improving the trill are arranged in a consistent order, the exercise looks like this:



Note example 81.

This exercise is played in exact rhythm with uniform and consistent quarter notes from start to finish. The aim is a precise and organised trill.

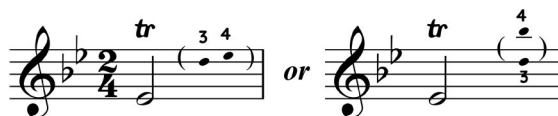
If the preparatory exercises and all other work are carried out systematically from Year 3 onwards, the trill becomes natural, not tense or sloppy.

Pupils who have not practised the trill correctly sometimes replace it with a quick vibrato without lifting their finger. This should never be allowed. The teacher should also make sure that when playing the trill, the pupil's wrist remains stable and does not bend outwards or inwards towards the neck of the violin. Both these positions can cause unwanted tension in the muscles.

The trill must be practised with each finger and at different speeds, and from both the principal note and the abovementioned auxiliary note.

Poor trills are usually caused by the main or trilling finger pressing too hard against the fingerboard, or by the non-trilling fingers becoming involved in the movement.

In trills, the stationary finger should press the string using normal pressure. The trilling finger reduces the pressure a little with its own drop. To prevent the trilling finger from ‘inviting’ other fingers to join in the movement, these fingers can be placed temporarily on the adjacent string (without pressing it).



Note example 82.

G.B. VIOTTI: CONCERTO NO. 23 IN G MAJOR, 1st MOVEMENT, AND ITS TECHNICAL CHALLENGES

Viotti's concerto is very useful for pupils in years 5 and 6. It incorporates many technical elements which, if meticulously rehearsed and adopted, will strengthen pupils' musical and technical skills.

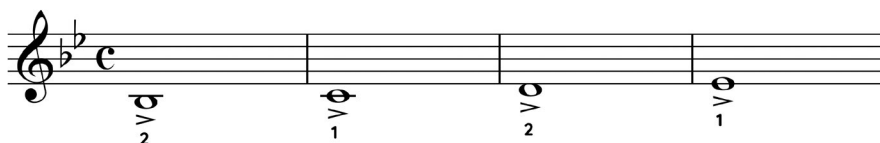
The concerto begins with large, expressive accents, played with up and down bows:



Note example 83.

These notes pose a challenge, as the accent must sound equally beautiful, colourful and expressive in both directions. There must be enough bow for both whole notes. Most importantly, the note that follows the first note must be played without stopping, and the bow change and shift must coincide exactly.

This leads to two tasks: firstly, one must learn to play the accent up and down with the same quality of sound; and secondly, the shift has to be well executed. The first task is tackled by working on the right kind of accent on one note (especially with an up-bow), then proceeding to the second task, which is to coincide the accent with the shift. For this, any scale can be practised using two fingers:



Note example 84.

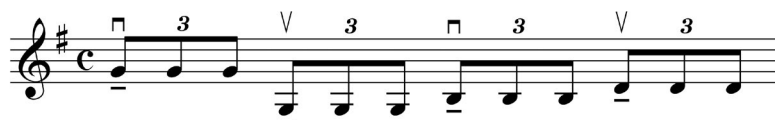
The concerto also includes a section played with a quick détaché:



Note example 85.

Pupils often play this with a shallow, frail sound. The bow does not travel straight and the movements of the fingers of the left hand do not coincide with the bow change. To keep the bow firmly on the string, each note is first played slowly with twice the length, observing the smooth movement of the bow. When each note is played in this way, the pupil will quickly understand how to maintain good contact with the string. This is essential for good sound-making. Moreover, with longer notes and slower movements of the left hand, the right hand also adjusts to a slower tempo. This makes coordination between the bow change and the fingers of the left hand much easier.

After this, playing each note three times, the pupil starts building up a metrically correct accent and working on the alternating up and down bows:



Note example 86.

The tempo is gradually increased, after which only one note is played as written in the music.

Détaché can be practised by playing Etude No. 5 from Mazas' first book:



Note example 87.

The next challenge is the dotted rhythm. To practise this, the notes are first played using the middle section of the bow, each dotted note followed by a noticeable pause:



Note example 88.

The execution of a full bow stroke up and down is achieved by gradually extending the movement. Here, the same Mazas etude (No. 5) can be used, but in a rhythmically modified form:



Note example 89.

Another option is Kayser's Etude No. 23:



Note example 90.

Next, the pupil is faced with a descending sequence from the sixth position to the first position, which most pupils find challenging:



Note example 91.

When practising this passage, the pupil should focus on the following intervals, which are rehearsed separately:



Note example 92.

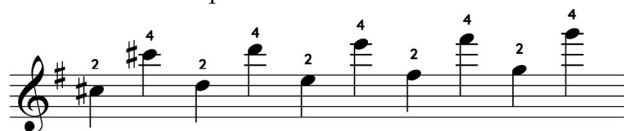
The 4th finger slides into the new position, after which the 1st finger is placed on the string in the new position. This shift should be as quiet as possible.

A similar example for practising ascending sequences:



Note example 93.

The octave is played with a shift from the 2nd finger to the 4th finger. The 2nd finger slides to the next position:



Note example 94.

All of these sequences, which are the root cause of most of the challenges in Part 1, are practised in the same way.

In addition to the above, the combined legato-détaché bowing across three strings is worth noting:



Note example 95.

For a music school pupil, this combination of legato and détaché is very difficult. It is played in the upper part of the bow with a combined movement of the upper arm and the wrist by accentuating the first note of the legato with a generous bow. The rest of the notes are played with little bow. If this technique proves too difficult for the pupil, they can replace the two separate notes (détaché) with a two-note legato.

STACCATO

Martelé is an essential preparatory bowing technique for learning staccato. In martelé, the attack is created with detached strokes up and down. In staccato, a group of notes is played on a single (up or down) bow by separating them with attacks.

Staccato should first be practised slowly to allow the pupil enough time to understand the technique and feel each of its elements in their muscles: the attack (which is produced by rapidly contracting the muscles); relaxing the muscles; and finally rest.

Staccato is practised with both the up and the down bow. The direction itself does not present much difficulty for pupils, and exercises utilising both directions improve the speed of muscle contraction and relaxation.

To start, staccato is played in the middle section of the bow with two strong 'bite' notes on a bow. In the down bow, the stick is slightly tilted toward the bridge, with all hair resting on the string. In the up bow, the stick is slightly tilted toward the fingerboard and there is a little less hair on the string.

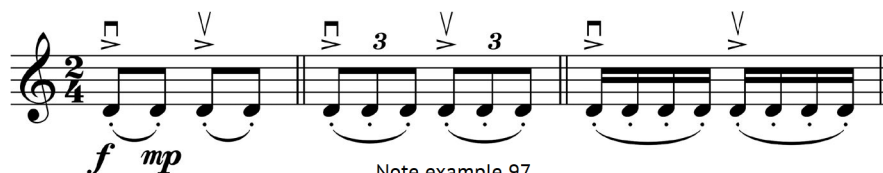
Staccato is created with a wrist movement and the thumb pressing the bow (for a quick attack). The pressure of the finger and the 'pulse' of the wrist are followed by a concrete pause, during which there is less bow pressure on the string and the wrist relaxes. This is followed by a new attack:



Note example 96.

The quicker the impulse and the clearer the pause between notes, the easier it is for pupils to understand and control the execution of all three elements, and the faster they will master the skill.

The number of notes and the tempo of the bow are gradually increased.



Note example 97.

Staccato is first practised on open strings and then with tetrachords, scales and suitable etudes.

The challenge with fast runs is that while the right hand is making short, fast movements, the fingers of the left hand must drop and alternate. The difficulty lies in coordinating these movements. Therefore, runs must first be played in legato, so that the left hand does not hinder or disturb the right. ■

Year 7

PRIMARY TASKS

In Year 7, pupils diligently prepare for their final exam and work on the selected repertoire.

Work on improving one's musical and technical skills continues with emphasis on pure intonation, finger velocity, double stops, three-octave scales and expressiveness of sound, and developing all of the bowing techniques learned so far. In addition to other new skills, pupils practise chromatic scales and – if not limited by the size of their hands and their general technical level – scales in tenths.

TECHNICAL EXERCISES AND OTHER STUDY MATERIAL

To start the music school year, pupils repeat the three-octave scales they have previously practised and then move on to the next scales. The teacher should not focus on the number of scales played, but on the quality of the playing: pure intonation, controlled bow division, smooth shifting and good sound-making. This also applies to double-stop scales and arpeggios. Six-four triads can be added and for more advanced pupils, other triad inversions from books by Flesch or Ševčík⁸⁵.

From Schradieck's first book, pupils can play the initial exercises at a fluent tempo (16–32-legato) and then proceed to the most advanced ones. To practise double-stops, Korgueff's⁸⁶ exercises or the first two or three exercises from Schradieck's second book can be studied. F. Fiorillo's etude no. 23⁸⁷ and other etudes not originally written in double-stops are also useful:



Note example 98.

F. Mazas, no. 39 (second book):



Note example 99.

J. Dont, nro 8⁸⁸:



Note example 100.

Of Kreutzer's double-stop etudes, no. 31 is among the easiest (89). It is played first in quarters without legato, and then in 2–4 legato.

Work to improve *détache*, legato, martelé and staccato continues. To practise broad *détache*, Fiorillo's etude no. 11 and Kreutzer's etudes no. 1, 3 and 8 are useful. Repetition (i.e. playing every note of an etude twice) will yield good results.

The following etudes can be used to practise legato: Mazas's no. 19 (first book), Dont's no. 3 and no. 6, Mazas's no. 32 (second book) and Kreutzer's no. 12 and no. 13.

Martelé can be practised with the following etudes: Mazas's no. 10 (first book) and no. 36 (second book) and Kreutzer's no. 4. To improve staccato, pupils can play Kreutzer's etude no. 5 and Mazas's etudes no. 34 and no. 37 (second book).

In addition to the bowing techniques mentioned above, trills are reinforced by playing etudes that develop the rapid dropping of adjacent fingers onto the string while playing a long legato, and etudes composed specifically for practising trill. These include Mazas's etude no. 13 (first book), Dont's etude no. 17 and Kreutzer's etudes no. 17–20. To cover a broad spectrum of techniques, etudes no. 23 and 37 from Mazas's second book can be studied.

Work on cantilena should not be ignored either. To practise, slow etudes such as Mazas's etudes no. 1 and no. 7 (first book) and no. 35 (second book) can be paired with slow pieces, e.g. Aleksandrov's *Aria*, Rakov's *Vocalise* and Tchaikovsky's *Autumn Song* (from *The Seasons* Op. 37b).

Fast pieces improving finger velocity and mobility include Francois Schubert's *The Bee*, Mostras's *Etude in A minor* and Glier's *Scherzo*. Suitable larger pieces to play in Year 7 include P. Rode's *Concerto No. 8*, G.B. Viotti's *Concerto No. 23*, C. Beriot's *Concerto No. 9* and A. Corelli's *Sonatas*. More advanced pupils can play the first two movements of G.F. Handel's *Sonatas* in E major and G minor, P. Rode's *Concerto No. 7*, W.A. Mozart's *Adélaïde Concerto* and the first movement of L. Spohr's *Concerto No. 2*.

REQUIREMENTS AT THE END YEAR 7

After seven years of music school, pupils should have mastered a certain number of musical and technical skills that they can utilise later in life. Some will embark on professional studies; some will end up playing in amateur orchestras or ensembles; others will simply enjoy music as avid listeners or knowledgeable concert-goers.

Equipping pupils with the right kind of musical and technical skills should be at the heart of music schools and the education system they employ. In addition to mastering their instrument within the framework of each year's curriculum, pupils should know how to analyse new pieces and manage to play them *prima vista*.

However, most music school graduates are quite helpless without their teacher, because the teacher has not instilled in them the skill and understanding of independent work. If fingerings are not readily provided, pupils are unable to interpret the piece, their *prima-vista* playing is poor and their professional preparation leaves much to be desired – even among pupils planning to further their studies. All of this stems from an improper teaching system. What is required of the pupil should also be required of the teacher.

REPERTOIRE SELECTION AND PREPARING THE PUPIL FOR THE FINAL EXAM

When preparing for the music school's final exam, teachers may opt for a repertoire that seeks to impress and thus present the pupil in a better light, even if the pieces do not match the pupil's musical and technical abilities. An overly difficult composition demands a lot of time and energy, hinders normal development and causes technical problems, and it will bore the pupil. The result will not always be favourable, especially if the pupil uses the same programme to apply for further studies. In most cases, playing a programme that is too difficult for the pupil's skill level does not leave the best impression.

A calm and artistically confident performance requires the pupil's musical and technical skills to be at a sufficient level. This level does not need to be artificially created by choosing particularly easy pieces for the final exam. If working consistently year-round (including during the summer holidays, when children have a lot of free time), pupils end up working on a large number of exercises, etudes and shorter and longer pieces with technical elements they need to develop. Among them, there may be a more demanding piece that expands and promotes the pupil's performance-related possibilities. Such a piece tends not to be performed at concerts, but is honed to a point where all the previously rehearsed pieces suddenly feel much easier. After this, the piece that works best can be selected and added to the final exam programme.

Technical preparedness is achieved in a different way. Any composition, etude or piece can be made temporarily more difficult. For example, if the programme includes an etude played in 8-legato, it can be practised in 16-legato. Once the pupil can play that, 8-legato will not cause any problems.

The same applies to the tempo of virtuoso pieces such as Schubert's *The Bee* or Yanshinov's *Spinning Wheel*. In order for the pupil to feel comfortable at the required tempo, the compositions can also be played considerably faster during lessons. Then, when on stage, the pupil will be calm and collected, because they are technically prepared to perform the piece at a moderate tempo⁹⁰.

In terms of quality, putting the repertoire already learned aside for a while can also yield good results. Firstly, taking a break from old material and

working on new, more demanding pieces will strengthen the pupil's musical and technical abilities. Secondly, when the old repertoire is "revived" as the final exam approaches, it will take on a new kind of freshness, and the performance will be technically freer.

PREPARING THE PUPIL FOR PUBLIC PERFORMANCES

A performer's state of mind on stage is something that affects every musician, from schoolchildren to mature artists. Most are unable to overcome their nerves completely: everyone performing in public experiences some degree of stage fright. For some, this never prevents them from giving an excellent performance, while others need to expend a lot of extra energy fighting their nerves and do not always achieve the desired result. Some are altogether unable to control their nerves, and every performance is an embarrassing experience they would rather avoid. In some extreme cases the degree of stage fright can be unbearable, and otherwise talented musicians are forced to pursue other careers. Usually, performers think that the feelings they feel are a personality trait that cannot be controlled, and continue their futile struggle against them.

While individual characteristics are obviously important, a child's musical education and upbringing in general also play a significant role. When the areas of musical education are examined more closely, it often turns out that the culpability lies with the teacher.

Every teacher has been on stage and recalls the feelings a performer has when performing in public. Before going on stage, they are interested to know who will be listening to them, because for a performer, this is not something about which they are indifferent. At times, the presence of someone important (or unpleasant) in the audience can act as an anxiety trigger. Why? Because while everyone hopes to do well and please the audience, there is always the fear of failure, of making a mistake, having a memory lapse or even freezing up. This leads to a situation where the performer, prior to taking to the stage, starts thinking about and bringing to mind "unpleasant" places that leave them worried and uncertain of themselves⁹¹.

Often pupils get up on stage unsure of themselves, thinking "Whatever happens, happens." In front of an exam board or an audience, they get anxious because they do not know how to react to the unfamiliar and distracting situation. An internal battle begins. The pupil hopes to shake off that awkward feeling and tackle the unpleasant task of playing in front of an audience. The thought that everything will be over in 5 or 10 minutes is comforting. In this moment of internal struggle, strength of character and the quality of technical and psychological preparation come to the fore. These qualities and their development are at the heart of education, being built upon from the very first lesson.

Such a state of mind is very common and has many contributing factors:

an unfamiliar environment; fear of freezing up and making mistakes; insufficient technical skills; unpleasant associations; and, most importantly, negative psychological influence on the part of the pupil's teacher and family.

So what can a teacher do to help a pupil feel more comfortable on stage?

First of all, the teacher must remember that their pedagogical influence on pupils begins during the entrance exams, and that first impressions – both good and bad – leave a deep mark on a pupil's psyche.

The current entrance exam situation is unlikely to leave a pleasant impression. The board, who traditionally sit at a red table with their attention focused entirely on the examinee, make children anxious. The examinees realise that their grade depends on the board members. In addition, the strange situation places a great strain on the child's nerves, resulting in fear, emotional turmoil and general tension (similar to the feelings experienced during a public performance).

Even if a child manages to hold their nerve, demonstrates good abilities and an ear for music and is accepted, their first impression will probably stick – and might do so for a long time. In the degree exam, the pupil finds themselves in a similar situation. Despite all of the practice and preparation that has gone into the programme, their earlier experience triggers an association that manifests itself as nervousness, uncertainty and apprehension. Long-lasting impact of this nature is quite plausible and raises questions about the entire entrance exam system. The exam should be pleasant and interesting for the child, not frightening and unnerving.

After playing in class all year, the first public performance means a drastic change to the circumstances to which the pupil has become accustomed over the year. Lessons are normally held in a classroom, not a hall, and the pupil stands on the floor, not on a stage. Apart from the teacher, there is usually nobody else present. The teacher sits nearby, counts the beat as usual, makes observations, interrupts their playing, speaks, sings and helps the pupil with words and gestures. The lesson starts with scales, followed by exercises, etudes and pieces. All of this feels safe and familiar. Repeated from lesson to lesson, it becomes a “dynamic stereotype”, i.e. a system in which the same stimuli trigger the same reactions.

During a performance, everything familiar suddenly disappears. The new environment makes the pupil tense, uncertain and uncomfortable. Strange silence is a new stimulus that adds to the pupil's concerns. In a degree exam or level exam, pupils start with pieces, not scales and etudes as they are used to doing. All of this interrupts the familiar order. The stereotype is broken, which is extremely stressful for the central nervous system and triggers a negative reaction.

In such cases, the teacher has failed to anticipate these issues in their teaching. Public performances must be addressed from the earliest lessons, paying attention to circumstances that could hinder future performances. This starts by creating optimal conditions in class that allow the child to feel free, not forced or shy.

In addition, pupils should be accustomed to practising in the presence of others. Different audiences evoke different feelings, all of which are important in terms of experience: when playing for beginners, pupils feel pride, confidence and even a touch of superiority; when faced with peers, a competitive instinct makes them want to play better than others; and in front of more advanced violinists, there is a great sense of responsibility, with pupils seeking to showcase their achievements by mobilising themselves as much as possible. The attention received from older pupils and reactions to the performance have a very positive effect on their self-esteem.

From a psychological point of view, it is very important that pupils receive guidance for solo performances, especially their first ones, which in a way are lessons in front of an audience. When performing, the pupil takes stock of their work and achievements and shares them with teachers, peers and family.

The pupil must believe that listening brings pleasure to the audience. The performer, on the other hand, feels most pleasure if they understand the character of the piece deeply and confidently, almost as if they had composed it themselves. The performance must be a carefully rehearsed mix of imagery and musicality. To this end, the teacher must teach the pupil to focus on the artistic task ahead and, before playing, to recall the character and tempo of the piece.

In addition to creating conditions in class that as far as possible resemble those of a performance, the teaching process should cultivate, from the outset, the skills needed to control oneself on stage.

Most pupils perform less well in public than they do in lessons. This is usually due to two reasons: insufficient technical preparedness; and undeveloped artistic enthusiasm. The former is closely linked to the latter. Problems of technical preparation are usually recognised first as they are inevitably reflected in the artistic performance as a whole. For example, any excess tension in the muscles before a public performance will multiply on stage. The entire body stiffens up and trembling hands refuse to obey the performer. Smooth and consistent playing is replaced by staccato-like sounds⁹². Obviously, in such a state, the pupil is unable to fulfil the musical and artistic task at hand. The same applies to all skills. The teacher must therefore place great emphasis on ensuring that each new skill (especially if related to posture or intonation) is practised correctly, consistently and confidently. Learning is controlled with the conscious involvement of the senses: touch, hearing and sight. Through such multifaceted and consistent learning, skills become firmly embedded and automatic over time.

In order for a pupil to truly embrace a composition and give their own interpretation of it following meticulous technical and musical work, they must be granted full artistic freedom to express their own fantasies and associations without corrections, interruptions or distractions. This gives the pupil independence and belief in their abilities⁹³.

Often, just before a performance, the teacher suddenly remembers that the pupil has not once played the piece from beginning to end without stops

and corrections. At the final rehearsal, the teacher sits further away and tries to act as a silent listener after first advising the pupil: "Try to play without my help. Imagine this is the examination. Focus, and try to remember everything." Such a reminder given just before the exam and in such a context carries a cautionary tone. It hardly benefits the pupil, and fulfilling all the teacher's requirements at once feels new and very hard. Other examples of things that can have a negative impact on the pupil's psyche include cases where the teacher "picks up the pace" by reminding the pupil of the upcoming exam or threatens to punish the pupil's insufficient efforts with a lower grade. The teacher should never become irritated or raise their voice.

All of these things together will make the pupil think the exam is something dangerous that will result in unpleasant consequences. The pedagogical examples given above provide fertile ground for fear. When on stage, the pupil will begin to worry about forgetting notes or making mistakes. Such fear is always based on something: perhaps the pupil has played a fast passage incorrectly or has had a memory lapse during a lesson or in public. Even if such incidents are isolated, pupils may remember them for a long time. When rehearsing, if there are passages which prove impossible to play or where the pupil always makes a mistake, the teacher should explain the reason for the mistake and show them how to solve it. The pupil is then asked to play the passage again. Such a reaction to mistakes does not frighten the pupil; instead, it encourages them to study the piece more deeply. Occasional mistakes can happen, even in easy passages and even if the piece has been well rehearsed. If a mistake occurs during a public performance, the pupil's attention must be directed elsewhere by saying, for example, that the performance was not expressive and musical enough, and giving some examples.

Sometimes the teacher reacts differently, especially if the mistake was made in front of other people. "What's wrong with you today? You never make mistakes! Play it again from the beginning", or "Keep making mistakes like that and you won't be playing at the concert!" Such a reaction from the teacher instils fear of making mistakes and will leave the pupil reluctant to perform. In the worst case scenario, the teacher informs the parents or the pupil that the performance went well, but that their grade will be lowered because of a mistake the pupil made.

Having your grade lowered because of a failed performance, discussing it in the presence of others and being comforted by your peers can have a negative impact on the child's psyche and affect future performances. The next time the pupil is on stage, they will involuntarily relive their earlier feelings, and in the absence of other reasons, the mistake may recur due to association. Repeated hardships lead to stage fright, and in subsequent performances, the pupil will go on stage fearing that they will make a mistake or forget something, rather than thinking about the artistic task at hand. Such examples are very common and mostly caused by thoughtless behaviour or incorrect teaching methods on the part of the teacher when preparing the pupil for a concert or exam.

Mistakes made while playing can be caused by many things. Most often, they occur in a new piece which has not been rehearsed with due care. Typically, pupils practise easy passages quickly and difficult ones slowly, cultivating mistakes and other inaccuracies in intonation, fingering and rhythm. Are all these mistakes inevitable? Do you have to “teach” your fingers the wrong sensations? Of course not. If, from the very first lessons, the teacher teaches the pupil to be aware of what they should be doing at each moment and how to do it, the pupil will gradually learn to read music with concentration and accuracy.

Mistakes and failures can also occur during the learning process if the piece exceeds the pupil’s technical abilities – something to consider when picking the repertoire for public performances. Exceeding the level of preparedness in any way will inevitably lead to poor results. Suppose a pupil playing a challenging piece overcomes those challenges during lessons, giving the impression that the composition is within their abilities, and the teacher lets them play the piece in a level exam or degree exam. On stage, with different distractions and stressful elements present (as above), the nervous system becomes overloaded and at some point stops sending impulses to the muscles. The inhibitory process in the cerebral cortex is triggered and the chain of familiar associations breaks down. As a result, the pupil might make a mistake or forget which notes to play and lose self-control. In that case, the only thought in the pupil’s mind will be how to reach the end as quickly as possible. The artistic task recedes into the background, and the pupil is left feeling annoyed and dissatisfied with their performance.

Sometimes the teacher chooses an etude, two pieces and a concerto for the level exam, and these are all the pupil plays throughout the semester. If an assigned composition proves too demanding, there is no time to learn anything else.

Each stage of progress sets limits on the development of one’s musical and technical abilities. These limits should be tested during lessons, not in concerts. It is much better to play a few etudes and two or three pieces of varying degrees of difficulty and then choose those that work best and in which the pupil feels free and confident. When an etude or piece that has already been learned is repeated, the pupil can fully focus on the artistic task and on a more sensitive and musical performance, rather than on overcoming technical difficulties. That way, the performance and all the preparatory work involved are approached in a psychologically correct way.

If a pupil experiences no technical difficulties, they will go on stage calmly, focusing all of their attention on the musical content of the piece and freely using all of the musical and technical means of expression at their disposal.

Novice teachers should remember that a pupil’s experience of their first public performance holds vital importance for all future performances. Their relationship with the stage is shaped by their impression of their first performance⁹⁴. It is therefore essential to create conditions in which the pupil feels comfortable and can play calmly and successfully in every way.

Most importantly, the piece rehearsed for public performance (especially the first one) should be considerably easier than what the pupil's current abilities allow. Technical preparedness is an advantage which contributes to a calmer mindset and a higher-quality performance. The pupil's mind works clearly and confidently on stage.

After a calm and successful performance, the pupil will be pleased and proud, and keen to perform again. If skilfully maintained, such a mindset is strengthened by each subsequent performance. It becomes a habit that empowers the pupil later when faced with more difficult artistic tasks. In addition to picking the right pieces, it is extremely important to understand the psychological techniques teachers use with pupils for overcoming difficulties. Expressions matter: instead of saying that the pupil should "hit" a note (after a jump), it is better to use the word "take", because hitting opens the possibility of missing the "hit". Taking, on the other hand, imposes a categorical requirement and eliminates all other options, thus mobilising and directing the pupil's psyche and muscular system in the right direction.

The more difficult the piece, the more the pupil should be encouraged to focus on its artistic side and to seek means of expression. "Places of danger" should not be given any special attention. If supported with skilfully selected auxiliary material intended for honing the necessary techniques, the pupil will not even notice them.

Sometimes teachers draw the pupil's attention to a difficult passage and warn them in advance of the danger. An ultimatum may follow: "If you learn this, I will let you play the piece. If not, you won't be playing it." The harmfulness of such an approach is evident: potential challenges frighten the pupil even before they start working on them.

Sometimes pupils become interested in testing the limits of their strengths and skills, and they overcome the difficulties of the piece and significantly improve their technique in the process. However, public performances of such pieces are usually artistically lacking and very stressful. Some can handle the stress; others cannot. Therefore, such experiments should be avoided.

Often, pupils "infect" one another with fear of difficult passages. Pupils who have already encountered them (possibly unsuccessfully) make sure to warn their peers in advance. The outcome is easy to guess. In many cases, the difficulties are exaggerated and not even justified, because they stem from incorrect teaching methods. But the damage has been done, and recalibrating the pupil's psyche proves difficult. A panicky mindset can lead to superstition that sometimes swells to absurd proportions, with pupils carrying amulets or wearing "lucky dresses" for public appearances.

Both pupils and their parents need to prepare for performances in a psychologically correct way. If the parents are overly nervous and fussy, this can have a negative effect on the child. Parents need to be told in advance to treat the day as any other, and to avoid doing anything out of the ordinary, like getting their child to take a nap, letting them skip school or overfeeding

them. All of this generates unhealthy attention, as if the performance was a particularly exciting event.

On the day of a concert, a pupil is not tired out with rehearsals or long violin lessons. The performance itself will not last longer than 10–15 minutes, and does not necessitate any deviations from the child's normal daily routines.

When deciding on the order of performance, the tradition of weaker pupils playing first and stronger pupils playing last should be avoided. This can create feelings of inferiority in the former and superiority in the latter.

Pre-performance advice and encouragements such as “don't be nervous” or “be bold in your playing” usually have the opposite effect. Instead, the pupil is first asked to take a few deep breaths to boost their circulation and release muscle tension, and then helped to focus all their attention on the piece they are about to perform.

Abram Ilyich Yampolsky handled such situations very wisely. Just before a young pupil would step onto the stage, he would ask them to show him how the piece started. This taught the pupils, almost inadvertently, to focus their attention on their primary task. They would confidently play two or three bars for their professor, receive his approval and immediately step onto the stage with their thoughts focused on how to begin the piece. The most difficult thing for a performer is to *concentrate immediately on the artistic task at hand*. With such a simple trick, Yampolsky taught his pupils to focus on the essentials and forget everything that tends to distract a performer.

A proper assessment discussion, held after a performance, plays an important educational role. After a level exam or degree exam, the teacher can evaluate each pupil's performance in front of the whole class. Here, emphasis should be given to the musical and artistic aspects of the performance instead of focusing on random shortcomings or lowering of the grade due to mistakes or pauses. Pupils should be particularly praised and encouraged for the expressiveness of their phrasing and the musicality of their performance. This discussion will serve as a useful guide for future performances – not only the first, but all subsequent ones.

Now let us turn to accompaniment. In order to master a piece correctly, it is very important to know how to use accompaniment skilfully. Playing with a piano should begin very soon after the pupil can play a piece from music, from beginning to end, slowly but correctly. This is necessary so that the pupil gains a proper understanding of the piece as a whole, its harmonies and overall idea. After this, accompaniment is not needed for a while. The piece is worked on and polished, after which the collaboration with the piano is resumed.

The piece is played from the score without stops, first slowly and then gradually increasing the tempo. The pupil reads the music while playing, but instead of reading individual notes, they soon start to use the notation as a visualisation of the melody. Memorisation should not be rushed, but should happen naturally over time.

When playing with accompaniment, the most important thing is to teach the pupil to hear the composition as a whole.

To sum up, public performances as such do not require any special preparation. Rather, preparing for them starts in the earliest lessons with the right kind of education. The teacher must keep their eyes firmly on the goal – public performance – and harness all of their teaching methods to this end. Step by step, the pupil is “equipped” with the means required for performing music. In this way, each public performance serves as the harmonious culmination of the work done in lessons at a specific level of learning.

WORKING ON THE VIOLIN REPERTOIRE

From their first lessons, children not only learn violin technique, but also build up their musicality. Even when playing open strings with the accompaniment of another violin or a piano, pupils actively listen to the harmony in which they are participating. The teacher should cultivate this seed of musicality with each new piece by feeding the child’s imagination with its content, character and contrasting moods. Gradually, the teacher introduces the child to phrasing and different means of expression by setting them new and increasingly difficult artistic tasks.

When selecting pieces, the teacher focuses primarily on skills that need improvement and further development. The learning material for each year includes pieces that are specifically designed to hone a particular skill. Some focus on finger velocity, bowing techniques or cantilena, while others require a variety of technical skills. In addition to their technical challenges, all pieces have the same goal: the musical and artistic development of the pupil.

Take, for example, the first two movements of G.F. Handel’s *Sonata in E major*. Although it involves no purely virtuosic elements, this sonata is one of the most difficult compositions in the music school repertoire. It requires free command of the instrument and thus a certain level of preparedness. From a purely technical point of view, this should manifest itself in good sound-making, bow division, dynamic variations and the mastery of a broad *détaché*, not to mention pure intonation and proficiency in shifts and positions.

However, if limited to these requirements, to conscientiously followed musical notation and to carefully applied technical skills, the performance becomes formal. The pupil must therefore also be able to understand the mood and character of the piece, immerse themselves in this mood and convey it in their performance. These are skills the teacher must teach. In addition to all the technical requirements, the teacher must ignite the fantasy and creative frenzy of the composition, fuelling the pupil’s imagination.

Let us imagine that a pupil is beginning to work on Handel’s *Sonata*. When familiarising themselves with the piece, they must immediately pay attention to its artistic content. The teacher explains that the *Adagio* is ma-

jestic, with a calm and supple theme. Despite the sixteenth note resting in the first two bars, the entire phrase (up to number 1) flows as a single lilting wave. It is explained to the pupil that the grandiose, peaceful and singing-like sound requires broad bow strokes and a moderate vibrato. Often this *Adagio* is played with too much emotion and poor bow changes, which ruins the character of the composition, as the melody lacks calmness and fluidity.

Fingerings and bowings are also important. In some editions, for example, the end of the first bar and the beginning of the second are marked to be played in the third position⁹⁵:



Note example 101.

Only violinists with broad fingertips can place their finger on two strings simultaneously and produce a good sound with both. With narrower fingers, the sound is poor and bland, and will break during the crossing. It is therefore better to use two different fingers, as in the example above. The important union of the two eighth notes in the third beat of the third bar should also remain intact and not be broken to make it easier to play (as in this edition). A pupil already in Year 7 should know how to draw the bow smoothly on a sixteenth note. The bowing and fingering suggested in the example expand the sound and enhance its expressiveness. The repeat is best started in the fifth position on the D string and in piano nuance to give it a soft, unique tone.

In addition, it is a good idea to familiarise the pupil with other works by Handel and to let them listen to a slow part of an oratorio in which the majesty and expanse of the melody grow to enormous proportions. The parallel between the sonata and the oratorio broadens the pupil's perception of the composition and sparks interest and initiative. Their interpretation may reveal valuable insights, which the teacher should note and nurture.

In this way, the teacher gradually fosters the pupil's talent towards creative thinking, imagination and the ability to turn technique into creative ideas.

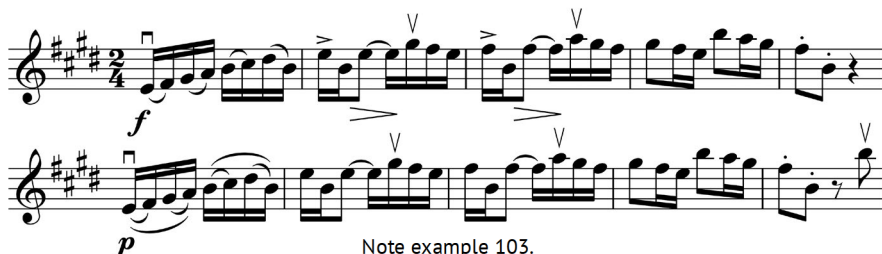
The teacher can feed the pupil's imagination with engaging creative tasks. When playing the second movement of *Sonata*, the teacher can point out its resemblance to Handel's famous concertos grosso and their allegros and, where possible, have the pupil listen to a movement from one of these concertos. After that, by playing at least the beginning of the piano accompaniment of Sonata's *Allegro* movement, the teacher can teach the pupil to pick out other melodically important string instruments from the sound

supporting the solo line. In this way, when playing *Sonata*, the pupil feels like a member of an ensemble and begins to listen to the piano accompaniment in a different way.



Note example 102.

The character of the second movement is dynamic and built on contrasts. The first phrase should therefore be played convincingly in *forte*, and the second phrase in *piano*, adjusting the bowing accordingly:



Note example 103.

In this section, in bars two and three, there are two slurred notes. To avoid the common mistake of accenting the second note, the pupil is advised to play the second note with a *diminuendo*, as in the example.

The author does not intend to provide a comprehensive analysis of both parts of *Sonata*. The purpose of the examples given above is to illustrate the principle of working on a composition in a way which allows the pupil to develop both their technical and artistic skills harmoniously.

Novice teachers often forget this rule because they are overly concerned with the technical aspects of playing. You often hear pupils in their fourth or fifth year playing Vivaldi's *Concerto*, Corelli's *Sonatas* or works by Bach with so few technical skills that the original artistic intent of the composition is buried under the difficulties posed by shifts, rhythm and intonation. The artistic side of the assignment is limited to following the dynamic markings (*forte* and *piano*). Such an introduction to a composition does nothing for the pupil's musical development. Artistic growth demands adequate technical skills for the composition in question. This is the first prerequisite. The second, which is equally important for musicianship, is that the teacher cultivates the pupil's receptiveness to artistic impressions and, from an early age, teaches them to see and feel all that is good and beautiful in the world. ■

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3) K. G. Mostras: Виды постановки, [*Types of playing postures*], from “Очерки по методике обучения игре на скрипке” [*Essays on violin teaching methodology*], 1960, p. 43.

4) “There can be no authority that exists only for children. Such an authority will always be a useless substitute.” A. S. Makarenko: Сочинения [*Essays*], vol. IV, published by the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, M., 1957, p. 150.

5) A. S. Makarenko: О коммунистическом воспитании [*Communist upbringing*], Uchpedgiz, M., 1952, p. 402.

6) “Raising children requires the most serious, simplest and sincere attitude.” A. S. Makarenko: Избранные педагогические произведения [*Selected pedagogical works*], Uchpedgiz, M., 1946, p. 243.

7) “The discipline required by Soviet citizens is much more complex. We demand that citizens not only understand why and for what this or that order must be followed, but also that they actively seek to carry out the orders in the best possible way.” A. S. Makarenko: Лекции о воспитании детей [*Lectures on raising children*], Uchpedgiz, M., 1953, p. 29.

8) “If an order is given, it must definitely be enforced. It is very bad if you first give an order and then forget it yourself.” A. S. Makarenko: Лекции о воспитании детей [*Lectures on raising children*], Uchpedgiz, M., 1953, p. 38.

9) When a musician ‘warms up’ or an athlete stretches, the capillaries activate and prepare the muscles for ‘combat’. Warm muscles are combat-ready.

10) Muscle tension is fairly easy to determine (without a violin) by rotating the head. Arms at sides press against the body and become tense and stiff, like sticks. When repeating the exercise, the person can consciously avoid tensing their arms.

11) See the section on this topic in ‘Learning process’ (‘Hand postures’).

12) Renowned pianists J. Hofmann and W. Gieseeking have brought out interesting views on this topic: “In order to play well, one must conserve one’s strength. This economy is something that many pianists playing with stiff hands lack. I relax as soon as I touch the keys. Practise relaxation, in which the muscles get released in the blink of an eye between two forces.” Josef Hofmann: Фортепианная игра. Ответы на вопросы о фортепианной игре. [*Piano playing, with piano questions answered*], Muzgiz, M., 1961, p. 211.

13) A. Zaporozhets: Психология [*Psychology*], Uchpedgiz, M., 1961, p. 25.

14) A. Zaporozhets: Психология [*Psychology*], p. 27.

15) В. Теплов: Психология [*Psychology*], Uchpedgiz, M., 1950, p. 92.

16) В. Теплов: Психология [*Psychology*], p. 97.

17) К. S. Stanislavsky: Работа актера над собой [*An actor’s work*], vol. 2, published by Iskusstvo, M., 1954, p. 100.

18) From this, we can conclude that discipline depends on the teacher’s ability to capture pupils’ attention and get them interested in the subject.

19) Alongside the sensory nerves covering the entire surface of the body, there are nerve endings that are activated by the fight-or-flight response, temperature, and other mechanical stimuli.

20) This feature of memory is important for repetition, i.e. performing a song from memory. For example, if a musician forgets the fingering, the melody helps them recall the part they forgot.

21) В. Теплов: Психология [*Psychology*], p. 103.

22) Same source, p. 106.

23) “Pupils do themselves a favour by not touching the keyboard until they have familiarised themselves with every note, sequence, rhythm, harmony, and all the markings on the music. They need to know the order of the sequences and what these sequences represent. They must be able to stop play-

ing at any point and continue from the same place with the same confidence as if they were writing their own name. Only when they have mastered the music in this way can they ‘voice’ it on the piano. When a pianist learns a composition in this way, they will remember it. During a performance, they never get confused or lost, because playing is a mere reflection – executed with the hands – of what they already know perfectly well.” Josef Hofmann: Фортепианная игра. Ответы на вопросы о фортепианной игре. [*Piano playing, with piano questions answered*], Muzgiz, M., 1961, p. 217.

24) “If repetitions are done in quick succession without breaks, one gets tired. The parts of the brain involved in the work begin to slow down, which creates unfavourable conditions for the formation of momentary memory connections. If breaks are added between the same number of repetitions, learning does not cause fatigue, and memory efficiency increases.” Zaporozhets: Психология [*Psychology*], p. 78.

25) See Zaporozhets: Психология [*Psychology*], p. 99.

26) To demonstrate quick reactions, you can play a game called ‘pull and release’, which is played as follows: Three children and the teacher stand holding the corners of a scarf. When one of them is told to ‘pull’, they must quickly pull the scarf towards themselves. When they are told to ‘release’, they must let go of the scarf. The game is played at a fast pace with the teacher observing the children’s reactions. The children behave in different ways: one makes mistakes, is late, and tires quickly, while another becomes faster and more skilled with repetition. This type of game provides good material for determining the children’s nervous system type.

27) It has been noted that children learn sung notes better than notes played on the piano.

28) Musical memory can be auditory, motor, or visual. Entrance exams in music schools usually test only auditory memory.

29) V. Vitlina: Дед Мороз [*Father Christmas*], from “Мы любим музыку” [*We love music*], op. 2, Muzgiz, M., 1960, p. 19.

30) “...psychological character depends 999/1000 on upbringing in the broad sense of the word and only 1/1000 on individuality.” I. Sechenov: Рефлексы головного мозга [*Reflexes of the brain*], published by Publishing House of the Academy of Medical Sciences of the USSR, M., 1952, p. 206.

31) The experiments were conducted in Leningrad and are described in the book “Опыт проведения приемных испытаний” [*Experiences of entrance examinations*], compiled by V. Ananeva. L., 1959.

32) “First, you should get to know the child, talk about shared interests, and build trust, and only then gradually move on to the entrance exam.” B. Struve: Пути начального развития скрипачей и виолончелистов [*The ways of the initial development of young violinists and cellists*], Muzgiz, L., 1937, p. 23.

33) К. G. Mostras: Виды постановки [*Types of playing postures*], from “Очерки по методике обучения игре на скрипке” [*Essays on violin teaching methodology*], p. 19.

34) Same source, p. 22.

35) “This method should be systematically enforced every day, not only during the lessons and when practising at home, but also when you live your life; when you go to bed, get up, eat, walk, work and rest, or to put it simply, at all times.” K. S. Stanislavsky: Работа актера над собой [*An actor's work*], vol. 2, published by Iskusstvo, M., 1954, p. 135.

36) “A general and consistent state is one where the weight of a relaxed body is evenly distributed on both legs, and the legs are slightly spread apart.” К. G. Mostras: Виды постановки [*Types of playing postures*], from “Очерки по методике обучения игре на скрипке” [*Essays on violin teaching methodology*], p. 23.

37) Counting aloud relaxes the pupil's neck muscles and the jaw. This is essential in achieving the correct playing posture.

38) When practising the left hand, the teacher must stand in a way that allows them to watch all fingers on both sides. Teachers who sit on the pupil's right side often fail to watch the thumb, which leads to incorrect postures.

39) If the pupil has short arms, the left hand and the violin should be held a little more on the right, making it easier for the right hand to run the bow parallel with the bridge. If the arms are very long, the violin must be held more on the left.

40) Bowing can also be started on the D string, followed by the A string.

41) The songs listed have been published in the following collections: K. Rodionov: Начальные уроки игры на скрипке [*Beginning violin lessons*], M. Muzgiz, 1960; Хрестоматия педагогического репертуара [*Anthology of pedagogical repertoire*], op. 1, M. Muzgiz, 1960; Compiled by T. Zaharina, 1960; Скрипичный букварь [*Violin ABC*], second edition, Muzgiz, L., 1962; Compiled by K. Fortunatov: Юный скрипач [*Young violinist*], op. 1, published by Sovetskiy kompozitor, 1963.

42) There may be many reasons for this: the voice may break due to improper use of the vocal cords; the child may not know how to listen to their own voice; or they simply do not understand what is expected of them.

43) For the time being, the pupil understands an interval as a distance between two notes, consisting of a certain number of half or whole steps in the already familiar C major scale.

44) Associations with familiar motifs can help remember intervals. For example, the Soviet national anthem begins with a fourth.

45) Some children do not know musical notation or intervals but can sing in tune or play a familiar melody on an instrument. Our task is to teach children to sing and play a new, unfamiliar melody in tune from musical notation. Without knowledge of the relationships between keys, this is not possible.

46) K.G. Mostras: Intonation, from “Очерки по методике обучения игре на скрипке” [*Essays on violin teaching methodology*], p. 188.

47) If a child does not know how to use their voice, then instead of singing a new song, they can practise and learn it on the piano, playing with one finger. Remembering the melody helps to achieve pure intonation on the violin.

48) Only a pupil with a developed ear can correct an off-key note independently.

49) A. I. Yampolsky: О методе работы с учениками [*Methods on working with students*], “Труды Государственного музыкально-педагогического института имени Гнесиных” [*Collected works of the Gnesin state music and pedagogical institute*], part 1, 1959, p. 14.

50) “The secret of great artists is that they use their talent to illuminate the work they are performing from within, putting their whole heart and soul into their work while remaining objective.” A. N. Serov: Воспоминания о М. И. Глинке [*Memories of M.I. Glinka*], Избранные статья, том первый [*Selected articles, volume one*], Muzgiz, M.-L., 1950, p. 132.

51) “The first form of musical receptivity is understanding the ‘general character’ of the piece. ‘Sad’ or ‘happy’, does one want to ‘dance’ or ‘march’ to the music...” G. Prokofiev: Формирование музыканта - исполнителя-пианиста [*The development of a musician-performer-pianist*], published by Publishing House of the Academy of Medical Sciences of the USSR, M., 1956, p. 15.

52) “The German violinist Ludwig Spohr wrote that if a pupil’s ear feels the need for a good sound, it will teach the necessary mechanical means of drawing the bow to obtain such a sound better than any theoretical instruction.” Quoted from G. Kogan: *У врат мастерства* [*At the gates of mastery*], published by Sovetskiy kompozitor, M., 1961, p. 40.

53) A. I. Yampolsky: О методе работы с учениками [*Methods on working with students*], “Труды государственного музыкально-педагогического института имени Гнесиных” [*Collected works of the Gnesin state music and pedagogical institute*], part 1, 1959, pp. 17–18.

54) First-year pupils should not be given summer homework.

55) K. Rodionov: Начальные уроки игры на скрипке [*Basic violin lessons*], M., 1960; N. Baklanova: Маленькие упражнения для начинающих [*Small exercises for beginners*], M., 1953; A. and I. Yanshinov: 30 легких этюдов [*30 easy etudes*], book 1, M., 1951; M. Garlitsky, K. Rodionov, K. Fortunatov: Избранные этюды для скрипки [*Selected etudes for violin*], part I, M., 1959.

56) The pieces listed are from K. Rodionov: Начальные уроки игры на скрипке [*Basic violin lessons*], M. Garlitsky, K. Rodionov, Yu. Utkin, and K. Fortunatov: Хрестоматия педагогического репертуара [*Anthology of pedagogical repertoire*], M., 1960.

57) These etudes are from Избранные этюды для скрипки [*Selected etudes for violin*], part I, no. 43, op. 2, no. 38.

58) For example, Избранные этюды для скрипки [*Selected etudes for violin*], part I, no. 46.

59) Избранные этюды для скрипки [*Selected etudes for violin*], part I, no. 33.

60) A. I. Yampolsky: О методе работы с учениками [*Methods on working with students*], “Труды Государственного музыкально-педагогического института им. Гнесиных” [*Collected works of the Gnesin state music and pedagogical institute*], part 1, 1959, p. 11.

61) Yu. I. Yankelevich: Смены позиций [*Shifts*], from “Очерки по методике обучения игре на скрипке” [*Essays on violin teaching methodology*], p. 73.

62) See Гаммы и апреджио для скрипки [*Scales and triads for violin*], compiled by A. Grigoryan, Muzgiz, M., 1959, part 2; Изучение позиций и переходов [*Studying positions and shifts*], Вторая позиция [*Second position*], pp. 11–12.

63) See K. Mostras: Гаммы, упражнения и этюды в позициях [*Scales, exercises and etudes in various positions*], op. 1, Вторая позиция [*Second position*], М., Muzgiz, 1952. А. Komarovsky: Этюды в трех позициях [*Etudes in three positions*], М.-Л. Muzgiz, 1952; Избранные этюды для скрипки [*Selected etudes for violin*], part II, nos. 1–8.

64) See Гаммы и арпеджио для скрипки [*Scales and triads for violin*] by A. Grigoryan, part 2, Третья позиция [*Third position*], pp. 3–4.

65) See H. Schradieck: Die Schule der Violintechnik, book 1, nos. 10–11; Selected etudes for violin, part II, nos. 9–13; F. Wohlfahrt: Легкие мелодические этюды (для скрипки) [*Easy melodic etudes for violin*], part 2, Muzgiz, М.-Л., 1940.

66) See Избранные этюды для скрипки [*Selected etudes for violin*], part II, nos. 15–20.

67) This shift type can be rehearsed with etudes 21–24 from the same book.

68) See Избранные этюды для скрипки [*Selected etudes for violin*], part II, nos. 25–26.

69) Same book, nos. 28–31.

70) See Избранные этюды для скрипки [*Selected etudes for violin*], part I, no. 65.

71) See Избранные этюды для скрипки [*Selected etudes for violin*], part II, no. 27.

72) See Избранные этюды для скрипки [*Selected etudes for violin*], part I, no. 15.

73) K. G. Mostras: Изучение позиций и переходов [*Studying positions and shifts*], from “Очерки по методике обучения игре на скрипке” [*Essays on violin teaching methodology*], p. 54.

74) When studying the fourth position, see K. G. Mostras: Гаммы, упражнения и этюды в позициях [*Scales, exercises and etudes in various positions*], part 2 (fourth position). To achieve the best results, the position can be rehearsed with exercises from H. Schradieck’s “Die Schule der Violintechnik” (book 1, no. 12) and Избранные этюды для скрипки [*Selected etudes for violin*], (part II, nos. 51–53).

75) Exercises 14–15 from H. Schradieck’s “Die Schule der Violintechnik” (book 1) can be used, as well as two-octave scales (e.g. B major, E major, E minor, F major, F minor, F sharp major, and F sharp minor). From *Избранные этюды для скрипки* [*Selected etudes for violin*], part 2, one can play etudes 54 and 56 in the fifth position, followed by the next 5–6 etudes from the same book to rehearse different techniques in the first five positions.

76) The example is from L. Auer: *Violin playing as I teach it*, part 1, New York, 1925, p. 27.

77) In addition to these open-string exercises, one should play “Упражнения и маленькие этюды” [*Exercises and small etudes*] (Yu. Konyus. M., 1941), in which the difficulties presented by double stops are arranged in a logical order. The book also contains useful double-stop etudes and some simple chord exercises.

See also: See *Избранные этюды для скрипки* [*Selected etudes for violin*], part I, pp. 51–54 (“Подготовительные упражнения и легкие этюды в двойных нотах” [*Preparatory exercises and easy etudes with double stops*]); Ya. Meksin: *Гаммы, упражнения и народные песни двойными нотами* [*Scales, exercises and folk songs with double stops*] (M., 1955), pieces: J. Lully: Gavotte and Musette from “Классические пьесы” [*Classic pieces*], M., 1963; R. Glière: “Musette” and others.

78) Martelé can be rehearsed with any etude played with détaché at a moderate tempo. In addition, there are etudes written specifically to practise martelé. See F. Mazas: *Violin Etudes*, book 1, Muzgiz, M., 1958, nos. 10–11; “Избранные этюды для скрипки” [*Selected etudes for violin*], part II, nos. 35 and 43. Etude no. 14 from the same collection, in which détaché alternates with martelé, is also very useful.

79) L. Auer: *Моя школа игры на скрипке* [*My violin school*], published by Triton, L., 1929, p. 58.

80) L. Auer: *Моя школа игры на скрипке* [*My violin school*], p. 78.

One of the most effective ways of developing left-hand technique, which promotes pure intonation, steady rhythm, finger precision and velocity, and other qualities required of a violinist, is to study scales and triads. Scales provide excellent material for developing the sound and the dynamics.” K. G. Mostras: *Работа над гаммами* [*Working with scales*], see the anthology “Очерки по методике игры на скрипке” [*Essays on violin teaching methodology*], p. 93.

81) K. G. Mostras, quote from the same source, p. 93.

82) The teacher must remember that the alternation of time values is related to the division of the bow, and therefore this skill must be learned consistently in advance by playing open strings: whole bow for a half note and a half bow for two quarter notes.

83) K. G. Mostras: Трель, тремоло и пиццикато [*Trill, tremolo and pizzicato*], see “Очерки по методике игры на скрипке” [*Essays on violin teaching methodology*], p. 139.

84) Such etudes for years three and four include “Избранные этюды для скрипки” [*Selected etudes for violin*], part I, nos. 41, 63, 64; op. 2, nos. 44, 66, 67; as well as Kayser’s etude no. 22 and Mazas’ etudes nos. 13 and 14.

85) C. Flesch: Das Skalensystem, Muzgiz, M., 1962.

O. Sevcik: School of Violin technique, book 2, Muzgiz, L. 1941.

86) S. Korguev: Упражнения в двойных нотах [*Double stop exercises*], Muzgiz, M., 1954.

87) F. Fiorillo: 36 etudes, Muzgiz, M., 1961.

88) J. Dont: 24 preparatory exercises for the studies of Kreutzer and Rode, Muzgiz, M., 1938.

89) R. Kreutzer: Etudes for violin, edited by A. Yampolsky, Muzgiz, M., 1961.

90) Going through the repertoire and selecting one piece for a public performance is a method that should be used in all years.

91) Before going on stage, pupils rarely play the cantilena passages of the piece to be performed. They consider them easy and therefore not worth worrying about. However, it is usually the cantilenas that suffer most during the performance.

92) “Particular care must be taken to ensure that the muscles are completely relaxed. The state in which the artist repeatedly checks themselves and struggles with tension should be a normal state on stage. This is achieved through extensive rehearsing and systematic training.” K. S. Stanislavsky: Работа актера над собой [*An actor’s work*], part 2, published by Iskusstvo, 1954, p. 135.

93) It is very important to teach pupils to begin a lesson or an at-home practise by playing a piece straight away without warming up. At first, this seems impossible, but gradually pupils begin to develop a habit of mobilis-

ing themselves and playing at full strength according to their own abilities right from the start.

94) “A child’s first public performance is a very responsible moment in their development as a soloist. The responsibility lies primarily with the teacher.” В. Struve: Пути начального развития юных скрипачей и виолончелистов [*The ways of the initial development of young violinists and cellists*], Muzgiz, L., 1937, p. 145.

95) G. F. Händel: Sonatas for Violin and Piano, book 2, Muzgiz, M., 1961.

What are the challenges and most important duties of a teacher when teaching the violin? What is the significance of the first meeting between the teacher and the student? How do you teach the technical skills of the left and the right hand systematically and correctly, and what is the importance of scales and études? How can you avoid physical and psychological stress during lessons? How do you train the ear and, consequently, intonation? How can you make sensible repertoire choices at different levels of studies and prepare students for performances? And finally, how can you support the growth of a young student in becoming a genuinely inspired and expressive musician?

In this book, Russian violin pedagogue Tatyana Pogozeva answers these and many other fundamental questions of violin teaching in her in-depth style. Although *Violin Teaching Methodology* was written in Moscow in 1966, its content is largely timeless and serves as a tool for 21st-century violin teachers and pedagogue students.

“Your violin must sing!” That is what Tatyana often said to her young students at the Oulu Music Institute and music camps in Finland. The pages of this book provide practical tips and techniques to make this wish a reality.

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