

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR DOUBLE BASS PLAYERS,
ANALYTICAL STUDIES ON *SCONCERTO* BY ARMANDO TROVAJOLI

By

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(Under the Direction of Milton Masciadri)

ABSTRACT

This document and practice methodology is a supplement to a lecture-recital featuring the suite *Sconcerto* for double bass and orchestra by Armando Trovajoli. In this project, a practice formula was designed to maximize effective practice time and to maintain focus on mastery. Moving sequentially through the suite, the most challenging passages are recognized and technical exercises are provided in order to produce an efficient practice methodology. Warm-up exercises are presented for each movement as preliminary practice of specific musical aspects found in the movement, while technical exercises extrapolated from particular measures encourage efficient practice time. Recommendations are made for the practice of both the exercises and the original passages from the suite.

INDEX WORDS: double bass, double bass technique, double bass pedagogy, double bass technical exercises, Armando Trovajoli, *Sconcerto*, analytical study.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this essay to my soul mate Serena who has been an inspiring companion in this wonderful journey.

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I would like to thank my parents and my brother who have been a constant source of encouragement and love. I would not be where I am today without their support and guidance. I wish to express my sincerest thanks to my professor and mentor Milton Masciadri who always believed in and encouraged me. I would like to thank my former professor Piermario Murelli who first put the bass in my hands and from whom I have learned a lot. Thanks to Dr. Cynthia Johnston Turner and Dr. David Haas for thoughtful suggestions for revision and clarification of this essay. I would like to thank my friend Greg Hankins for making music with me. A very special thank to the Athens' community who supported and encouraged me throughout this wonderful adventure.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

Practicing is a very complex activity that varies depending on several factors such as personality, personal needs, and musical styles. Several scholars have addressed these diverse problems and have carefully analyzed this activity. After more than a decade of observing double bass players practicing in various contexts, the author has developed a practice formula designed to produce effective practice time and to maintain focus on mastery. This practice formula is based on three main concepts:

- Practicing always needs purpose. The performer should always know the purpose of the exercise.
- Practicing always needs to be planned. The performer should always plan the practice time ahead and not leave the activity to chance.
- Practicing always needs to be focused; quality matters more than quantity.

In order to focus the practice on musical qualities that matter, some general published information about the composer, style, and recordings needs to be collected. Elizabeth A. H. Green in *Practicing Successfully* explains in detail, that without good basic habits, practicing can be a very frustrating and time-consuming activity. “There is a certain art to effective practicing, and there are fundamental principles to be understood and applied.”¹

¹ Elisabeth A. H. Green, *Practicing Successfully: A Masterclass in the Musical Art* (Chicago: GIA Publications, Inc., 2006) 19.

The intent of this project is to create a practice formula for more effective and successful results with specific exercises pertaining to the suite *Sconcerto* by Armando Trovajoli.

The formula is based on four sequential steps:

- 1 Recognition of general technical issues in the movement (or piece);
- 2 Recognition of specific challenging passages;
- 3 Analysis of technical problems;
- 4 Devising technical exercises to address issues.

The author specifically chose *Sconcerto* because it is a very technically challenging work of obvious musical merit, but one that is not very often performed. The author hopes to contribute a practical guide to learning and mastering this composition.

Need for the study

Today the comprehensive catalogue of literature for double bass offers an extensive selection of method books that help educators guide younger players towards the achievement of a superior technique. A large collection of solo and orchestra repertoire, methods books, technical studies, études, and recordings is referenced in Murray Grodner's *Comprehensive Catalog of Music, Books, Recordings and Videos for Double Bass*.²

Unfortunately very few of these works suggest the application of technical exercises to specific passages found in the literature. Therefore, there is a gap between the technical studies and the repertoire. The ability to recognize and master challenging passages is a very important and effective skill that needs to be cultivated in students. An analytic study

² Grodner, Murray, *Comprehensive Catalog of Music, Books, Recordings and Videos for Double Bass*, 4th ed. (Littleton: Grodner Publications, 2000).

of separate parts of a work is essential to guarantee a high level performance of the piece. The performer, in addition to technical and musical improvements, will be directed to generate a sense of self-teaching, a skill that is essential for a successful career. This project encourages continued scholarship and further creation of similar technical studies based on other pieces in the repertoire.

Methodology

Research on the Suite *Sconcerto* by Armando Trovajoli was conducted in order to collect relevant information about the composer and the work itself. The author interviewed Franco Petracchi in February 2016 with the primary purpose of collecting relevant historical information about the composer and the suite itself. Following the points outlined in the previous paragraph, the author devised technical exercises. For each movement of the suite, two warm-up exercises were created to address the general technical issues such as articulations and recurring interval leaps. These exercises are meant to be performed before approaching the movement in order to internalize the correct way to address the main technical issues. After a close analysis of the movement, some challenging passages were identified and technical issues were dissected and approached separately. The author devised technical exercises to master those problematic sections. The exercises are designed to be a preliminary step to beginning the study of the suite, as well as a tool for ongoing reference and practice throughout the learning process. For each exercise, instructions are given concerning how it should be played and for what specific purpose.

Delimitations

This project does not address the theoretical or musicological perspective of the suite; instead, this is a practical guide for performers. All the material provided in this document aims to support the practice of the exercises. Even though *Sconcerto* is challenging as a complete entity, the project does not provide exercises for every measure; rather, it focuses on the most demanding passages. The exercises address some of the most common technical issues; it is left to the individual player to recognize his/her technical weaknesses. The exercises written for this document give examples of how the practice should be planned and organized in order to be focused and effective.

CHAPTER 2

THE GENESIS OF *SCONCERTO*

Brief Biographies of the Composer and the Performer

Although this project is not intended to provide an in-depth biographical study, relevant information about the composer, the performer, and the work itself is key for a focused and stylistically accurate practice of the suite. Much of the material presented here is the result of the interview between the author and Franco Petracchi which occurred in February 2016.

Armando Trovajoli

Armando Trovajoli was born in Rome on September 2, 1917, and died on March 1, 2013.³ He is best known as the composer of nearly three hundred movies directed by famous Italian directors including De Sica, Monticelli, Scola, Magni, Risi, Pietrageli, Vicario, and Lattuada.⁴ He was hired to write the score for many of Sophia Loren's biggest hits, including *La ciociara* (*Two Women*) from 1960, *Ieri, oggi, domani* (*Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*) from 1963, and *Matrimonio all'italiana* (*Marriage Italian Style*) from 1964. All three films earned Oscar nominations. Trovajoli started his musical studies playing violin and piano at the age of four. He graduated in piano performance at the Santa Cecilia Conservatory in Rome under the guidance of Professor Libero Barni. Trovajoli studied

³ Information taken from Trovajoli's official biography, available at his official web site: <http://www.trovajoli.it> (accessed February 10, 2010).

⁴ Ibid.

composition and film scoring with Angelo Francesco Lavagnino at the Chigiana Academy in Siena.⁵ In 1937 Trovajoli was invited to play piano with the Rocco Grasso Big Band, and after that time, he worked as a jazz pianist all over Europe. For many years, he was one of the most celebrated jazz musicians in Italy.⁶ In 1949, he was invited to represent his country at the International Jazz Festival in Paris. During this period, Trovajoli played with some of the best jazz musicians in the world, including Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Miles Davis, Chet Baker, Stephan Grappelli, and Django Reinhard. Trovajoli is considered one of the most eclectic musicians of his generation.⁷ He had a glorious career as a classical piano performer. He was invited to perform *Rhapsody in Blue* by George Gershwin with the S. Cecilia Orchestra to commemorate the anniversary of the death of the composer. Trovajoli composed the music of several musical comedies including *Rugantino* (also represented on Broadway), *Ciao Rudy*, *Aggiungi un posto a tavola*, *Accendiamo la Lampada*.⁸ Trovajoli is also well known as the composer of several popular songs, some of which can almost be considered national treasures. The composer earned four David di Donatello Awards. In 2002, Trovajoli composed the suite *Sconcerto* and dedicated it to the world famous double bass player Franco Petracchi.

Franco Petracchi

Franco Petracchi was born in Pistoia in 1937 and currently lives in Rome. In 1958, he graduated *summa cum laude* in double bass performance from the Santa Cecilia Academy of Music in Rome under the guidance of Professor Guido Battistelli. During his

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

studies in Rome, he had the opportunity to study composition with Professor Di Donato and conducting with Franco Ferrara. He gave his solo debut in 1960 at the Contemporary Music Festival in Venice. In the same year, Petracchi won the audition as principal double bass at the National Symphonic Orchestra RAI in Turin. During his career, he worked with renowned conductors such as Bernstein, Karajan, Giulini, Muti, Abbado, and Metha.

Petracchi started his academic career in 1971 when he won the chair of double bass position for the conservatories of Bari, Frosinone, L'Aquila, and Rome. In 1986, he started teaching at the Conservatory in Geneva, where he taught the class *Virtuosité* until 2009. Along with Accardo, Giuranna, and Filippini, Petracchi is one of the founders of the string school *Accademia Walter Stauffer* of Cremona. His *Simplified Higher Technique* method book, published by Yorke in 1982, had an international impact on the double bass educational system. His method of synthesizing and formalizing the technique elevated the instrument to the standard of the other string instruments. This distinguishing aspect of his teaching allowed several of his students to succeed at international solo competitions and orchestra auditions. In an interview with Lucia Borsatti, Petracchi stated:

I give everything to my students, and in return I expect them to be committed to the job. When I first meet a student I am really severe. That is to say I tell him the truth, the whole truth, everything. But if they survive, I know they will succeed.⁹

Many important composers have paid homage to Petracchi by writing works that hold significant roles in the double bass solo repertoire, including Mortari's *Sinfonia Concerto* (1960), Mortari's *Concerto per Franco Petracchi* (1966), Mortari's *Duettini Elegia e*

⁹ Lucia Borsatti, "The Master of Bel Canto," *The Strad* 104 (February 1993): 130.

Capriccio (1976), Morricone's *Studio 89*, Berio's *Duetti per Violoncello e Contrabbasso*, Rota's *Divertimento Concertante*, and Armando Trovajoli's *Sconcerto*.¹⁰

Historical Background on *Sconcerto*

Armando Trovajoli dedicated *Sconcerto* to Franco Petracchi, who performed the premiere with the Symphonic Orchestra della Provincia di Bari in 2002 in Bari, Italy.¹¹ The suite is approximately twenty-six minutes in length and holds an important position in the solo repertoire of double bass. Trovajoli had just finished *Puppet*, a composition for violin, string orchestra, piano, and percussion dedicated to the famous violin player Salvatore Accardo, when Petracchi asked him to write a piece for double bass. Petracchi recalls that moment:

I asked him to compose a piece for me. He [Trovajoli] replied he would think about it, but he said he was bewildered by my request. He was not sure he could do that.¹²

Trovajoli composed the suite for double bass and entitled it *Sconcerto*, which in Italian means "bewildered." *Sconcerto* is a four-movement work with the following movement titles to which I have added introductory comments:

I – *Blues: Remembering the Nightclub*. Petracchi asked the composer to write a blues as the first movement of the suite. Knowing Trovajoli was an astonishing jazz player, he wanted to challenge the composer asking him to write a blues for a classical double bass player.¹³

¹⁰ Rodney Slatford, "Petracchi, Francesco," in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online* (accessed February 10, 2016).

¹¹ Information taken from Trovajoli's official biography, available at his official web site: <http://www.trovajoli.it> (accessed February 10, 2010).

¹² Franco Petracchi, interview by author, February 2016.

¹³ Ibid.

II – *Allegretto: Carefree Youth*. According to Petracchi, the subtitle to this movement was originally “walking in the park.” When writing this movement, the composer was inspired by American musical comedy films such as *Singin’ in the Rain*, by Betty Comden and Adolph Green.¹⁴

III – *Pavane: A Moment of Meditation*. This movement was inspired by Faure’s Pavane, Op.50.¹⁵

IV – *Scherzo: The Synthesis of a Pleasant Conversation Between a Virtuoso and Composer*. The style of this movement is very similar to Trovajoli’s musical comedies. Petracchi expressed his thoughts about it as follows:

The music seems to describe an Italian street festival with open markets, Italian women shopping, and the characters of old Rome.¹⁶

Petracchi played an important role during the compositional process. There was a constant collaboration between the composer and the performer during the writing process. Especially in the second and fourth movements, Petracchi suggested adding some of the scales and arpeggios to the double bass part in order to add motion.¹⁷ For instance, Petracchi added the sixteenth notes in measure 39, in measure 85 and 86 of the fourth movement. The performer also reviewed the orchestration of the suite that, in his opinion, was too dense in texture, making it hard for the soloist to be heard. The piano reduction edited by Ricordi was written by Roberto De Leonardis, who was a young student at that time. According to Petracchi, even if Trovajoli rewrote 85% of the reduction, he insisted on keeping De Leonardis’ name on the published edition. Indeed, the composer had a

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

reputation as an honest and generous person. During the dress rehearsal of the premiere in Bari, Trovajoli and Petracchi made several changes to the double bass part. The author is in possession of a copy of Petracchi's part and will perform the latest version of the suite in the Lecture Recital that will occur on Wednesday April 20, in Edge Hall, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia.

CHAPTER 3

THE FIRST MOVEMENT

Introduction to the Movement¹⁸


Title	Tonality	Duration	Metronome	Challenging Passages
Tempo di Blues	G Minor	6:00 minutes 107 Measures	 = 80	1. Measure 69-70 2. Measure 83 3. Measure 89-97

Figure 3.1 First Movement Overview

As the title suggests, this movement is based on the American genre and musical form of the Blues. The melody is constructed on the blues scale G – Bb – C – Db – D – F – G with the characteristic blue note (in this case Db) that often occurs on strong beats. The rhythm presents a variety of triplets, eighth notes, and dotted eighth notes with accents placed on weak beats. Since this kind of articulation is rarely found in the classical repertoire, the author suggests practicing specific warm-up exercises in order to internalize the articulation. It is very important that the performer always be aware and consider the style of the movement not just during the performances but also during the practice time. The primary technical challenges that occur in this movement include articulation, shifts, and sound production. These musical aspects of the movement need to be addressed during the technical exercises before performing the whole piece.

¹⁸ References to pitch and tonality in the next four chapters are made with reference to the double bass part that calls for solo tuning (A E B F#).

The two warm-up exercises below should be practiced with great attention to articulation and intonation before approaching the movement in its entirety. The exercises are sequences built on the G melodic minor scale and are designed to internalize the prominent rhythmic figures in the first movement. For an effective result, the exercises must be performed with the marked accents and bowings.

Warm-up Exercise No. 1

$\text{♩} = 80$

The exercise consists of 29 measures of music, primarily using eighth-note triplets. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 80. The exercise is divided into two systems: measures 1-12 and 13-29. Measures 1-12 are in the bass clef, and measures 13-29 are in the treble clef. The notation includes various triplet markings (groups of three notes beamed together with a '3' above or below) and bowing/accents indicated by slurs and accents (>). Measure 13 includes a change to the treble clef. Measure 14 includes a change to the bass clef. Measure 15 includes a change to the treble clef. Measure 16 includes a change to the bass clef. Measure 17 includes a change to the treble clef. Measure 18 includes a change to the bass clef. Measure 19 includes a change to the treble clef. Measure 20 includes a change to the bass clef. Measure 21 includes a change to the treble clef. Measure 22 includes a change to the bass clef. Measure 23 includes a change to the treble clef. Measure 24 includes a change to the bass clef. Measure 25 includes a change to the treble clef. Measure 26 includes a change to the bass clef. Measure 27 includes a change to the treble clef. Measure 28 includes a change to the bass clef. Measure 29 includes a change to the treble clef.

5

Simile..

9

13

17

21

25

29

2

Warm up Exercise No.1



Figure 3.2 Warm-up exercise No.1

Warm-up Exercise No. 2

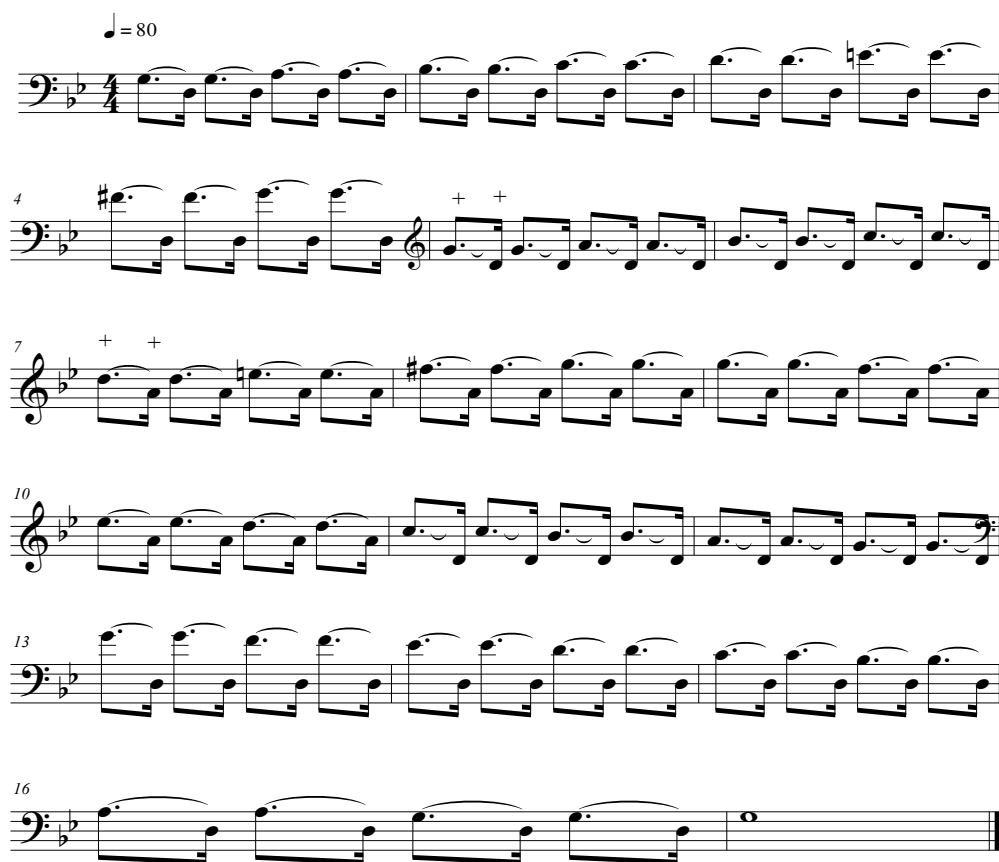


Figure 3.3 Warm-up exercise No.2

Exercise no. 1 measures 69 - 70



Figure 3.4 Measures 69 – 70

Intonation is the primary cause for concern in this passage. Specifically, the shifts from C to F and from F to Db are common causes of intonation issues. The author suggests a specific fingering (shown in the exercise below) that does not require a shift between the F and Db. The two-step exercise below is designed to internalize the intervals in the passage using the open string D as reference for intonation. Steps A and B must be played sequentially with attention to intonation and sound production until the player has mastered all the intervals.

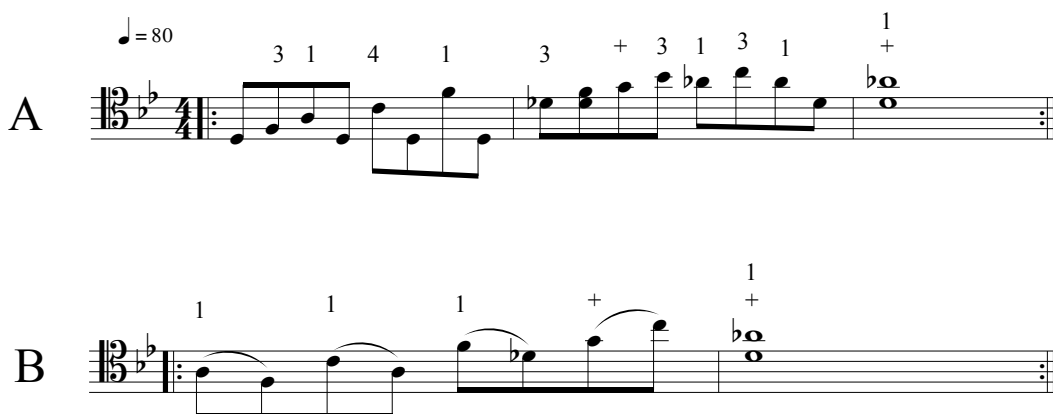


Figure 3.5 Exercise measures 69 - 70

Exercise no. 2 measures 83 – 84



Figure 3.6 Measures 83 – 84

In order to maintain tone quality and provide fluidity in the passage, the author suggests playing the excerpt on the G-string. The interval G – Dd commonly causes intonation problems which will be addressed in the next exercise. The shifts should be played while always maintaining the hand on the fingerboard with careful attention to shifting the whole hand to the next position as indicated by the parenthesis. Steps A and B of the exercise must be played sequentially until the shifts are masterfully executed.



Figure 3.7 Exercise measures 83 - 84

Exercise no. 3 measures 89 - 97

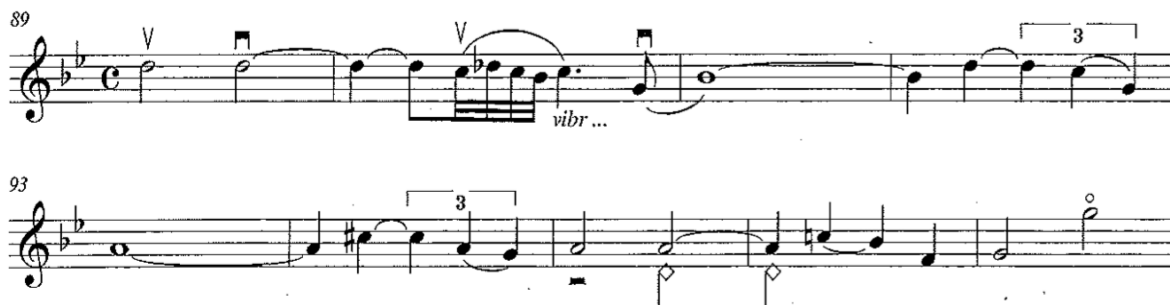


Figure 3.8 Measures 89 – 97

Sustained sound is the primary cause for concern in these measures. Sustaining long notes in a melody with *forte* dynamic can cause stiffness of the right arm and, as a result, stiffness of the entire body. When the left hand is tense, it cannot properly transfer the weight of the arm on to the fingerboard, and this can cause intonation and vibrato issues. The two-step exercise below is designed to focus the attention on the intonation of the passage without worrying about sustaining the sound. In this way, the technical problems can be addressed and defeated separately. The exercise should be played sequentially, with no vibrato, focusing on transferring the left arm's weight to the fingerboard. Once the performer has developed a relaxed technique and the left hand has physical memory of all the shifts, he/she can practice the original excerpt and work on sound production, tone, and vibrato.

A

B

Figure 3.9 Exercise measures 89 – 97

CHAPTER 4

THE SECOND MOVEMENT

Introduction to the Movement

Title	Tonality	Duration	Metronome	Challenging Passages
Allegretto	Db Major (mm. 1-38)	6:30 minutes	♩ = 96	1. Measure 157-162
	D Major (mm. 39-68)	275 Measures		2. Measure 167-170
	G Major (mm. 69-84)			3. Measure 253-256
	D Major (mm. 85-113)			
	Bb Major (mm. 114-123)			
	C Major (mm. 124-148)			
	G Minor (mm. 149-186)			
	G Major (mm. 187-194)			
	Eb Major (mm. 195-206)			
	G Major (mm. 207-224)			
	C Major (mm. 225-275)			

Figure 4.1 Second Movement Overview

As previously stated, the style of *Allegretto* can be linked to Trovajoli's musical comedies. In fact, the music seems to describe a comedy scene. As shown in the chart, the movement presents several, unconventional key modulations. Even though this compositional technique is uncommon in classical music, it is frequently used in musical comedies. The orchestration is light in texture, and the movement presents two main characteristic melodies. The first melody is characterized by the fast and light sixteenth-note figures, while a more lyrical and romantic melody is presented in measure 124. The primary technical challenges that occur in this movement include articulation, intonation, and fast scale figures.

The two warm-up exercises below should be mastered before approaching the movement. The first exercise is designed to help the player to master the prominent rhythm figure in the movement and its articulation. The goal of the exercise is to master the bow stroke. The player should adjust the speed and pressure of the bow in order to produce the same articulation in different registers of the instrument. The second exercise is designed to internalize string crossings. The attack and length of each note must be the same regardless of different registers and strings. For a more effective result, the exercise must be played with the bowing variations A, B, C, which are shown below the exercise. Both exercises are built on repeated scale patterns; thus the player's attention can be focused on sound production.

Warm-up Exercise No. 1

Musical score for Warm-up Exercise No. 1, featuring bass and treble staves with various musical notations and fingerings.

The score is written in 2/4 time and D major (two sharps). It consists of 32 measures, divided into two systems of 16 measures each.

System 1 (Measures 1-16):

- Measures 1-4: Bass staff only. Includes slurs, accents, and fingerings (1, 4, 1, 1, 0, 4).
- Measures 5-8: Bass staff only. Includes slurs, accents, and fingerings (1, 4, 3, 4, 1, 3, 4).
- Measures 9-12: Bass staff only. Includes slurs, accents, and fingerings (1, 4, 3, 4, 1, 4).
- Measures 13-16: Bass staff only. Includes slurs, accents, and fingerings (2, 3, 2, +, 3, +, 2).

System 2 (Measures 17-32):

- Measures 17-20: Treble staff only. Includes slurs, accents, and fingerings (1, 3, 1, +, 2, +, 1).
- Measures 21-24: Treble staff only. Includes slurs, accents, and fingerings (1, +, 3, +, 1, 1, +, 3, +, 1).
- Measures 25-28: Treble staff only. Includes slurs, accents, and fingerings (1, 2, 0).
- Measures 29-32: Treble staff only. Includes slurs, accents, and fingerings (1, +, 3, +, 1).



Figure 4.2 Warm-up exercise No. 1

Warm-up Exercise No. 2

A

B

C

Figure 4.3 Warm-up exercise No. 2

Exercise no. 1 measures 157-162



Figure 4.4 Measures 157 - 162

The sequence in measures 157 – 162 presents difficulty mainly in the execution of left-hand finger patterns and shifts. Achieving good intonation is the main concern since the speed of the passage does not allow instant adjustments during performance. The two-step exercise below is based on Petracchi's three basic thumb positions, explained in detail in the method book *Simplified Higher Technique*, edited by Yorke in 1982¹⁹. Section A of the exercise is designed to strengthen the thumb position shifts in the tonality and register of the original passage. The rests allow time for the performer to practice each shift with a whole-hand movement, a technique which can be difficult to master at tempo. Every figure of the sequence requires one position shift. Section B addresses each shift in the passage using the rests with the same purpose as in section A; the hand should be reset during each rest.

¹⁹ Franco Petracchi, *Simplified Higher Technique*. Foreword by Wolfgang Sawallisch. Introduction by Rodney Slatford. (London: Yorke Edition, 1982).



Figure 4.5 Exercise measures 157 – 162

Exercise no. 2 measures 167 - 170



Figure 4.6 Measures 167 – 170

As in the previous passage, measures 167-170 necessitate stability of the left hand frame and accuracy with thumb-position shifts. However, in contrast to the previous sequence, in this passage each group of four sixteenth notes starts with the lowest pitch in the figure. This allows the performer to use fingering patterns for each of the six figures in the sequence. Once again, the given exercise should be approached with the greatest

attention to intonation and stability of the left hand frame. As in the previous exercise, the rests allow the performer to execute shifts with a whole-hand movement as opposed to stretching out the hand to reach the new note. Stretching the hand would cause tension and leave the fingers out of position to play the next passage, a practice that should be avoided.



Figure 4.7 Exercise measures 167 – 170

Exercise no. 3 measures 253 - 256



Figure 4.8 Measures 253 – 256

This passage presents two main difficulties: fast string crossings and fast arpeggio/scale figures. For the practice of this passage and of several others similar to this

one, the author suggests the use of rhythmic figures. Each group of four sixteenth notes is played with a particular rhythmic figure, as shown in the next exercise. As explained in *Practicing Successfully*, by Elizabeth A. H. Green, the application of rhythmic figures conquers fingering problems and improves tone production: “When the mind concentrates on listening to the quality of sound on the long notes and carries it through the ensuing faster notes, the continuity of the passage improves.”²⁰ The exercise should be performed with the four rhythmic variations a,b,c,d with great attention to the attack and tone of each note.



Figure 4.9 Exercise measures 253 – 256

²⁰ Elisabeth A. H. Green, *Practicing Successfully: A Masterclass in the Musical Art* (Chicago: GIA Publications, Inc., 2006) 36.

CHAPTER 5

THE THIRD MOVEMENT

Introduction to the Movement


Title	Tonality	Duration	Metronome	Challenging Passages
Pavane	G Minor	6:45 Minutes 117 Measures	 = 60	1. Measure 5 - 12 2. Measure 57 - 63

Figure 5.1 Third Movement Overview

Composing the third movement, Trovajoli was inspired by Fauré's Pavane, Op. 50.²¹ The movement ebbs and flows from a series of harmonic and melodic climaxes, conjuring a haunting *Belle époque* elegance. However, unlike most Pavanés, this movement has a ternary meter. The difficulties with executing this movement lie mostly with sound production and tone. The careful practice of long notes is essential for the achievement of fine tone production. The warm-up exercise below should be played with no vibrato and with a focus on delivering the right arm's weight uniformly onto the bow and consequently onto the string. The exercise provides a practice strategy for achieving good tone, accurate shifts, and precise intonation at the same time. It is built on recurrent intervallic leaps found in the movement. In order to be an effective practice for the Pavane, the whole exercise should be played on the G-string.

²¹ Franco Petracchi, interview by author, February 2016.

Warm-up Exercise No. 1

$\text{♩} = 60$

The musical score for Warm-up Exercise No. 1 consists of 48 measures, organized into eight systems of six measures each. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats: B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 60. The melody is written on a single treble clef staff. The notes are as follows:

- Measures 1-6: B-flat, A, G, F, E, D (half note).
- Measures 7-12: D, C, B, A, G, F (half note).
- Measures 13-18: E, D, C, B, A, G (half note).
- Measures 19-24: F, E, D, C, B, A (half note).
- Measures 25-30: G, F, E, D, C, B (half note).
- Measures 31-36: A, G, F, E, D, C (half note).
- Measures 37-42: B, A, G, F, E, D (half note).
- Measures 43-48: C, B, A, G, F, E (half note).

Figure 5.2 Warm-up exercise No. 1

Exercise no. 1 measures 5 – 12



Figure 5.3 Measures 5 – 12

This short passage is an example of a larger section of music to which the same approach should be applied. Sound production and shifting is the primary concern in these measures. The two-step exercise below should be practiced with no *vibrato* and careful attention to intonation and tone. Every shift should be realized maintaining the left hand on the fingerboard. The use of a G drone is suggested in order to provide a pitch reference for accurate intonation.



Figure 5.4 Exercise measures 5 – 12

Exercise no. 2 measures 57 – 63



Figure 5.4 Measures 57 – 63

Shifting and high-position intonation are the primary concern in these measures. The two-step exercise below provides an approach focused on shifting to a particular position instead of to a specific note. This approach is implied in the fingerings provided below. The exercise should be played with *glissando* shifts making sure that the weight of the left hand is appropriately delivered to the fingerboard. The exercise should be performed with no *vibrato* and while maintaining a focused sound.




Figure 5.5 Exercise measures 57 – 63

CHAPTER 6

THE FOURTH MOVEMENT

Introduction to the Movement

Title	Tonality	Duration	Metronome	Challenging Passages
Scherzo	G Minor/Major (mm. 1-34)	9:00 Minutes	 = 90	1. Measures 59 – 62
	F Major (mm. 35-62)	289 Measures		2. Measures 117 - 120
	C Major (mm. 63-66)			
	F Major (mm. 67-70)			
	Ab Major (mm. 71-86)			
	C Major (mm. 87-108)			
	F Major (mm. 109-156)			
	G Major (mm. 157-162)			
	Eb Major (mm. 163-196)			
	D Major (mm. 170-174)			
	Bb Major (mm. 175-195)			

	C Major (mm. 196-205)			
	F Major (mm. 206-225)			
	Eb Major (mm. 226-231)			
	F Major (mm. 232-255)			
	C Major (mm. 256-289)			

Figure 6.1 Fourth Movement Overview

As in the second movement, the Scherzo presents several unconventional key modulations that should be analyzed before approaching its practice.²² This movement is possibly the most demanding of the entire suite due to the speed and articulation required. The practice for this movement should be undertaken in a methodical manner in order to master the material quickly. Due to the length of the movement and to the different musical styles presented, the Scherzo should be divided into five sections, and the performer should approach each section separately.

²² This is not an analytical paper; the chart is meant to show essential information about the movement.

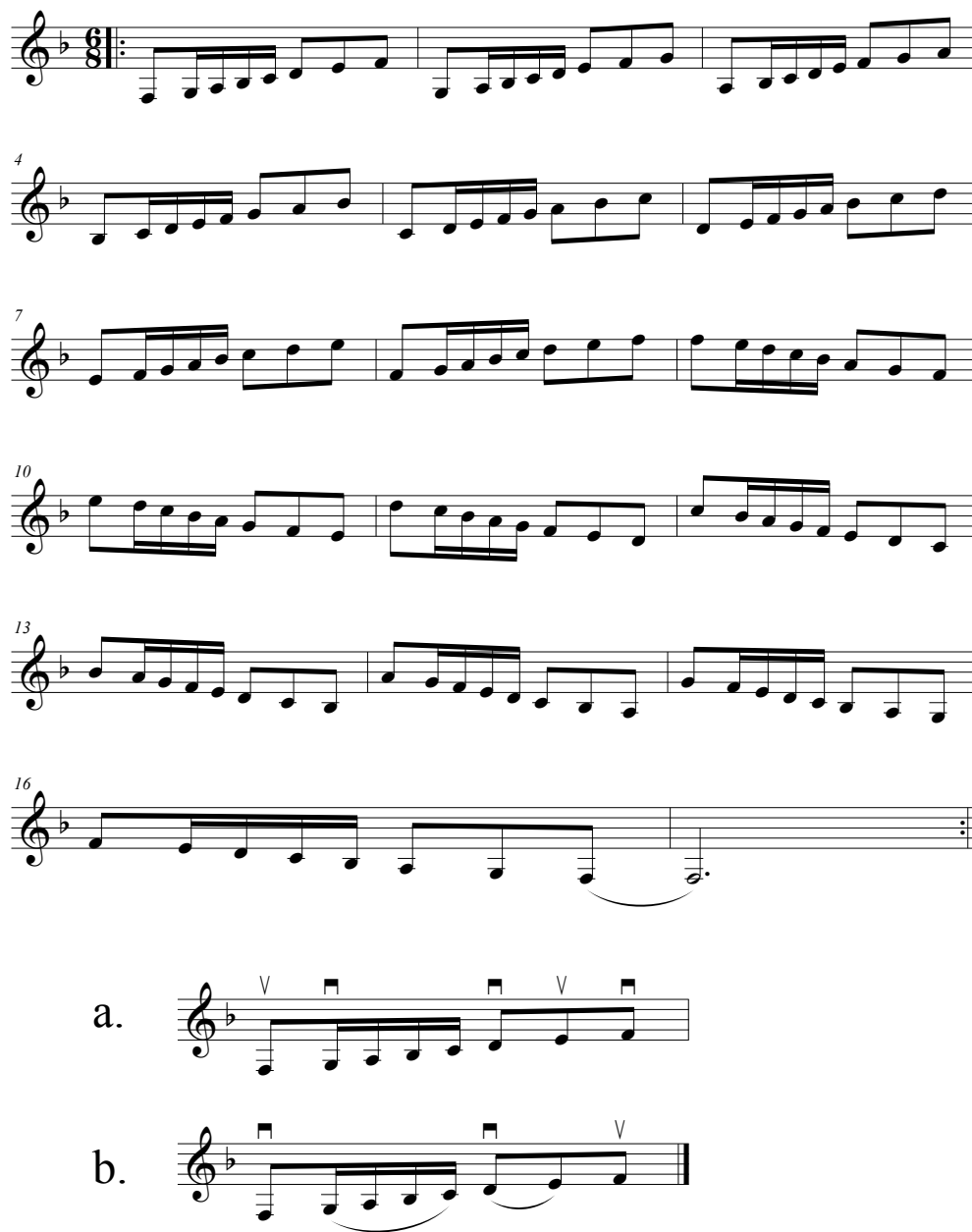
Section	Measures	Primary difficulties
Section 1	1 - 70	Fast scales and arpeggios Articulation
Section 2	71 - 96	<i>Meno mosso</i> ♩ = 56 Shifts
Section 3	97 - 156	Intervallic leaps Fast scales and arpeggios Articulation
Section 4	157 - 181	<i>Adagio – Lentamente</i> ♩ = 54 Sound production Tone
Section 5	181 - 289	Fast scales and arpeggios Articulation

Figure 6.2 Chart of sections

Warm-up exercise no. 1 focuses on mastering the primary articulation of the movement. It should be played in different keys and with the bowing variations shown below it. Warm-up exercise no. 2 is a variation of Petracchi's exercise no. 11 found in *Simplified Higher Technique* method book.²³ This exercise focuses on large-leap shifts, which are one of the primary difficulties in the fourth movement. The two warm-up exercises below should be mastered before approaching the movement.

²³ Francesco Petracchi, *Simplified Higher Technique* (London: Yorke Edition, 1982): 16.

Warm-up Exercise No. 1



The musical score for Warm-up Exercise No. 1 is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 8/8. The main exercise consists of six staves of music, each containing a sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes. The first staff begins with a repeat sign. The second staff is marked with a '4' above the first measure. The third staff is marked with a '7' above the first measure. The fourth staff is marked with a '10' above the first measure. The fifth staff is marked with a '13' above the first measure. The sixth staff is marked with a '16' above the first measure and ends with a double bar line. Below the main exercise are two variations, labeled 'a.' and 'b.', each consisting of a single staff of music. Variation 'a.' features a sequence of eighth notes with a 'V' above the first measure. Variation 'b.' features a sequence of eighth notes with a 'V' above the first measure and a double bar line at the end.

Figure 6.3 Warm-up exercise no. 1

Warm-up Exercise No. 2



Figure 6.4 Warm-up exercise no. 2

Exercise no. 1 measures 59 - 62



Figure 6.5 Measures 59 – 62

Shifting in very high positions is the primary concern in this passage. The movements of the left hand frame must be very accurate in order to avoid intonation problems. Step A of the exercise below focuses on understanding and mastering the “geography” of the fingerboard to ensure that the player is aware of his/her position at any time. In step A, shifts occur with every three-note group, while step B of the same exercise focuses on shifting inside the three-note group as in the original passage. The same challenges can be found in several sections throughout the whole movement. The exercise should be applied to passages with similar difficulties.

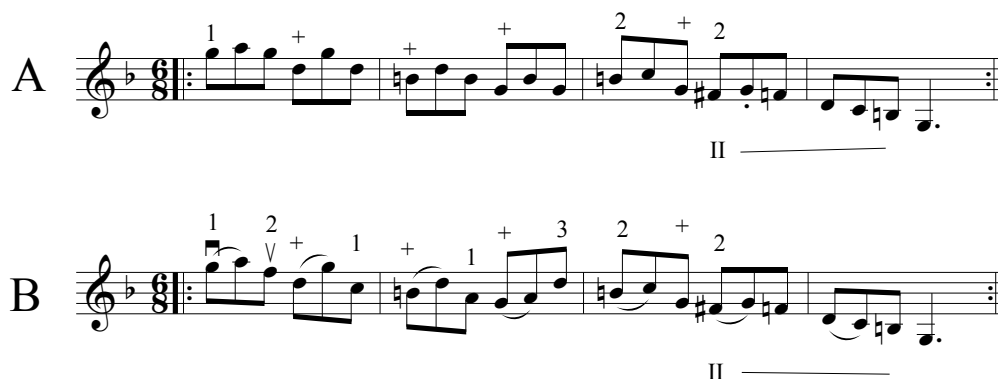


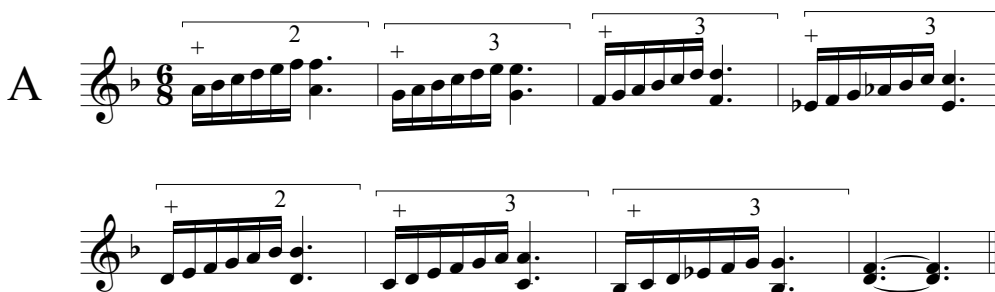
Figure 6.6 Exercise measures 59 – 62

Exercise no. 2 measures 59 - 62



Figure 6.7 Measures 117 – 120

High position intonation is the main concern in this passage. There are two aspects to consider in order to prevent intonation problems in these measures: 1) maintain the hand frame with pure intonation; 2) shift accurately. Step A of the exercise below is designed to maintain a stable left hand frame. When the player performs this exercise, the hand must always be relaxed in order to deliver the weight of the arm on the fingerboard efficiently. Step B focuses on the shifts that should always be initiated by playing the lower note with the thumb as shown in the exercise. The same challenges can be found in several sections throughout the whole movement. The exercise should be applied to passages with similar difficulties.



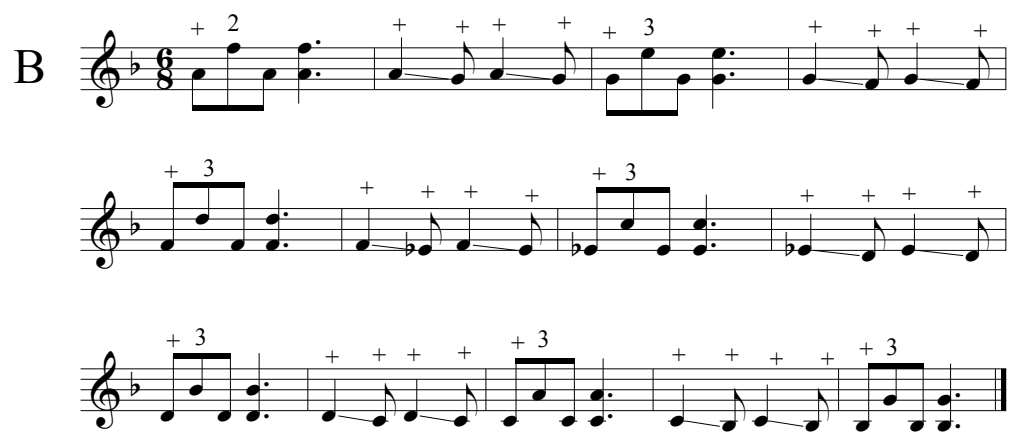


Figure 6.8 Exercise Measures 117 – 120

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This project represents the culmination of my academic studies. During the past several years, I have had the opportunity to work with and closely observe some of the best musicians in the world. I experienced and analyzed different instrumental techniques, various musical interpretations, and several ways of making music. I discovered that great performers, conductors, singers, and educators share a very important skill: the ability to recognize deficiencies and efficiently remedy them. I believe that teaching a practice methodology is one of the most valuable skills that educational systems provide to students. The exercises I designed in this project are an example of how the technique can be applied to master the repertoire. The warm-up exercises function as a preliminary practice of specific musical aspects found in the movement or piece, while the exercises extrapolated from particular measures are an example of how to improve the efficiency of practice time. During my career, I will pursue this teaching philosophy by extending this project to major pieces found in the double bass repertoire.

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APPENDIX A: LECTURE RECITAL SCRIPT

Good evening and thank you for coming. For this project, I designed a practice formula in order to produce effective practice time and to maintain the focus on its purpose. In today's presentation I will explain this practice formula and give some examples of the technical exercises I wrote, I will then perform Sconcerto, a suite in four movements by Armando Trovajoli with the pianist Greg Hankins.

Practicing is a very complex activity that varies depending on several factors such as personality, personal needs, and musical styles. Several scholars have addressed these diverse problems and have carefully analyzed this activity. After more than a decade of observing double bass players practicing in various contexts, I developed this practice formula based on three main concepts:

- Practicing always needs a purpose. The performer should always think of the purpose of the exercise.
- Practicing always needs to be planned. The performer should always plan the practice time ahead and not leave the activity to chance.
- Practicing always needs to be focused; quality matters more than quantity.

The formula I designed has four sequential steps:

- 5 Recognition of general technical issues in the movement (or piece);
- 6 Recognition of specific challenging passages;
- 7 Dissection of technical problems;
- 8 Devising technical exercises to address issues.

In the document (that can be found online), moving sequentially through the suite *Sconcerto* by Armando Trovajoli, I identified the most challenging passages and I provided technical exercises in order to produce an efficient practice methodology. For each movement of the suite, I created two warm-up exercises to address the general technical issues such as articulations and recurring interval leaps. These exercises are meant to be performed before approaching the movement in order to internalize the correct way to address the main technical issues. After a close analysis of each movement, I recognized some challenging passages, dissected technical issues, and approached them separately. The exercises are designed to be a preliminary step to beginning the study of the suite, as well as a tool for ongoing reference and practice throughout the learning process. I specifically chose *Sconcerto* because it is a very technically challenging work that is, in my opinion, underestimated by the double bass community and not very often performed. In order to focus the practice on musical qualities that matter, some general published information about the composer, style, and recordings needs to be collected. All the material presented in this project aims to shape the practice of the suite to achieve its main purposes. In the document I included short biographies of Armando Trovajoli and Franco Petracchi.

Armando Trovajoli

Armando Trovajoli was born in Rome in 1917, and died in 2013. He is best known as the composer of nearly three hundred movies scores directed by famous Italian directors. In 1937 Trovajoli was invited to play piano with the Rocco Grasso Big Band, and after that

time, he worked as a jazz pianist all over Europe. For many years, he was one of the most appreciated jazz musicians in Italy. During this period, Trovajoli played with some of the best jazz musicians in the world, including Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Miles Davis, Chet Baker, and Stephan Grappelli. He is considered one of the most eclectic musicians of his generation. He had a glorious career as a classical piano performer. Trovajoli composed the music of several musical comedies and is also well known as the composer of several popular songs, some of which can be considered national treasures. In 2002, Trovajoli dedicated the suite *Sconcerto* to the world famous double bass player Franco Petracchi.

Franco Petracchi

Franco Petracchi was born in Pistoia in 1937 and currently lives in Rome. He gave his solo debut in 1960 at the Contemporary Music Festival in Venice.

Petracchi is a very influential teacher. His *Simplified Higher Technique* method book, published by Yorke in 1982, had a strong impact on the double bass educational system all over the world. His method of synthesizing and formalizing the technique elevated the instrument to the standard of other string instruments. This distinguishing aspect of his teaching allowed several of his students to succeed at international solo competitions and orchestra auditions. Many important composers have paid homage to Petracchi by writing works that hold significant roles in the double bass solo repertoire, (including Mortari's *Sinfonia Concerto* (1960), Mortari's *Concerto per Franco Petracchi* (1966), Mortari's *Duettini Elegia e Capriccio* (1976), Morricone's *Studio 89*, Berio's *Duetti per Violoncello e Contrabbasso*, Rota's *Divertimento Concertante*, and Armando Trovajoli's *Sconcerto*.)

Historical Background on *Sconcerto*

As I said earlier, Armando Trovajoli dedicated *Sconcerto* to Franco Petracchi, who performed the premiere in 2002 in Bari, Italy.

I interviewed Franco Petracchi this past February with the primary purpose of collecting relevant historical information about the composer and the suite itself.

Petracchi played an important role during the compositional process. There was a constant collaboration between the composer and the performer during the writing process. The suite is approximately twenty-six minutes in length and holds an important position in the solo repertoire of double bass. Trovajoli had just finished *Puppet*, a composition for violin, string orchestra, piano, and percussion dedicated to the famous violin player Salvatore Accardo, when Petracchi asked him to write a piece for double bass. Petracchi recalls that moment during my interview:

I asked him to compose a piece for me. He [Trovajoli] replied he would think about it, but he said he was bewildered by my request. He was not sure he could do that.

Trovajoli composed the suite for double bass and entitled it *Sconcerto*, which in Italian means “bewildered.” *Sconcerto* is a four-movement work with the following movement titles:

I – Blues: Remembering the Nightclub. Petracchi asked the composer to write a blues as the first movement of the suite. Knowing Trovajoli was an astonishing jazz player, he wanted to challenge the composer asking him to write a blues for a classical double bass player.

II – Allegretto: Carefree Youth. According to Petracchi, the subtitle to this movement was originally “walking in the park.” When writing this movement, the composer was

inspired by American musical comedy films such as *Singin' in the Rain*, by Betty Comden and Adolph Green.

III – Pavane: A Moment of Meditation. This movement was inspired by Faure's Pavane, Op.50.

IV – Scherzo: The Synthesis of a Pleasant Conversation Between a Virtuoso and Composer. The style of this movement is very similar to Trovajoli's musical comedies. Petracchi expresses his thoughts about it:

The music seems to describe an Italian street festival with open markets, Italian women shopping, and the characters of old Rome.

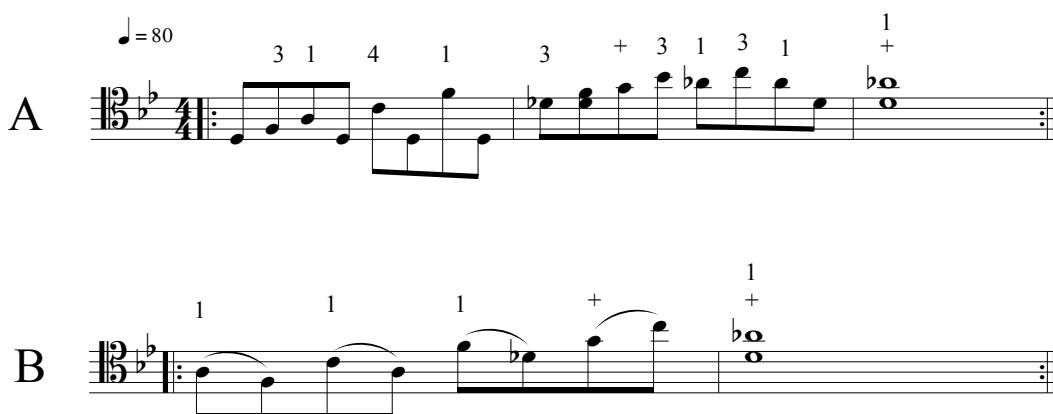
This movement seems to be a tribute to the Italian popular music much loved by the composer.

Now I would like to show you some of the exercises you can find in my paper. The first one focuses on technical issues found in measure 69 of the first movement.

Exercise no. 1 measures 69 - 70



Intonation is the primary cause for concern in this passage. Specifically, the shifts from C to F and from F to Db are common causes of intonation issues. I suggest a specific fingering (shown in the exercise) that does not require a shift between the F and Db. The two-step exercise is designed to internalize the intervals in the passage using the open string D as reference for intonation. Step A and B must be played sequentially with attention to intonation and sound production until the player has mastered all the intervals.



~PERFORM THE EXERCISE~

The second exercise I would like to show you it is taken from the second movement.

Exercise no. 2 measures 167 - 170



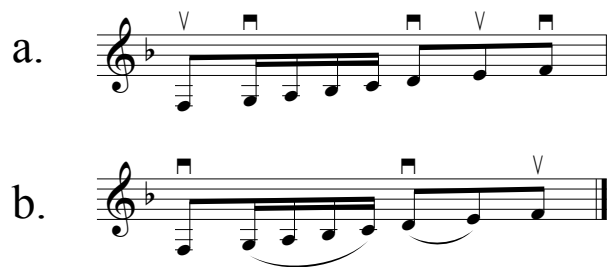
Measures 167-170 necessitate stability of the left hand frame and accuracy with thumb-position shifts. In this passage each group of four sixteenth notes starts with the lowest pitch in the figure. This allows the performer to use fingering patterns for each of the six figures in the sequence. The exercise should be approached with the greatest attention to intonation and stability of the left hand frame. The rests allow the performer to execute shifts with a whole-hand movement as opposed to stretching out the hand to reach the new note. Stretching the hand would cause tension and leave the fingers out of position to play the next passage, a practice that should be avoided.



~PERFORM THE EXERCISE~

The next exercise I would like to show you it is the warm-up exercise from the fourth movement. The Warm-up exercise no.1 focuses on mastering the primary articulation of the fourth movement. It should be played in different keys and with the bowing variations shown below it. This exercise should be mastered before approaching the movement in order to internalize the bow stroke.

Warm up Exercise No.1

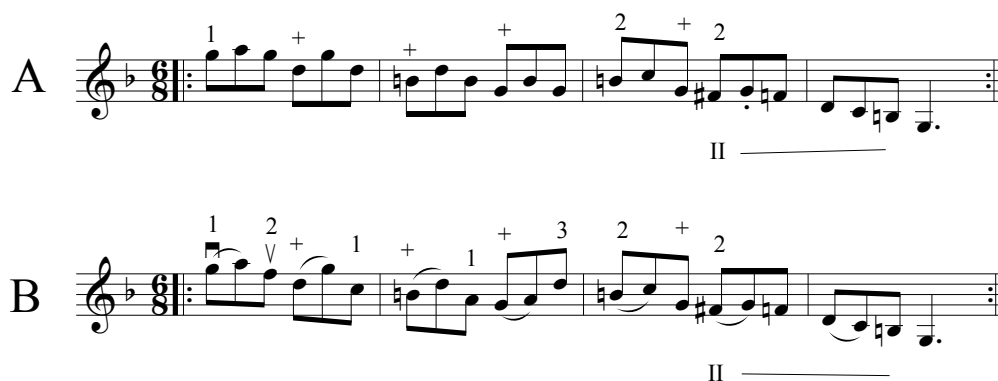


~PERFORM THE EXERCISE~

The last exercise I am going to show is extrapolated from measures 59 – 62 of the last movement.



Shifting in very high positions is the primary concern in this passage. The movements of the left hand frame must be very accurate in order to avoid intonation problems. Step A of the exercise focuses on understanding and mastering the “geography” of the fingerboard to ensure that the player is aware of his or her position at any time. In step A, shifts occur every three-note group, while step B of the same exercise focuses on shifting inside the three-note group as in the original passage. The same challenges can be found in several sections throughout the whole movement. The exercise should be applied to passages with similar difficulties.



~PERFORM THE EXERCISE~

CONCLUSIONS

This project represents the culmination of my academic studies. During the past several years, I had the opportunity to work with and closely observe some of the best musicians in the world. I experienced and analyzed different instrumental techniques, various musical interpretations, and several ways of making music. I discovered that great performers, conductors, singers, and educators share a very important skill: the ability to recognize deficiencies and efficiently defeat them. I believe that teaching a practice methodology is one of the most valuable skills that educational systems provide to students. The exercises I designed in this project are an example of how the technique can be applied to master the repertoire. During my career, I will pursue this teaching philosophy by extending this project to major pieces found in the double bass repertoire. I will now perform *Sconcerto*, please welcome Mr. Greg Hankins.