

APPLYING THE ŠEVČÍK ANALYTICAL STUDIES METHOD TO BARTÓK'S  
CONCERTO FOR VIOLA AND ORCHESTRA: A PERFORMER'S GUIDE

by

MEGAN CHISOM PEYTON

(Under the Direction of Maggie Snyder)

ABSTRACT

Béla Bartók's Concerto for Viola and Orchestra is a major work in the instrument's repertoire, and poses significant challenges to the performer. For several works of similar stature in the violin literature, Otakar Ševčík wrote analytical studies to guide the performer through the learning process, essentially providing how-to manuals for violinists. Though method books and etudes exist for the viola in original and transcribed form, no published collections equivalent to Ševčík's analytical studies exist for any major viola works.

This dissertation addresses the lack of composition-specific preparatory exercises for the viola with specific respect to Bartók's Concerto. Moving sequentially through the work, the most challenging passages from each movement are discussed, and original, newly-composed exercises in the style of Ševčík's analytical studies are provided. Passages are categorized according to difficulty, and references to commercially available etudes that address similar techniques are provided. Recommendations are made for the practice of both the provided exercises and the original passages from the

Concerto. Musical examples from the viola parts for both the Tibor Serly and Peter Bartók/Nelson Dellamaggiore editions of the Concerto are provided for each passage discussed.

INDEX WORDS: viola, viola technique, viola pedagogy, viola concerto, viola study, viola etude, Bartók, Bartók Viola Concerto, Otakar Ševčík, analytical study

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MEGAN CHISOM PEYTON

B.M., The University of Texas at Austin, 2005

M.M., The University of Georgia, 2009

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MEGAN CHISOM PEYTON

Major Professor: Maggie Snyder

Committee: Mark Cedel  
Adrian P. Childs

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso  
Dean of the Graduate School  
The University of Georgia  
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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Purpose of the Study

For any performer, learning a concerto poses challenges. Though each work makes its own technical demands of the soloist, many basic principles and approaches can be applied to learning any composition. One tool that has long been used for such undertakings is the etude. Often, a performer is able to locate an etude or collection of such that will provide exercises specific to the skill (s)he is seeking to maintain or improve. In this manner, a specific skill can be abstracted and practiced away from the concerto, with the intent of applying the facility gained from etude study to subsequent work on the concert piece.

In addition to the procedure outlined above, violinists have an invaluable resource in the output of Otakar Ševčík. Along with his numerous books of general violin technique studies, Ševčík also constructed analytical studies for several of the standard works of the violin repertoire.<sup>1</sup> In these studies, Ševčík disassembles various passages by way of providing seemingly simple and accessible exercises (each of which corresponds to a specific range of measures in the original piece), which are to be mastered before the corresponding passage in the original work is attempted. Gaining in popularity as of late

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<sup>1</sup> Analytical studies by Ševčík exist for the following works for violin: Tchaikovsky, Concerto; Paganini, Concerto No. 1; Wieniawski, Concerto No. 2 and *Scherzo-tarantelle*, Mendelssohn, Concerto; Brahms, Concerto (including Joachim cadenza). Full citations appear in the bibliography.

in part due to their republication by lead editors Stephen Shipps and Endre Granat,<sup>2</sup> these analytical studies have become of great interest to performers and pedagogues alike.

Béla Bartók's Concerto for Viola and Orchestra (First Edition, 1950;<sup>3</sup> Revised Edition, 1995<sup>4</sup>) is a staple of the modern violist's repertoire. Unfinished at the time of the composer's death in 1945, Bartók's Concerto holds a firm place as one of the "big three" concertos in the canon of standard viola repertoire, along with Hindemith's *Der Schwanendreher* and Walton's Concerto for Viola and Orchestra. The work is highly challenging for the soloist, both technically and musically, with the somewhat disjunct nature of the Concerto providing additional difficulties for the violist in terms of establishing continuity of performance. Moreover, the consideration of edition selection must be undertaken carefully when endeavoring to learn the Concerto, as the two most widely available editions of the work<sup>5</sup> vary greatly not just in editorial markings, but also in melodic content. The intent of this study is to construct analytical exercises, written in the style and with the organizational principles of the Ševčík collections, which will serve as an aid in learning and mastering the technical difficulties in both editions Bartók's Concerto for Viola and Orchestra.

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<sup>2</sup> All of the works previously listed have now been republished, along with their accompanying Ševčík studies. For full citations, see bibliography.

<sup>3</sup> Béla Bartók, and Tibor Serly, Concerto for Viola and Orchestra, Op. posth (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1950).

<sup>4</sup> Béla Bartók, Nelson Dellamaggiore, Peter Bartók, and Paul Neubauer, Viola Concerto, Op. posth (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1995).

<sup>5</sup> Béla Bartók, Nelson Dellamaggiore, Peter Bartók, and Paul Neubauer, Viola Concerto, Op. posth (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1995); Béla Bartók, and Tibor Serly, Concerto for Viola and Orchestra, Op. posth (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1950).

### Need for the Study

It is rumored that many teachers and performers have created reference lists and “cheat sheets” that link specific studies and etudes with isolated passages within concert works (or even entire movements). However, very little scholarship is extant that provides players with comprehensive resources of this type. Additionally, there is a profound lack of published exercises or studies that are aimed at aiding in the learning of specific passages or pieces of music.

Many etudes exist for violists, both as originals written for the instrument and as transcriptions from (most often) violin collections. However, though Ševčík’s method books have been transcribed for viola,<sup>6</sup> there are no published collections equivalent to his analytical studies for any of the major viola works, with the exception of Ross DeBardelaben’s recent doctoral research, which involves applying Ševčík’s analytical studies method to Brahms’s Sonata in F minor, Op. 120, No. 1.<sup>7</sup>

### Methodology

Following the points outlined above, this project was completed through constructing a collection of newly-composed exercises designed to be a preliminary step to beginning study of the Bartok Viola Concerto, as well as a tool for ongoing reference and practice throughout the learning process. Following the model of Ševčík’s analytical studies, exercises were written which correspond to specific passages in the Concerto,

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<sup>6</sup> Otakar Ševčík and Alan H. Arnold, *Preparatory studies in double-stopping: for viola*, op. 9 (London: Bosworth, 1990); Otakar Ševčík and Lionel Tertis, *School of technique, op. 1, for viola* (London: Bosworth, 1952); Otakar Ševčík and Lionel Tertis, *School of bowing, op. 2, for viola* (London: Bosworth, 1956); Otakar Ševčík and Lionel Tertis, *The celebrated Ševčík studies, arranged for viola* (London: Bosworth, 1952).

<sup>7</sup> Ross Adam DeBardelaben, “Applying the Sevcik approach to selected excerpts from the first movement of the Brahms Viola Sonata in F Minor” (D.M.A. diss., University of Miami, 2012).

with variations included for both the Serly and Dellamaggiore/P. Bartók editions, where appropriate. In composing the exercises, standard etude books and studies from both the violin and viola repertoires were consulted for reference and model.

The collection of etudes contains exercises that move systematically and sequentially through the Concerto, with the original passages (excerpted from both editions) provided for reference.<sup>8</sup> Passages are categorized with respect to difficulty, with Level 1 being the least difficult, followed by Levels 2, 3, and 4. Instructions are given for each exercise as to how it should be played, along with suggestions for variations. To further address techniques required of the performer in these passages, references to additional related exercises (in other method or etude books) are offered in Appendix A.

### Delimitations

Though the Bartók Viola Concerto is challenging as a complete entity, this document does not address nor provide exercises for every measure. The more challenging and awkward passages are addressed, with the less demanding passages left to the performer's individual approach. Though there are passages in the Concerto that are demanding in terms of bowing technique, the primary focus here is on addressing left-hand technical challenges; only the most challenging bowing passages are addressed. Finally, the exercises provided are intended to provide both concrete and abstract strategies for preliminary practice of those passages discussed herein. However, it is left to the individual player to devise a practice strategy for transferring mastery of the exercises to the original passages in the Concerto. As the level of difficulty of the etudes

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<sup>8</sup> Excerpts from the viola parts of both editions of the Concerto are included in this document with the generous permission of the publisher, Boosey & Hawkes. Documentation is provided in Appendix B.

provided here differs between passages, the size of the gap between technical mastery of the etude and readiness for performance of the original Concerto passage will vary across passages and players.

Perhaps most important is that despite the inclusion of original excerpts and alternate exercises for both the Serly and Dellamaggiore/P. Bartók editions of the Concerto, this study does not address the fundamental issues that arise in examining the two editions and their differences from either a theoretical or musicological perspective; interest in the variation between the editions lies solely in an effort to provide the most comprehensive tool possible for the performer, regardless of which edition is chosen. Finally, in contrast to the Ševčík analytical studies, this project will not include a newly edited performance edition of the Concerto as a whole. The present study seeks only to provide studies that relate to the two main editions in current publication.

### Review of Literature

In conducting research regarding etude collections of the nature discussed above, it quickly became clear relatively few publications exist that specifically address the goals of this study. The Ševčík analytical studies are, in addition to serving as models for the etudes contained here, the most salient and comprehensive works available that relate to the subject of exercises constructed for specific use with a single composition. However, several other sources were helpful in completion of this collection, including the prefaces and editors' notes for both the Serly<sup>9</sup> and Dellamaggiore/P. Bartók<sup>10,11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Béla Bartók and Tibor Serly, preface to Béla Bartók and Tibor Serly, Concerto for Viola and Orchestra, Op. posth. (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1950).

<sup>10</sup> Peter Bartók and Nelson Dellamaggiore, preface to Béla Bartók, Nelson Dellamaggiore, Peter Bartók, and Paul Neubauer. Viola Concerto, Op. posth. (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1995).

editions of the Bartók Viola Concerto, and Donald Maurice's recent book on the Concerto.<sup>12</sup> Though it predates Maurice's book, Stephanie A. Asbell's doctoral treatise<sup>13</sup> provides a comprehensive discussion on the differences between the published editions of the Concerto. That document proved very useful in easily determining which passages are significantly different to warrant the construction of separate exercises. Additionally, several books about viola playing and by violists include writings on approaches to learning difficult works and helpful references to specific studies for the same purpose. The most useful of these were those by Dalton,<sup>14</sup> Dolejši,<sup>15</sup> and Riley.<sup>16</sup> Ševčík's other method books<sup>17</sup> are also invaluable resources, as they provide even greater context for Ševčík's approach to violin (viola) study in general, and models for the construction of the analytical exercises.

I also examined many viola method books in my search for pertinent material. Ulisses Silva's D.M.A. dissertation,<sup>18</sup> which catalogs viola publications of this nature, was quite useful in this undertaking. It has been noted that, in contrast to the wealth of material to violinists, the canon of viola literature lacks extensive method books to address all stages of the player's development. This phenomenon, with specific respect to

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<sup>11</sup> Paul Neubauer, Editorial Notes from Béla Bartók, Nelson Dellamaggiore, Peter Bartók, and Paul Neubauer. *Viola Concerto*, Op. posth. (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1995).

<sup>12</sup> Donald Maurice, *Bartók's Viola Concerto: The Remarkable Story of His Swansong* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>13</sup> Stephanie Ames Asbell, "Béla Bartók's *Viola Concerto*: A Detailed Analysis and Discussion of Published Versions" (D.M.A. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2001).

<sup>14</sup> David Dalton and William Primrose *Playing the Viola: Conversations with William Primrose* (Oxford [England]: Oxford University Press, 1988).

<sup>15</sup> Robert Dolejši, *Modern Viola Technique* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1973).

<sup>16</sup> Maurice W. Riley, *The History of the Viola* (United States: s.n., 1991).

<sup>17</sup> Otakar Ševčík and Alan H. Arnold, *Preparatory studies in double-stopping: for viola*, op. 9 (London: Bosworth, 1990); Otakar Ševčík and Lionel Tertis, *School of technique, op. 1, for viola* (London: Bosworth, 1952); Otakar Ševčík and Lionel Tertis, *School of bowing, op. 2, for viola* (London: Bosworth, 1956); Otakar Ševčík and Lionel Tertis, *The celebrated Ševčík studies, arranged for viola* (London: Bosworth, 1952).

<sup>18</sup> Ulisses Carvalho Da Silva, "Original and Transcribed Etude Books for Viola: A Reference Guide for Teachers and Students" (D.M.A. diss., University of Georgia, 2010).

the Bartók Viola Concerto, has been researched and documented in Minor Wetzel's dissertation.<sup>19</sup> As mentioned above, no viola studies are widely available that specifically address the technical concerns of any single major work in the repertoire, though DeBardelaben's recent work<sup>20</sup> appears promising.

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<sup>19</sup> Minor Lewis Wetzel, "A Better Bartók: Dilemmas and Solutions in Performing Bartók's Viola Concerto" (D.M.A. diss., University of California – Los Angeles, 2010).

<sup>20</sup> Ross Adam DeBardelaben, "Applying the Sevcik approach to selected excerpts from the first movement of the Brahms Viola Sonata in F Minor" (D.M.A. diss., University of Miami, 2012).

## CHAPTER 2

### THE FIRST MOVEMENT

The first movement of the Bartók Concerto is possibly the most demanding of the work's three movements due to the sheer variety of techniques required of the violist. As when learning any advanced musical selection, practice for this movement should be undertaken in a methodical and deliberate manner in order to master the material quickly and efficiently. The primary technical challenges that occur most often throughout this movement include shifting, double-stop intonation, and left-hand finger pattern recognition and placement. Aside from these technical hurdles, the musical aspects of the Concerto's first movement must also be addressed in practice; musical choices must inform technical ones, and vice versa. This comes to light especially in lyrical passages that involve challenging shifting, such as measures 73 - 76 in the Serly edition or measures 74 - 76 in the revised edition (Figures 2.14 and 2.15, respectively). In this passage, it is important for the player to consider the ultimate desired effect of the shifts (i.e. audible? inaudible? with *portamento*?) in performance when initially learning the measures.

The passages discussed in this chapter represent the most daunting of the first movement's material. As noted above, the variety of techniques required in the movement is vast. Therefore, the passages discussed here represent many different aspects of viola playing and preparation that are required for performance of the

Concerto. The provided exercises are equally diverse, while still maintaining an analytical approach to each passage. As this movement comprises roughly half of the Concerto, the number of passages included in this chapter is significant.

### Measures 21 - 23



Viola Concerto, SZ120 by Bela Bartók, completed and orchestrated by Tibor Serly  
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Figure 2.1. Measures 21 - 23, Serly edition.



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 & Peter Bartók  
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Figure 2.2. Measures 21 - 23, revised edition.

Difficulty Level: 2

This passage presents difficulty mainly in the execution of different left-hand finger patterns. Changing between perfect and diminished fifths can make it easy for the

fingers to get tangled with each other. Achieving good intonation is of utmost importance in this passage, since the quick arpeggiations almost make the pitches sound as though they are being played together. The exercises below should be practiced slowly, with great attention given to intonation. Fingers should remain down as much as possible: each two-beat grouping employs a single finger pattern, which should be set before beginning. To play the G-natural at the end of each two beats, use the open string. This facilitates resetting the hand for the next two beats.

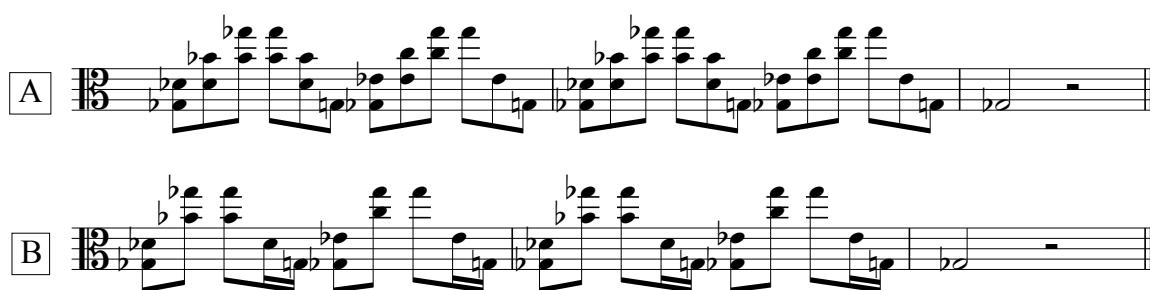


Figure 2.3. Exercises A and B for measures 21 - 23, Serly edition.



Figure 2.4. Exercises A and B for measures 21 - 23, revised edition.

Measures 36 - 37



Viola Concerto, SZ120 by Bela Bartók, completed and orchestrated by Tibor Serly  
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Figure 2.5. Measures 36 - 37, Serly edition.



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& Peter Bartók  
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Figure 2.6. Measures 36 - 37, revised edition.

Difficulty Level: 3

Shifting is the primary concern in this passage, though attention must also be given to half-step intonation. Since intervals become physically smaller at the top of the viola's range, the latter becomes increasingly difficult as pitch rises. The exercise below should be practiced slowly, with *glissando* shifts where indicated by dashes. As the shifts are mastered, speed may be increased in order to attain the facility necessary to execute

the Concerto passage. This example may be practiced both as written and in reverse in order to gain an even better grasp of the shifts and intervals.

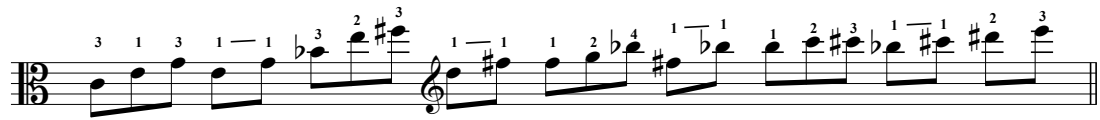
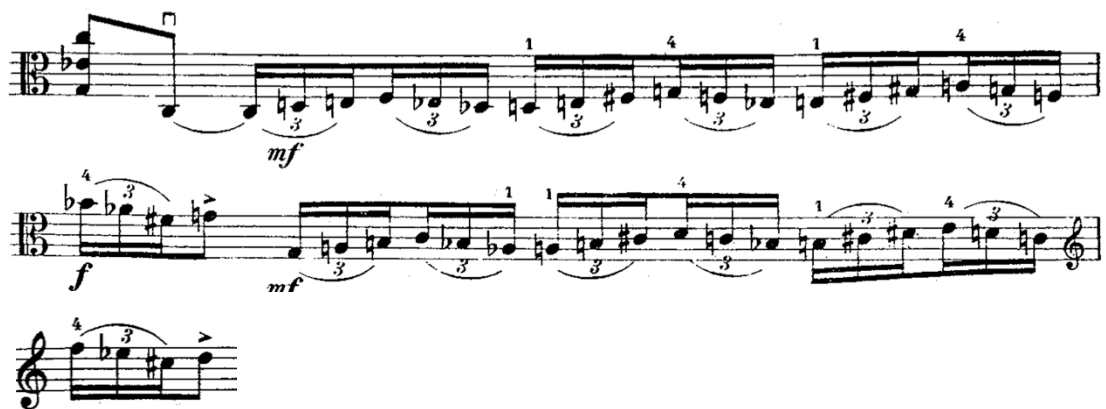


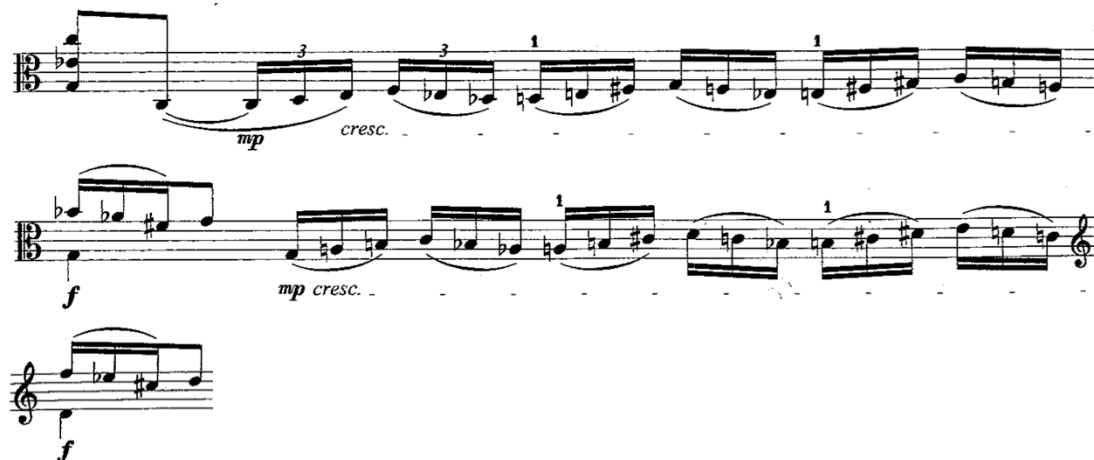
Figure 2.7. Exercise for measures 36 - 37.

#### Measures 41 - 43



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Figure 2.8. Measures 41 - 43, Serly edition.



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 & Peter Bartók  
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Figure 2.9. Measures 41 - 43, revised edition.

Difficulty Level: 2

Both this passage and the one following require careful attention to finger patterns within the left-hand frame, as well as the flexibility to extend the first to fourth finger reach beyond the interval of a perfect fourth. Bartók makes regular use of the whole step throughout this passage, usually in three note groupings (either ascending or descending) followed by another three note grouping that begins one half-step beyond the end point of the previous group and reverses direction. These three note cells are chained together to form the complete passage, which slowly ascends in pitch. It is useful to practice the alternating groupings, as doing so gives a clear picture of how the hand moves by a whole step shift upwards at the beginning of each set of two cells.

The exercises below should be practiced with the goal of maintaining the hand frame and finger pattern throughout: four notes are played, the entire hand is shifted up one whole step, and the fingers are automatically in place for the next group of pitches.

Every fourth grouping breaks this mold, and requires extension of the left hand frame in order to execute the tritone interval between the outer pitches of the group. This should be achieved either by arranging the fingers in a pattern of consecutive whole steps (“reaching” the interval) or by pivoting the hand at the second finger in order to reach the pitches that form the tritone.

In addition to working Exercises A and B as written, it is suggested that the player practice setting the hand through silent finger-placing: put all fingers down for each bracketed group of notes, as is fingering a quadruple-stop. Then move on to the next bracketed set. This may be done slowly at first, but the tempo should be increased to match the speed with which the hand will need to be moved for executing the actual passage.

Figure 2.10 shows two musical exercises, A and B, for measures 41-43. Exercise A is in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major, and Exercise B is in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. Both exercises show fingerings for each note group.

**Exercise A:** The notation shows a sequence of notes with fingerings indicated below. The fingerings are: [0 1 2 3], [1 2 3 4], [1 2 3 4], [4 3 2 1], [0 1 2 3], [1 2 3 4], [1 2 3 4], [4 3 2 1].

**Exercise B:** The notation shows a sequence of notes with fingerings indicated below. The fingerings are: [3 2 1], [4 3 2 1], [4 3 2 1], [0 1 2 3], [3 2 1], [4 3 2 1], [4 3 2 1], [0 1 2 3].

Figure 2.10. Exercises A and B for measures 41 - 43.

Measures 48 - 50

Measures 48 - 50, Serly edition. The score is in 5/4 time. The first staff (Viola) starts with a forte (f) dynamic and a tempo marking of 84. The second staff (Piano) is marked with a 'V' for Viola. The third staff (Viola) is marked with a box containing '50' and the instruction 'poco a poco accel.'. The music includes various fingerings and articulations.

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Figure 2.11. Measures 48 - 50, Serly edition.

Measures 48 - 50, revised edition. The score is in 5/4 time. The first staff (Viola) starts with a forte (f) dynamic and a measure number of 48. The second staff (Piano) is marked with a '1' for Viola. The third staff (Viola) is marked with a '4' for Viola. The music includes various fingerings and articulations.

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Figure 2.12. Measures 48 - 50, revised edition.

Difficulty Level: 1

As in the measures 41 - 43, this passage necessitates stability of the left hand frame as well as the maintenance of whole-step finger patterns within the frame. However, in contrast to the previous passage, the player is not required to navigate the reach of a tritone in this example, eliminating a degree of difficulty. Once again, the given exercises should be approached with the greatest attention given to the stability of the left hand finger pattern and frame. Each grouping should be treated as a unit; the hand should be reset during each rest. Note that the five pitches beginning with G-flat near the end of the second exercise routinely prove difficult for intonation purposes, likely due to the four consecutive whole steps.<sup>21</sup>



Figure 2.13. Exercises A and B for measures 48 - 50.

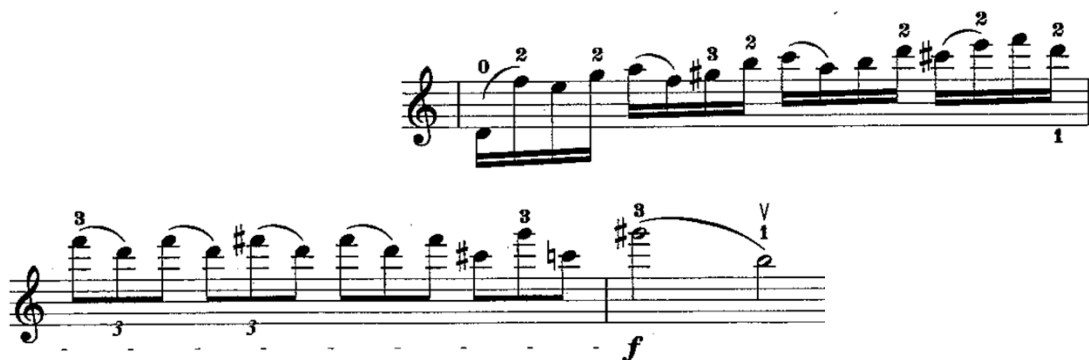
<sup>21</sup> Though I have no proof of this, I would assert that the intonation over these five notes proves difficult because most classically trained (western) players are not used to hearing four whole steps in succession. The prominence of the major scale -- especially as opposed to the whole tone scale -- in western music seems to work its way into the ear in this passage, making it easy to hear the D-natural at the end of the group as “wrong,” in favor of a D-flat.

Measures 73 - 76 (Serly edition) and 74 - 76 (revised edition)



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Figure 2.14. Measures 73 - 76, Serly edition.



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Figure 2.15. Measures 74 - 76, revised edition.

Difficulty Level: 2

Shifting and high-position intonation are the primary causes for concern in these measures. The exercises should be practiced with *glissando* shifts where indicated by dashes, with careful attention to shifting the whole hand in half-step shifts. The section of the passage addressed in the final line of each of the exercises below poses significant

difficulty in achieving good intonation, in large part due to the high range and expanding intervals. An open-D string drone is employed at that point in order to provide a pitch reference for maintaining focused intonation.

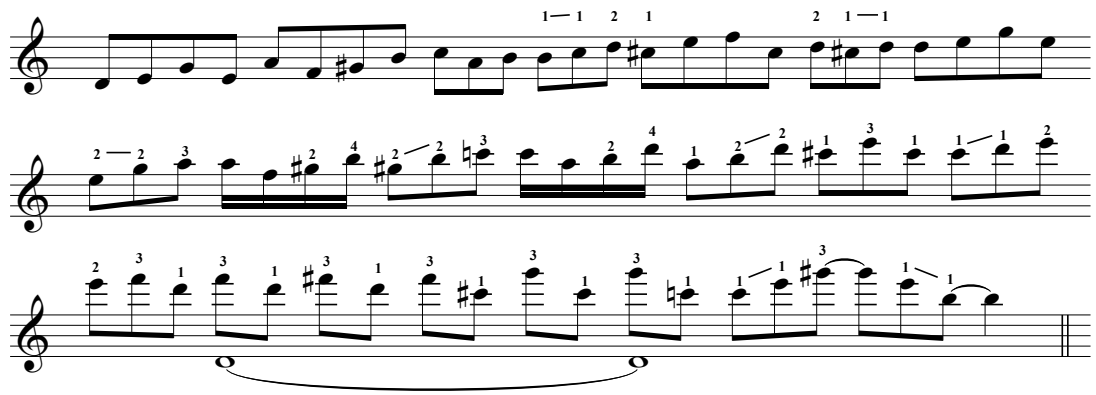


Figure 2.16. Exercise for measures 73 - 76, Serly edition.

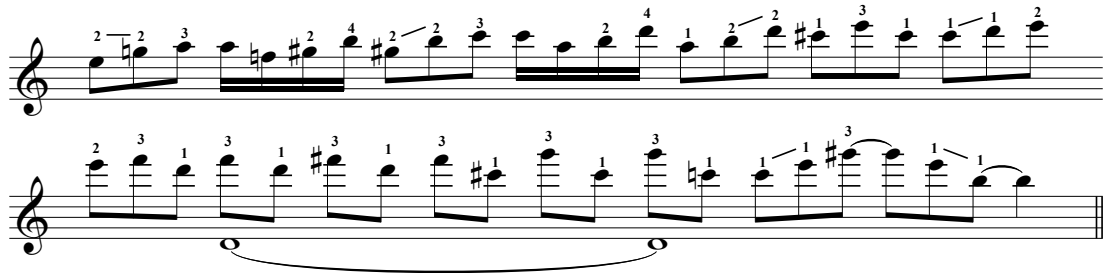


Figure 2.17. Exercise for measures 74 - 76, revised edition.

### Measures 88 - 90



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Figure 2.18. Measures 88 - 90, Serly edition.



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Figure 2.19. Measures 88 - 90, revised edition.

Difficulty Level: 3

Measures 88 - 90 likely require some of the most tedious fingering strategies in the entire Bartók Viola Concerto. Since the pitches are arranged in an arpeggiated fashion, there is little time for shifting of the fingers. The perfect fifths stacked above

tritones are somewhat difficult in terms of intonation, but the real challenge lies in arranging the fingers in a way that limits the need for hand position changes or left arm acrobatics. For those with thin fingers, this can be quite an undertaking. The exercises below are designed to encourage approaching this passage as a series of double-stops and stationary - moving pitch sets, with attention drawn to those times when one or more fingers can remain stationary. When fingers must be lifted, it should be done as quickly and with as little motion as possible.



Figure 2.20. Exercise for measures 88 - 90, Serly edition.



Figure 2.21. Exercise for measures 88 - 90, revised edition.

Measures 102 - 108



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Figure 2.22. Measures 102 - 108, Serly edition.

102

Tempo I (♩ = 100)

*p*

*sim.*

*sim.*

*f*

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Figure 2.23. Measures 102 - 108, revised edition.

Difficulty Level: 3

The difficulties of this passage are many, with the most notable being the high position and the numerous perfect fifths, which must be fingered as double-stops due to the fast tempo.<sup>22</sup> Though perfect fifths may not pose much of a problem in lower positions, the task of producing a fifth with good sound with clear intonation in fourth or

<sup>22</sup> In this passage, “hopping” the finger from one string to another is not practical, so both pitches of the perfect fifths must be stopped simultaneously.

fifth position (or higher) is a challenge due to string height and the increased distance between the strings. In addition to the fifths, achieving good overall intonation in this passage is a challenge. In order to execute this passage effectively, the player must treat each harmony (each beat or pair of beats) as a single unit and set the left hand appropriately. The exercises below are designed to encourage this approach, while also dividing each chord into its component double stops in order to give focused intonation practice. Practice should be slow, with limited movement of the fingers. If at all possible, fingers should remain rounded while playing the fifths; collapsing the finger in order to stop both strings should be avoided if at all possible.



Figure 2.24. Exercise A for measures 102 - 108, Serly edition.



Figure 2.25. Exercise B for measures 102 - 108, Serly edition.



Figure 2.26. Exercise C for measures 102 - 108, Serly edition.



Figure 2.27. Exercise D for measures 102 - 108, Serly edition.

A

Figure 2.28. Exercise A for measures 102 - 108, revised edition.



Figure 2.29. Exercise B for measures 102 - 108, revised edition.

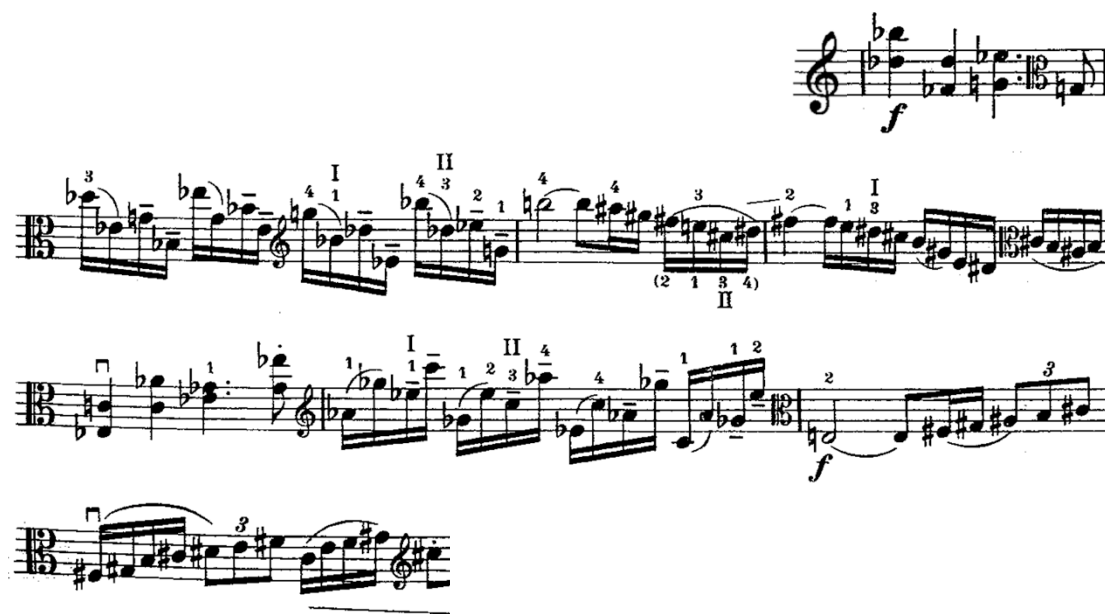


Figure 2.30. Exercise C for measures 102 - 108, revised edition.



Figure 2.31. Exercise D for measures 102 - 108, revised edition.

Measures 112 - 119



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Figure 2.32. Measures 112 - 119, Serly edition.



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Figure 2.33. Measures 112 - 119, revised edition.

Difficulty Level: 3

Two main difficulties present themselves in this passage: fast string crossings (measures 113 and 117) and frequent changes in left hand placement/finger pattern. In the Serly edition, measures 112 and 116 have the additional difficulty of double-stop sixths; these should be practiced slowly, in sequence, in order to achieve consistently good intonation. Before playing both pitches of the double stops together, it is important to practice placing both fingers while only sounding one. This way, it is easy to determine which of the two notes is posing the greatest challenge to the intonation of the interval.

As noted above, the challenge in successfully performing measures 113 and 117 lies chiefly in executing the string crossings. However, the left-hand technique difficulty in these measures is not to be taken lightly, especially considering the quick tempo. For this reason, it is highly recommended that a fingering be chosen that “sets” the left hand in a single position for each beat. If this is the approach, these measures turn out to be

manageable for the left hand, so long as practice of the shifts between each beat is done thoroughly and carefully. Note that the fingering included in the revised edition treats each beat as a unit, with shifts only between beats, while the fingering included in the Serly edition requires shifts in the middle of some beats. Bowing exercises are provided below for measures 113 and 117 of each edition. Exercise A reflects potential fingering choices for the Serly edition that more closely match the revised edition, limiting shifting to between beats. Exercise B accompanies Primrose's printed fingering for the passage.

Measures 114 - 115 and 118 - 119 are relatively unchallenging in comparison to the rest of this passage. Like many similar passages in the Concerto, they require careful attention to the distinction between half steps and whole steps, and a focused approach to intonation.



Figure 2.34. Exercises A and B for measures 113 and 117, Serly edition.



Figure 2.35. Exercise for measures 113 and 117, revised edition.

Measures 129, 133, and 136 - 140



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Figure 2.36. Measure 129, Serly edition.



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Figure 2.37. Measure 133, Serly edition.



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Figure 2.38. Measures 136 - 140, Serly edition.



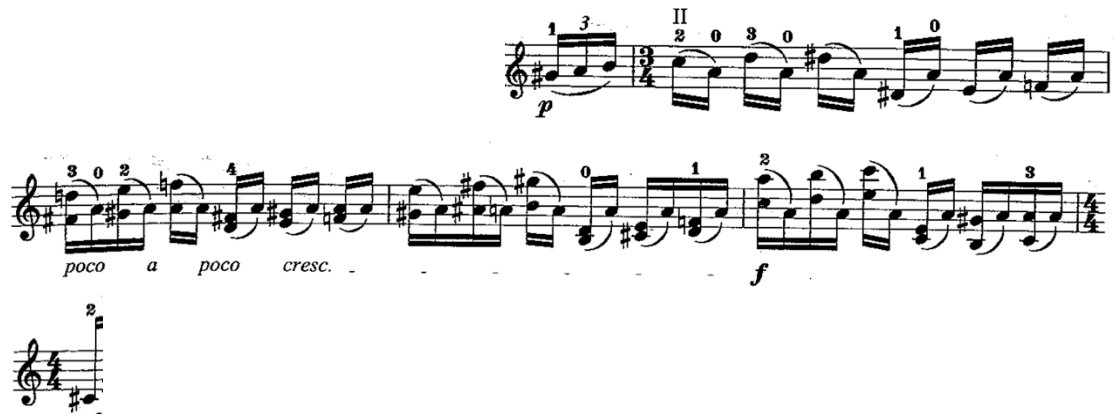
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Figure 2.39. Measure 129, revised edition.



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Figure 2.40. Measure 133, revised edition.



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Figure 2.41. Measures 136 - 140, revised edition.

#### Difficulty Level: 2

These short passages are part of a larger section of music, to which the same approach should be applied. The general feature most prevalent throughout these excerpts is the alternation between a stationary pitch and a moving line of either single pitches or double-stops. The difficulties with executing these measures lie in the two-fold intonation challenge inherent in the writing: the moving pitches must be in tune with the stationary pitch, and, when present, the double-stops must be in tune in themselves. The exercises below provide practice strategies for achieving good intonation in both of these conditions, and should be practiced slowly, making sure to listen for pure intonation between the drone and the moving pitches. In exercise A for measure 133, the fingers should slide along the string when possible or be lifted with a minimum of motion.

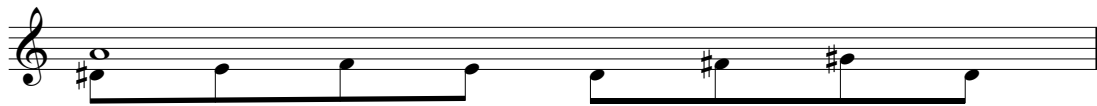


Figure 2.42. Exercise for measure 129.

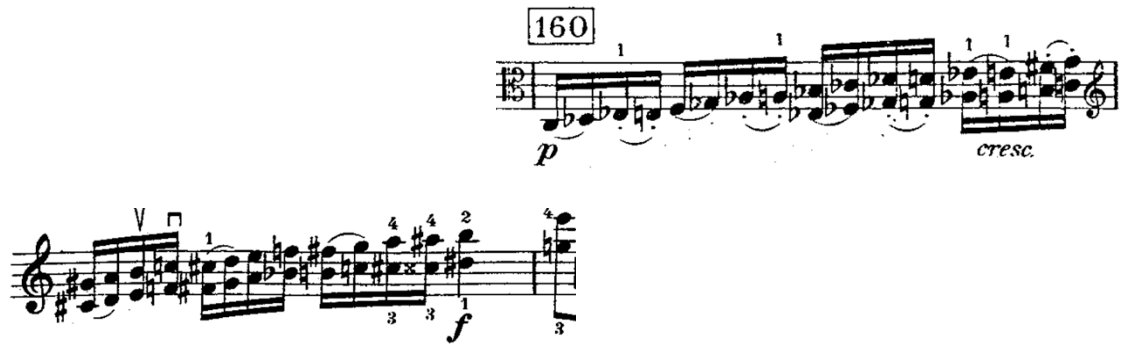


Figure 2.43. Exercises A, B, and C for measure 133.



Figure 2.44. Exercises A and B for measures 136 -140.

Measures 160 - 162 (Serly edition) and 159 - 161 (revised edition)



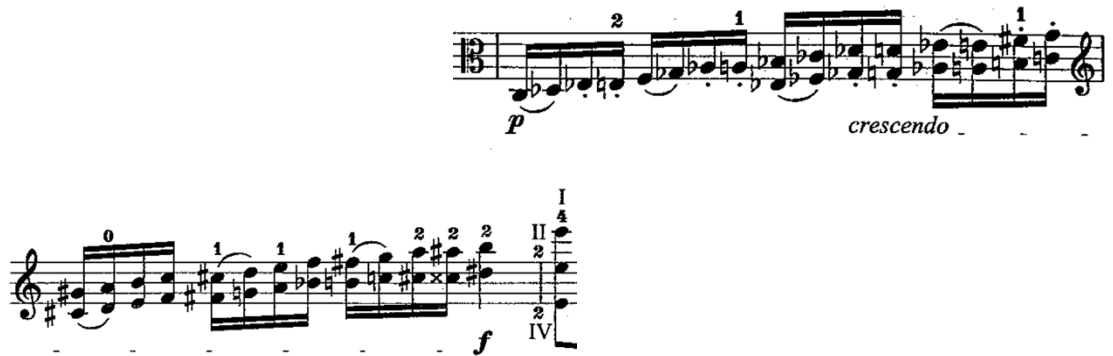
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Figure 2.45. Measures 160 - 162, Serly edition.



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Figure 2.46. Measures 159 - 161, revised edition.

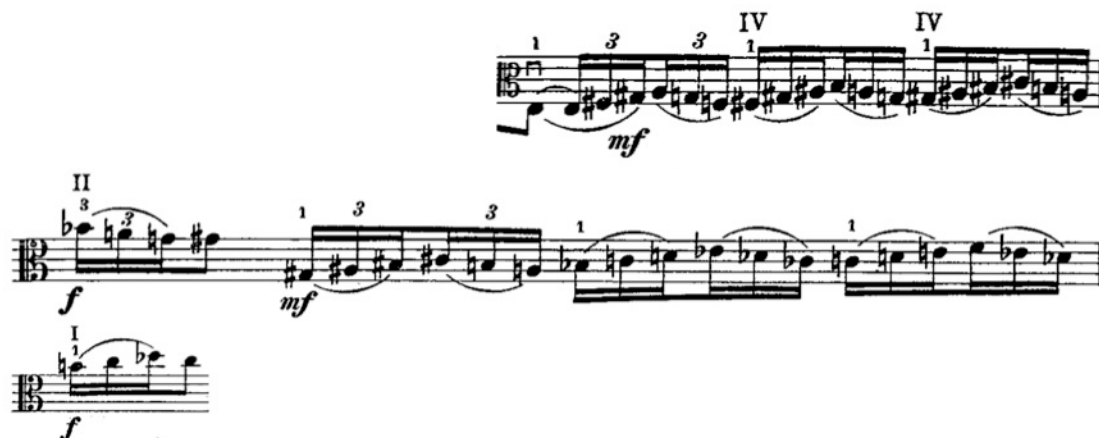
Difficulty Level: 3

This passage includes strings of consecutive perfect fifths, which form an ascending line that ends with a double-stop chord in the high register of the instrument. The climbing fifths require slow practice and careful attention to the manner in which the finger(s) approach the strings, and the exercises provided here should be first practiced slowly with concerted focus on those issues.

Exercises A and B below are designed for those players who choose to only use first and second fingers (in alternation) in executing this passage, and distill the passage into individual lines for each set of alternating fifths. Exercises C and D are intended for those players who utilize all four fingers in the lower positions. Both sets of exercises share the goal of perfecting the shifting motion before revisiting the original passage. As in measures 102 - 108, it is preferable that the fingers remain curved when playing this passage if at all possible; collapsing the fingers in order to stop both pitches of the fifths may seem innocuous at a slow tempo, but the rapid shifting required at concert tempo makes the un- and re- collapsing of the fingers for each fifth challenging and impractical.



Measures 162 - 164 (Serly edition) and 161 - 163 (revised edition)



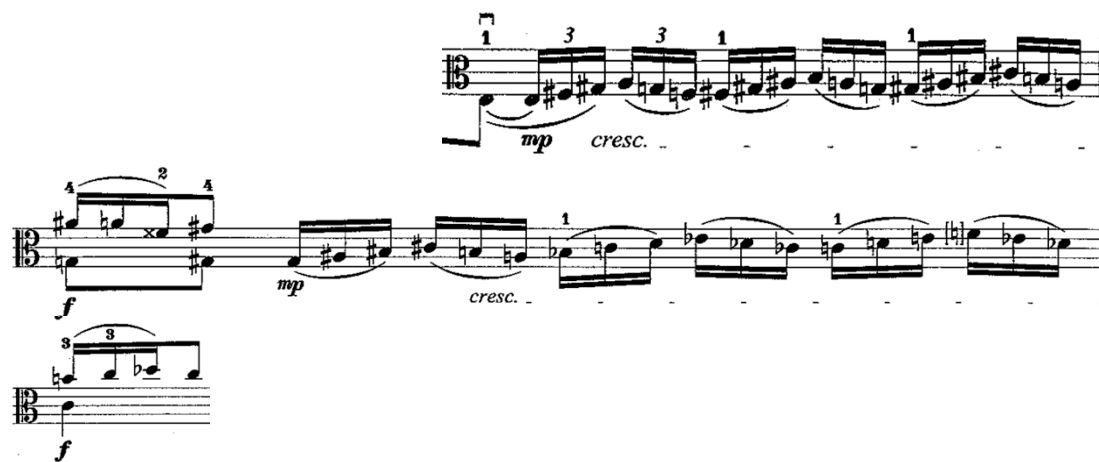
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Figure 2.48. Measures 162 - 164, Serly edition.



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Figure 2.49. Measures 161 - 163, revised edition.

Difficulty Level: 2

Analogous to measures 41 - 43 and 48 - 50, both this passage and the one following again require careful attention to finger patterns within the left-hand frame. The exercises below should be practiced with the goal of maintaining the hand frame and finger pattern throughout: four notes are played, the entire hand is shifted to the appropriate position for the next grouping, and the fingers are automatically in place for the next set of pitches. Every fourth grouping breaks this mold, requiring either a shift in the middle of the grouping, or different finger pattern than in previous groupings.

As for the analogous passages mentioned above, in addition to working the exercise below as written, it is suggested that the player practice setting the hand through silent finger-placing: put all fingers down for each bracketed group of notes, as is fingering a quadruple-stop. Then move on to the next bracketed set. This may be done slowly at first, but the tempo should be increased to match the speed with which the hand will need to be moved for executing the actual passage.



Figure 2.50. Exercise for measures 162 - 164, Serly edition, and measures 161 - 163, revised edition.

Measures 168 - 170 (Serly edition) and 167 - 169 (revised edition)



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Figure 2.51. Measures 168 - 170, Serly edition.



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Figure 2.52. Measures 167 - 169, revised edition.

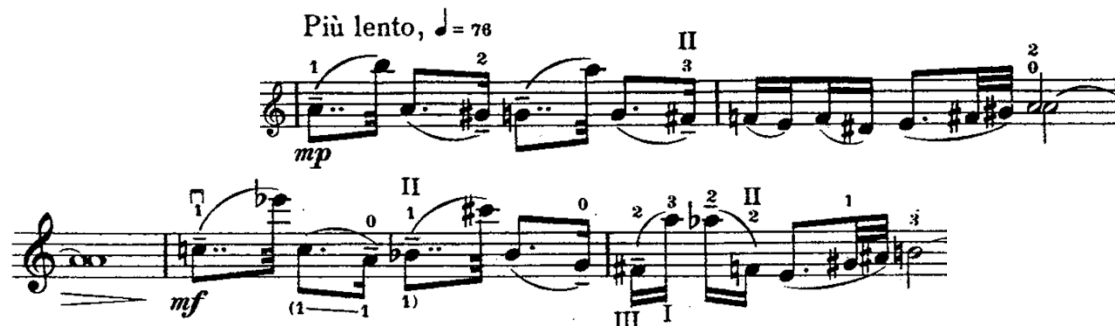
Difficulty Level: 2

As in the previous example, this passage necessitates stability of the left hand frame as well as the maintenance of whole-step finger patterns within the frame. Once again, the given exercises should be approached with the greatest attention given to the stability of the left hand finger pattern and frame. Each grouping should be treated as a unit; the hand should be reset during each rest. As in measures 48 - 50, note that the five pitches beginning with C-flat near the end of the second exercise routinely prove difficult for intonation purposes, likely due to the four consecutive whole steps. In contrast to measures 48 - 50, this passage receives a difficulty rating of '2' due to the absence of open-string pitches.



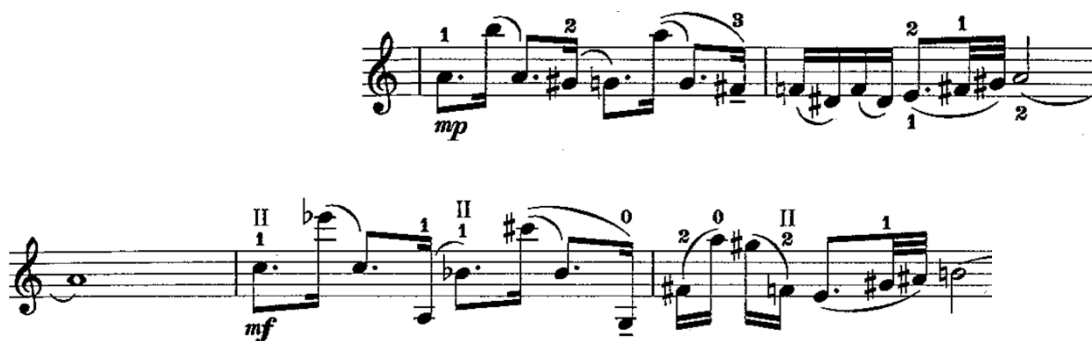
Figure 2.53. Exercise for measures 168 - 170, Serly edition, and measures 167 - 169, revised edition.

Measures 185 - 189 (Serly edition) and 183 - 187 (revised edition)



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Figure 2.54. Measures 185 - 189, Serly edition.



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Figure 2.55. Measures 183 - 187, revised edition.

Difficulty Level: 2

The large intervals of ninths and tenths are the primary concern in learning this passage. Though these are intervals rarely required of the violist, they are quite possible in this instance, as the high register compresses the physical distance between the pitches

on the fingerboard. In order to develop the muscle memory necessary to play the higher pitch of the large intervals in tune reliably, the exercises below ask that the pitches be practiced as simultaneities; through this type of practice, the hand should develop the flexibility to play both pitches accurately while keeping the fingers down. When preparing the Concerto passage for performance, it is important to give enough metric length to the top note to ensure that the pitch is heard clearly.

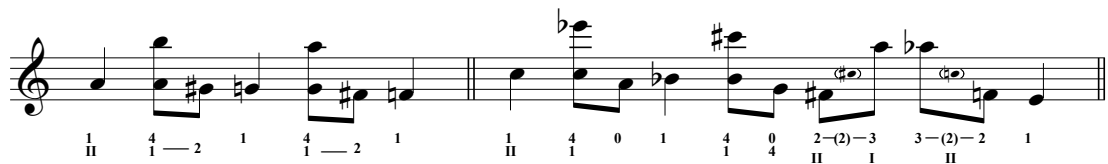


Figure 2.56. Exercise for measures 185 - 189, Serly edition.

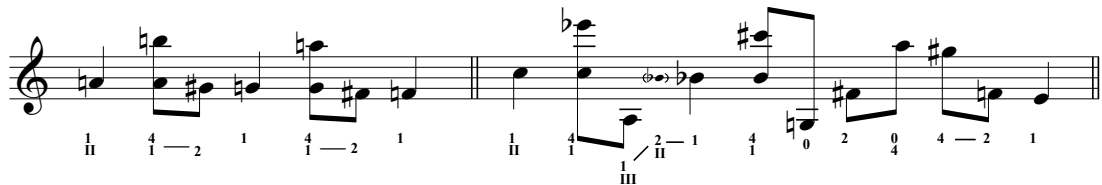


Figure 2.57. Exercise for measures 183 - 187, revised edition.

Measures 191 - 200 (Serly edition) and 189 - 198 (revised edition)

The musical score consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 4/4 time signature. It starts with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and includes fingering numbers (1, 2, 3, 4) and a first position (*I*) marking. The second staff continues the melody with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a *espr.* (espressivo) marking. The third staff features a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and includes a second position (*II*) marking. The fourth staff concludes the passage with a *dim.* (diminuendo) marking. Below the fourth staff, a box labeled '200' indicates the end of the section, followed by a final measure with a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic.

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Figure 2.58. Measures 191 - 200, Serly edition.

189

Poco più mosso,  $\text{♩} = 76$

accelerando

*mp*

*p*

*cresc.*

a tempo ( $\text{♩} = 76$ )

*f espr.*

195

*mp*

*mf*

*dim.*

II

V

II

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Figure 2.59. Measures 189 - 197, revised edition.

Difficulty Level: 1

Chromaticism and half- versus whole-step intonation create the difficulty in this relatively straightforward passage. Exercises are provided for the first two measures, and focus on the setting of the hand in the extremely condensed pattern of half steps between all of the fingers. Following these first measures, the passage includes more whole steps, enabling the player more freedom and comfort within the left hand frame. Since there are numerous fingerings appropriate for this passage, no finger-pattern exercises are provided for the final eight measures; however, it is recommended that they be practiced in the given manner once a fingering is chosen.

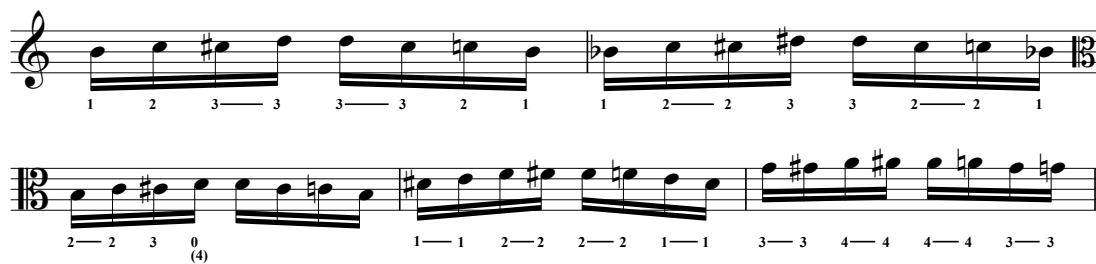


Figure 2.60. Exercise for measures 191 - 193, Serly edition, and measures 189 - 191, revised edition.

Measures 213 - 215 (Serly edition) and 211 - 213 (revised edition)



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Figure 2.61. Measures 213 - 215, Serly edition.



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Figure 2.62. Measures 211 - 213, revised edition.

### Difficulty Level: 3

The difficulty in these measures lies primarily in the shifting required, especially as the goal is the very high register of the viola. The examples below provide a systematic method for practicing these shifts. As noted above, the high register of these measures is a challenge, as half steps become increasingly small when pitch reaches this range. Maneuvering the left hand around the bouts of the instrument may also be an issue in this passage, and must be addressed by each individual player. The exercises should be practiced with *glissando* shifts where indicated by dashes, with the most careful attention given to intonation and accuracy of shifting while maintaining a stable left hand frame. Alternate exercises are provided for shifting starting from either the D or A string, with a condensed version of each at the end of their respective lines.

The image displays two musical exercises for viola, written on a single staff with a treble clef. The first exercise, corresponding to measures 213-215 of the Serly edition, begins with a double bar line and a '0' with an asterisk below the staff, indicating a drone. The notation includes various fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4) and shifting techniques (indicated by dashes and numbers 1, 2, 3). The second exercise, corresponding to measures 211-213 of the revised edition, is labeled 'alternate' and also features a drone at the beginning. It includes similar fingering and shifting notation. A legend at the bottom states: '\* Drone; play throughout'.

Figure 2.63. Exercise for measures 213 - 215, Serly edition, and measures 211 - 213, revised edition.

## CHAPTER 3

### *PARLANDO* AND THE SECOND MOVEMENT

The *Parlando* section preceding the second movement of the Bartók Concerto is highly challenging, mostly due to the extended chromatic scalar passage that occupies the space from the eleventh measure of the section to the beginning of the second movement (see Figures 3.1 and 3.2). Intimate familiarity with the left hand shapes and finger patterns required for this passage is essential, as the fast tempo, irregular metric groupings, and changing intervallic patterns provide ample opportunity for confusion during performance. Therefore, though short, the *Parlando* section requires a significant amount of attention during the course of preparing the Concerto for performance.

Though the second movement appears short in length and light on notes, its difficulty should not be underestimated, as it makes significant technical demands of the soloist. High-register playing permeates the movement, requiring the player to address the logistical issues often encountered during extended high-range passages on the viola. The navigation of the left hand around the shoulder of the viola must be considered, as should be the maintenance of a left-hand posture that permits free and relaxed vibrato during the extreme-range passages in this movement.

*Parlando*, Measure 11 - End

The musical score for Measure 11 - End of the Viola Concerto, SZ120 by Bela Bartók, completed and orchestrated by Tibor Serly, is presented in two staves: Viola (treble clef) and Piano (bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#). The score is characterized by dense, chromatic passages with numerous accidentals and fingerings. The Viola part begins with a series of sixteenth notes, followed by a more complex sequence of notes with many sharps and flats. The Piano part provides a harmonic accompaniment, often using octaves and chords. The score includes dynamic markings such as *cresc.*, *ff*, *sfz dim. - p*, and *attacca*. It also includes tempo markings *a tempo moderato* and *rallent.*, and a tempo indication of  $\text{♩} = 100$ . The score ends with a double bar line and the word *attacca*.

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Figure 3.1. *Parlando*, measure 11 - end, Serly edition.



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Figure 3.2. *Parlando*, measure 11 - end, revised edition.

Difficulty Level: 4

This passage is arguably one of the most difficult to be found in the Concerto. The highly chromatic scales provide the pitfall of getting one's fingers tangled in addition to demanding an intimate knowledge of the pattern of whole and half steps. Since that pattern is irregular, the player must become very familiar not only with the intervals, but also with the varying distances between the hand's outer "frame" fingers (first and fourth). Exercise A, below, provides a method of practice that focuses on establishing the

compressed hand frame shapes that are necessary when playing this passage. Focusing carefully on intonation, each beamed group of two notes should be first attempted as a unit, which is then connected to the previous and subsequent groupings. In this way, the player develops the outer framework for the left hand, which is then filled in by way of Exercise B. In both exercises, the hand should be placed as a unit for each beamed grouping of pitches, and then shifted as a whole prior to beginning the next grouping. Once this has been achieved, work on connecting each group to the next via smooth shifting is advised. Exercise C provides a rhythmic framework for increasing the tempo of Exercise B in order to attain the speed and facility necessary for performing the original passage, and should be practiced with metronome, increasing tempo as able.

**A**

**B**

**C**

\* Select bracketed section that matches chosen fingering.

Figure 3.3. Exercises A, B, and C for *Parlando*, measure 11 - end, Serly edition.

**A**

**B**

**C**

\* Select bracketed section that matches chosen fingering.

Figure 3.4. Exercises A, B, and C for *Parlando*, measure 11 - end, revised edition.

### Measure 29



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Figure 3.5. Measure 29, Serly edition.



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Figure 3.6. Measure 29, revised edition.

### Difficulty Level: 2

This measure consists of an ascending run that joins the previous, low-register, material to the subsequent passage, which utilizes the extreme high register of the viola. The difficulty here lies primarily in shifting. However, attention must also be given to the irregular pattern of intervals, as the accelerating tempo provides little opportunity to establish a stable hand frame. The exercise below should be practiced slowly at first, in order to allow careful focus on intonation. As the exercise is mastered, the tempo may be increased to the point of matching that of the original excerpt. Shifts (indicated by

regardless of tempo.

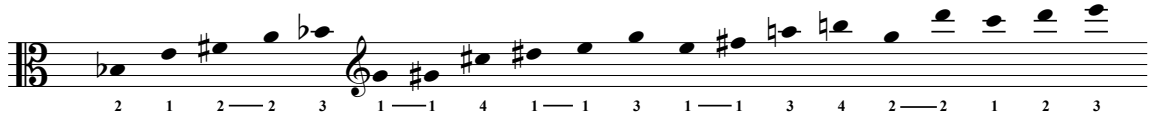


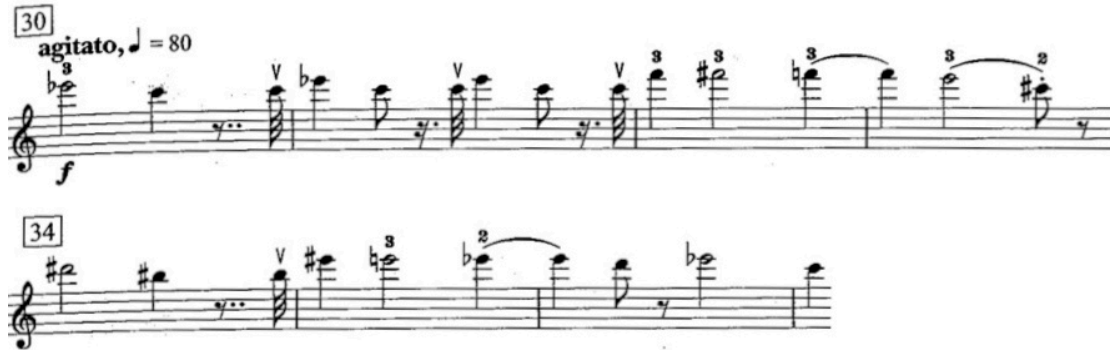
Figure 3.7. Exercise for measure 29.

### Measures 30 - 36



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Figure 3.8. Measures 30 - 36, Serly edition.



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Figure 3.9. Measures 30 - 36, revised edition.

Difficulty Level: 1

This passage makes use of the extreme high register of the viola. Though the measures would be quite unchallenging if played in a lower octave, Bartók's choice of range makes the execution of this passage difficult. Main areas of concern are sound quality and intonation. The provided exercise employs an open-D string drone to aid the player in judging whether the moving notes are in tune. When practicing the exercise, care should be taken to shift the entire hand as a unit, with the first finger serving as an anchor for the rest; despite the high position, a stable left hand posture with curved fingers should be maintained.

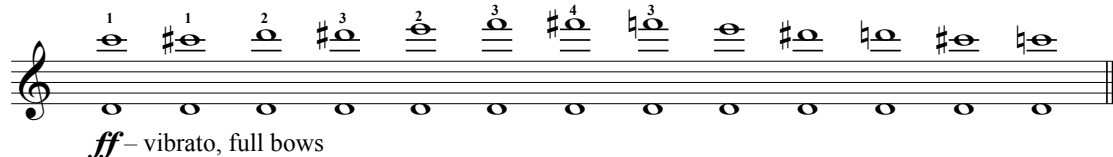


Figure 3.10. Exercise for measures 30 - 36.

Measures 54 - 55



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Figure 3.11. Measures 54 - 55, Serly edition.



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Figure 3.12. Measures 54 - 55, revised edition.

Difficulty Level: 1

At first glance, this passage may appear difficult. However, if one examines it in terms of left hand finger patterns, it becomes clear that each one-beat grouping is made up of the same intervallic content as the others. Though the original passage presents the pitches within these three-note groupings out of (ascending) order, each grouping may still be practiced as a simple ascending trichord with the intervals of a minor second followed by a minor third.

The exercises below should be practiced with strong focus on maintaining a stable left hand frame and finger pattern, while always shifting the hand as a unit. Note that in this passage, the distance between the first and fourth fingers is a diminished fourth (enharmonically, a major third), as opposed to a perfect fourth.

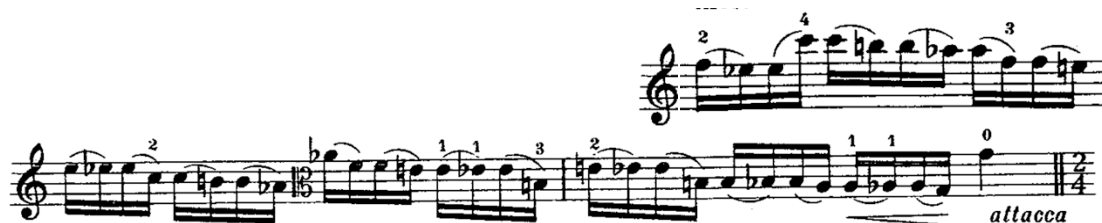


Figure 3.13. Exercise for measures 54 - 55, Serly edition.



Figure 3.14. Exercise for measures 54 - 55, revised edition.

### Measures 55 - 57



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Figure 3.15. Measures 55 - 57, Serly edition.



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Figure 3.16. Measures 55 - 57, revised edition.

Difficulty Level: 1

This passage can be easily broken down into a scalar format for practice. Though the intervallic pattern is irregular, none of the shifts required are particularly unusual. The pitches are also spelled such that readability is high. Exercise A should be practiced and mastered first, with careful attention given to intonation and smooth shifting. Exercise B is a continuation of the previous exercise, and requires fluidity in shifting in order to maintain the rhythmic pattern.



Figure 3.17. Exercises A and B for measures 55 - 57, Serly edition.



Figure 3.18. Exercises A and B for measures 55 - 57, revised edition.

Measures 70 - 78 (Serly edition) and 68-76 (revised edition)



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Figure 3.19. Measures 70 - 78, Serly edition



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Figure 3.20. Measures 68 - 76, revised edition.

Difficulty Level: 3

Chords comprised of two stacked pairs perfect fourths form the content of these measures. An open string below these pitches is sometimes added. While the addition of the open string below the fingered pitches does not alter the left-hand difficulty of the passage in terms of finger placement or execution, the fixed pitch of the open string does make it essential that the intonation of the stopped notes is pure in relation.

Since the interval content of the sonorities stays the same throughout the passage, the fingering also remains the same. Thus, the difficulty in this passage lies in maintaining the correct distance between the fingers (intonation) while shifting the hand by whole steps. The exercises below separate the chords that appear in the Concerto into their component pairs of perfect fourths. These should be practiced with a relaxed left hand, sliding slowly between the pairs of pitches. To further prepare for performance of the original passage, the pitch missing from each of the exercises below may be stopped with the appropriate finger, but not sounded. Note that the upper two pitches for the first

five measures of the passage are also the lower two pitches for the subsequent four measures.



Figure 3.21. Exercises for measures 70 - 78, Serly edition, and measures 68 - 76, revised edition.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE THIRD MOVEMENT

The third movement of the Bartók Concerto is, in essence, a *moto perpetuo* in the style of many romantic-period violin works bearing the title or designation. Though there are periods of rest for the violist in this movement, the fast tempo is maintained with little variation throughout. In addition to speed and agility, technical demands include the navigation of highly chromatic passages and prolonged periods of high-register playing. Shifting also poses an issue in the third movement, especially in those passages that feature the repetition at different pitch levels of falling dyad figures ornamented by trills (measures 8 - 21 and 84 - 92 are prime examples of this type of content, and can be seen in Figures 4.1, 4.2, 4.13, and 4.14). An extended passage of double-stop octaves (measures 198 - 212, Figure 4.20) in the Serly edition is also a challenge for those players performing that version of the Concerto.

The task of learning this movement should include slow, deliberate practice, with the utmost attention given to the placing of the left hand and fingers. Fragmentation of the movement's content according to left hand position and/or finger pattern is recommended so that the player may develop a personal sequence of hand placements that will then be practiced. In this way, the movement is learned with more attention to muscle memory than aural cues; it is this author's opinion that such an approach is highly

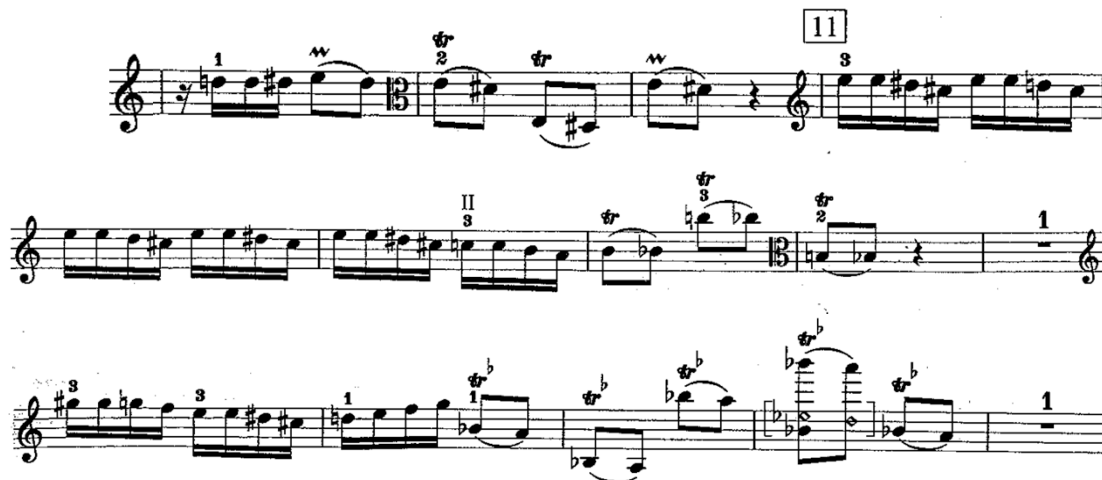
efficient when attempting a *moto perpetuo*-type selection. Many of the exercises provided in this chapter address this approach to practice.

Measures 8 - 21



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Figure 4.1. Measures 8 - 21, Serly edition.



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Figure 4.2. Measures 8 - 21, revised edition.

Difficulty Level: 2

This passage demands speed and agility in shifting and resetting the hand in a somewhat compressed finger pattern. For the first part of the passage the distance between first and third fingers is generally a whole step, which is a smaller span than is typical. Elsewhere in the passage the distance between those two fingers widens to a minor third (sometimes spelled as an augmented second), a more typical spacing within the left hand frame. Managing these intervals within the hand frame is the main task in these measures. The quick tempo in this passage means there is little time to change the finger pattern after the left hand is set, necessitating an approach to practice that emphasizes familiarity with the progression of finger patterns. The exercises below outline such an approach. In addition to practicing them as written, it is recommended that the player practice (silently; without the bow) placing the hand for each bracketed

group of notes with all fingers down in the appropriate position, as if fingering a multi-stop. In preparing the Concerto passage for performance, it is suggested that the performer deliberately plan the number of turns to be executed for each trill in order to facilitate left hand relaxation and clarity of the figures. Reference to etudes that address planning of trills in this manner is provided in Appendix A.



Figure 4.3. Exercise for measures 8 - 21, Serly edition.



Figure 4.4. Exercise for measures 8 - 21, revised edition.

Measures 41 - 49



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Figure 4.5. Measures 41 - 49, Serly edition.



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Figure 4.6. Measures 41 - 49, revised edition.

Difficulty Level: 2

Much as in the last passage, the difficulty in these measures lies primarily in maintaining an accurate sense of where the left hand is placed on the fingerboard. In addition, the finger patterns within the hand frame must be learned such that when the hand is shifted, the fingers automatically move into the correct positions. Exercises that address these concerns are provided below for measures 41 - 44. It is suggested that these measures and measures 45 - 49 also be practiced in the silent hand-setting method as outlined for the previous passage. An additional exercise that addresses sliding the second finger within the hand frame is provided for measure 41. As in measures 8 - 21, in preparing the Concerto passage for performance, it is suggested that the performer deliberately count the number of turns he or she plans on executing for each trill.



Figure 4.7. Exercise for measure 41.



Figure 4.8. Exercise for measures 41 - 44, Serly edition.

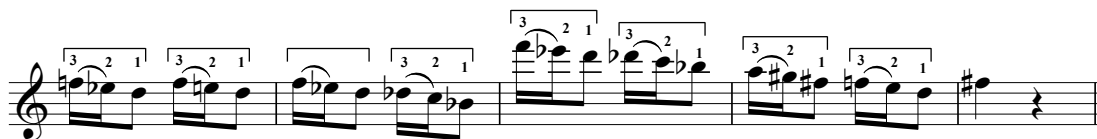


Figure 4.9. Exercise for measures 41 - 44, revised edition.

### Measures 65 - 81

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Figure 4.10. Measures 65 - 81, Serly edition.

65

Poco più mosso, ♩ = 126-132

*mp*

71

81

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Figure 4.11. Measures 65 - 81, revised edition.

Difficulty Level: 3

An overall understanding and comfort with fingerboard layout is essential when learning this passage. Slow practice of the original measures is recommended in order to build familiarity with the changing patterns of note repetitions and melodic contour. In addition, Exercise A below provides a representation of the various scalar fragments that comprise the passage. The goal of this exercise is to distill the pitch content of these measures into simple pitch groupings, which may then be practiced for intonation as well

as finger pattern familiarity. Exercise B provides a method for practicing intonation of the pitches that appear in both the viola part and the orchestra accompaniment during the first part of this passage. In Since the trombone outlines pitches of the viola line in a melodic statement, it is important for the soloist to address the intonation of the pitches shared between the solo and orchestra parts. In addition to approaching this issue through practice of Exercise B, it is suggested that the entire passage be practiced with a drone pitch of an adjacent open string. Note that no fingering is provided for the exercises; since fingering choices vary widely in this passage, the player should apply his or her own fingering to the example.

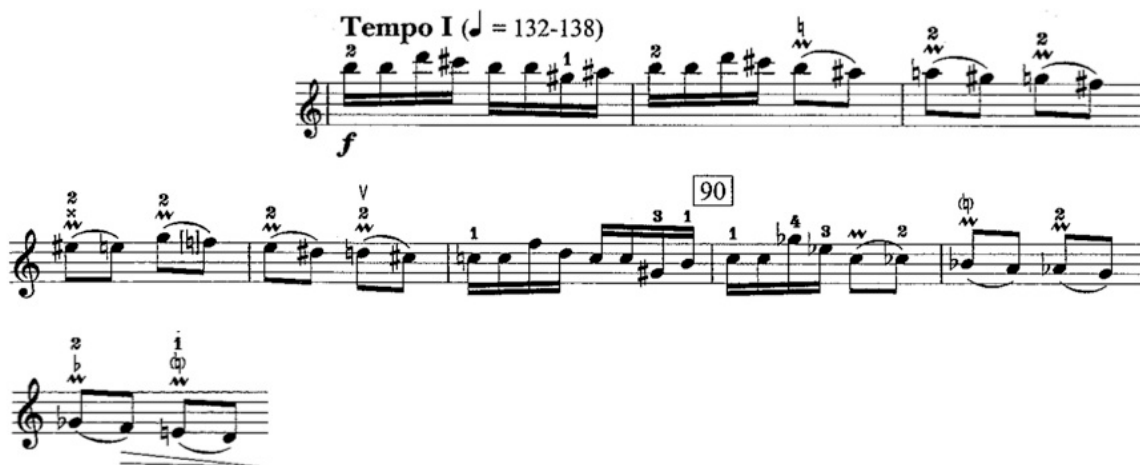
**A**

Measures 84 - 92



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Figure 4.13. Measures 84 - 92, Serly edition.



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Figure 4.14. Measures 84 - 92, revised edition.

Difficulty Level: 2

This passage contains material similar to that found in measures 8 - 21, but provides the added challenge of extending the left hand frame beyond the reach of a perfect fourth in addition to compressing the hand into smaller intervallic distances than are typical. In addition, accurate shifting is especially important in this passage; as the final note of a shift has often just been heard, inaccurate shifts are likely to be more noticeable here than in other instances. Finally, the fast tempo eliminates the possibility of correcting any mistakes during performance (making it extremely important that this passage be well understood by the performer). The exercise below employs the same approach as for measures 8 - 21. Practice should be slow, with particular attention given to finger patterns within the hand frame. Silent hand-setting should also be practiced, with emphasis on accurate alteration of the hand frame when moving between compressed and extended shapes.

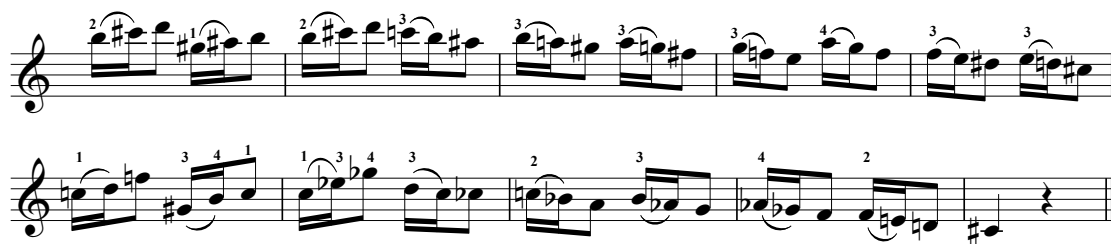


Figure 4.15. Exercise for measures 84 - 92.

Measures 101 - 103



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Figure 4.16. Measures 101 - 103, Serly edition.



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Figure 4.17. Measures 101 - 103, revised edition.

Difficulty Level: 4

Along with the passage from the *Parlando* section preceding the second movement (addressed in Chapter 3), this is arguably one of the most challenging sections of the Concerto. Though the content is not overly complex in itself, the combination of double stops and high left hand position make these three measures difficult to execute at performance tempo. Double-stop intonation and shifting are the primary areas for concern when learning and practicing this passage. The exercises below provide strategies for addressing these issues by illustrating the individual paths of the upper and

[illegible]

**A**

Exercise A is a single-line melody in treble clef, 4/4 time. It consists of two measures. The first measure contains the notes G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), and C5 (quarter). The second measure contains the notes B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), and F#4 (quarter). Fingering numbers are indicated above the notes: 1, 2, 1, 2 for the first measure and 2, 1, 1, 2 for the second measure.

**B**

Exercise B is a single-line melody in treble clef, 4/4 time. It consists of two measures. The first measure contains the notes G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), and C5 (quarter). The second measure contains the notes B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), and F#4 (quarter). Fingering numbers are indicated above the notes: 1, 2, 1, 2 for the first measure and 2, 1, 1, 2 for the second measure.

Measures 198 - 212 (Serly edition) and 198 - 204 (revised edition)

The image displays a musical score for the Viola Concerto, measures 198-212, in the Serly edition. The score is written for a single staff in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It begins with a box containing the number '200' above the first measure. The tempo/mood marking 'sempre f' is placed below the first measure. The music consists of a continuous eighth-note pattern. Measures 198-204 are shown in the first system, and measures 205-210 are in the second system. A box containing the number '210' is placed above the final measure of the second system. The score ends with a sharp sign on the final note.

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Figure 4.20. Measures 198 - 212, Serly edition.



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Figure 4.21. Measures 198 - 204, revised edition.

Difficulty Level: 2 (Serly edition); 1 (revised edition)

Octave intonation is the primary difficulty in this passage. Since the interval of the octave is maintained throughout, the left hand's task consists of two goals: maintain an octave hand frame with pure intonation, and shift accurately. The challenge in maintaining intonation in the octave hand frame lies mainly in the tendency for many players to develop left hand tension in extended octave passages and with the adjustment necessary at register changes. In the Serly edition the most obvious opportunity for error occurs in measure 206, when the initial statement of the passage is repeated at the upward transposition of a perfect fourth. At that point, the performer must adjust the hand frame to reflect the smaller spacing of intervals in the high range of the viola.

Shifting the left hand accurately is also a concern in this passage, as the entire hand must be moved as a unit throughout in order to maintain pure octave intonation. Exercises A and B illustrate an approach to practicing that addresses shifting the first and fourth fingers individually. Each of these exercises should be practiced as written first,

and then with the additional finger placed but not sounded. Shifts should initially be practiced as slow *glissandi*, and then may be quickened. The left hand should remain as relaxed as possible throughout. In order to have a pitch reference for intonation purposes, open-string drones may be used when practicing these exercises.

Exercise C addresses the bowing of this passage. Though it may seem an innocuous aspect of these measures, the relaxation of the right hand is essential for maintaining clarity during the repetitive string crossings. It is recommended that Exercise C be practiced slowly at first, with the goal of increasing the speed to performance tempo. For the Serly edition, an alternate bowing is provided below the staff.

Figure 4.22 displays three musical exercises (A, B, and C) for measures 198 - 212, Serly edition. Exercise A shows a melodic line with fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) and bowing marks. Exercise B shows a similar melodic line with different fingerings and bowing marks. Exercise C shows a rhythmic pattern with bowing marks and fingerings.

Figure 4.22. Exercises A, B, and C for measures 198 - 212, Serly edition.



Figure 4.23. Exercises A, B, and C for measures 198 - 204, revised edition.

Measures 213 - 221 (Serly edition) and 205 - 213 (revised edition)



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Figure 4.24. Measures 213 - 221, Serly edition.



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Figure 4.25. Measures 205 - 213, revised edition.

#### Difficulty Level: 2

This passage must be practiced slowly and deliberately in order to ensure the clarity of intonation between whole and half steps. In order to simplify this task, Exercises A and B provide a reduction of the original passage into a scalar format. The goal in practicing these exercises should be to familiarize oneself with the pitch content of the original passage so that the repeated notes and ornamentations of the original may be executed without detriment to intonation or hand posture.

A

B

\* Serly: G#  
 Revised edition: G#  
 \*\* In the revised edition, this pitch is spelled as D#.

Figure 4.26. Exercises A and B for measures 213 - 221, Serly edition, and measures 205 - 213, revised edition.

Measures 222 - 231 (Serly edition) and 214 - 224 (revised edition)

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Figure 4.27. Measures 222 - 231, Serly edition.



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Figure 4.28. Measures 214 - 224, revised edition.

#### Difficulty Level: 2

Shifting from very high to lower positions is at issue in the preparation of this passage, as is small-interval intonation. The downward shifts in the first few measures should be executed such that the left fingers maintain contact with the string; this is often a challenge in shifts involving high positions, as the shoulders of the viola may impede smooth motion of the left hand. Another challenge in this passage is accurate aural preparation for leaps; in order to ensure that the performer plays the pitch following an intervallic leap in tune, it is helpful if he or she is able to aurally perceive the pitch before playing it. In this passage, the irregular intervallic pattern makes the process of aural preparation challenging. To practice this skill, it is suggested that the performer attempt to sing the pitch following any leap before attempting to sound the pitch on the

instrument. In addition, mastery of fingerboard “geography” is necessary to ensure that the player is clearly aware of what position he or she is in at any given time, and where the first finger lies in pitch-space for each position.



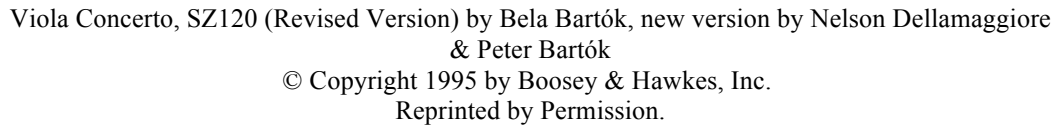
Figure 4.29. Exercise for measures 222 - 231, Serly edition, and measures 214 - 224, revised edition.

Measures 263 - End (Serly edition) and 251 - End (revised edition)



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Figure 4.30. Measure 263 - end, Serly edition.



Difficulty Level: 3

Shifting in a fast tempo is the primary technical challenge here, with the added issue of navigating the left hand around the shoulder of the viola posing the potential for additional logistical considerations. Practice of this passage should commence at a slow tempo, and must address intonation and shifting. It is suggested that the pitches be separated into segments according to fingering - all of the notes to be played in one position should be played, then the hand should be reset during silence, and then the next group of notes should be played, and so forth. The exercise below illustrates this approach, and provides an alternate fingering to those found in the Serly and revised editions.

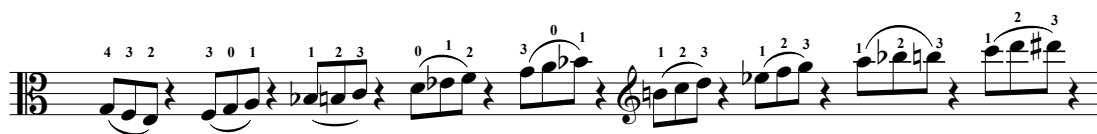


Figure 4.32. Exercise for measure 263 - end, Serly edition, and measure 251 - end, revised edition.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Beginning to learn a new work is often a daunting task for a performer. The question, “Where do I begin?” is a frequent uttering among many, and has been rarely addressed in the published literature with respect to specific works. The most notable exceptions to this statement are the analytical studies of Otakar Ševčík,<sup>23</sup> which provide systems of etudes for several of the standard violin concertos and other concerted works. In this way, the performer is provided with a “how-to manual” of sorts, enabling efficiency in the learning process. Though similar projects have been undertaken by graduate students,<sup>24</sup> no other published collections of the scope of Ševčík’s are known to exist.

Violists are fortunate to have access to transcriptions of Ševčík’s many method books, as well as other etude collections. However, there are few original etudes for the advanced violist<sup>25,26</sup> and no analytical studies, save those contained in DeBardenlaben’s recent Doctoral dissertation.<sup>27</sup> Considering this lack of materials, the difficulty of

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<sup>23</sup> Analytical studies by Ševčík exist for the following works for violin: Tchaikovsky, Concerto; Paganini, Concerto No. 1; Wieniawski, Concerto No. 2 and *Scherzo-tarantelle*, Mendelssohn, Concerto; Brahms, Concerto (including Joachim cadenza). Full citations appear in the bibliography.

<sup>24</sup> Ross Adam DeBardenlaben, “Applying the Ševčík approach to selected excerpts from the first movement of the Brahms Viola Sonata in F Minor” (D.M.A. diss., University of Miami, 2012).

<sup>25</sup> Minor Lewis Wetzel, “A Better Bartók: Dilemmas and Solutions in Performing Bartók’s Viola Concerto” (D.M.A. diss., University of California – Los Angeles, 2010).

<sup>26</sup> Ulisses Carvalho Da Silva, “Original and Transcribed Etude Books for Viola: A Reference Guide for Teachers and Students” (D.M.A. diss., University of Georgia, 2010).

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

Bartók's Concerto for Viola and Orchestra, and its prominence in the violist's repertoire, it is useful to address the work under the lens of the Ševčík analytical studies method.

Therefore, in what preceded, the most challenging passages from the viola part of Bartók's Concerto for Viola and Orchestra have been systematically discussed. Technical difficulties have been enumerated, and practice strategies have been offered. Finally, original etudes in the style of Ševčík's analytical studies have been provided to aid the player in preparation of this work.

For each passage addressed, an exercise or set of exercises presents concrete practice strategies intended to assist the player in developing the necessary skills for specific application of techniques to the learning of the Concerto. It is then expected that the player will use the strategies from the etudes to further his or her practice of each passage, with the eventual goal of performing the Concerto as a whole. Though the exercises provided here are a preliminary step in approaching the work, their use and mastery is intended to provide a firm technical basis from which the violist can move to practice of the original Concerto passages.

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APPENDIX A

LIST OF PASSAGES DISCUSSED

	Measure Numbers (Serly)	Measure Numbers (Revised Edition)	Difficulty Level	Primary Technical Concerns	Additional Related Etudes/Studies*
Mvmt. I	21 - 23	21 - 23	2	finger patterns, perfect fifth intonation	Ševčík Op. 1, Ševčík Op. 9
	36 - 37	36 - 37	3	small interval intonation, shifting	Ševčík Op. 7, Ševčík Op. 8
	41 - 43, 48 - 50	41 - 43, 48 - 50	2	intonation, whole step/half step distinction, finger patterns, hand frame stability	Ševčík Op. 1, Ševčík Op. 7, Rode 23
	73 - 76	74 - 76	2	shifting, high position intonation, hand frame extension	Ševčík Op. 8, Kreutzer 14, 30, 25, 26, Rode 23
	88 - 90	88 - 90	3	sliding fourth finger, intonation	Kreutzer 14, 30, Rode 23
	102 - 108	102 - 108	3	high position intonation, perfect fifth intonation, hand frame stability	Kreutzer 25, 26
	112 - 119	112 - 119	3	string crossings, hand frame stability, shifting	Ševčík Op. 8

	129, 133, 136 - 140	129, 133, 136 - 140	2	intonation	Ševčík Op. 1
	160 - 161	159 - 160	3	perfect fifth intonation, shifting	Ševčík Op. 8
	162 - 164, 168 - 170	161 - 169	2	intonation, whole step/half step distinction, finger patterns, hand frame stability	Ševčík Op. 1, Ševčík Op. 7, Rode 23
	185 - 189	183 - 187	2	large interval intonation, hand frame extension	Ševčík Op. 9, Kreutzer 14, 30
	191 - 200	189 - 198	1	intonation, whole/half step distinction	Ševčík Op. 7
	213 - 215	211 - 213	2	high position intonation, shifting	Ševčík Op. 8, Kreutzer 25, 26
	<i>Parlando</i> , m. 11 - end	<i>Parlando</i> , m. 11 - end	4	chromaticism, finger patterns, whole/half step distinction	Ševčík Op. 7, Rode 23
Mvmt. II	29	29	2	shifting	Ševčík Op. 8
	30 - 36	30 - 36	1	high position intonation	Kreutzer 25, 26
	54 - 55, 55 - 57	54 - 55, 55 - 57	2 (Serly), 1(Revised)	hand frame maintenance, shifting	Ševčík Op. 8
	70 - 78	68 - 76	3	intonation, sliding perfect fourths	Ševčík Op. 9

Mvmt. III	8 - 21	8 - 20	2	shifting, finger pattern changes, trill planning	Ševčík Op. 8, Rode 23, Campagnoli 30 Kreutzer 15 - 22
	41 - 49	41 - 49	3	shifting, finger pattern changes	Ševčík Op. 1, Rode 23, Campagnoli 30
	65 - 81	65 - 81	3	hand frame maintenance, finger pattern changes, whole/half step distinction	Ševčík Op. 1, Ševčík Op. 7, Kreutzer 14, 30, Campagnoli 30
	84 - 92	84 - 92	2	shifting, finger pattern changes, trill planning	Ševčík Op. 1, Rode 23, Campagnoli 30, Kreutzer 15 - 22
	101 - 103	97 - 103	4	double stop intonation	Ševčík Op. 9, Kreutzer 32, 33, 35, Rode 16, 19
	198 - 212	198 - 204	2 (Serly), 1(Revised)	octave intonation, shifting, hand frame maintenance	Ševčík Op. 1, Ševčík Op. 9, Rode 21
	213 - 221	205 - 213	2	hand frame maintenance, finger pattern changes, whole/half step distinction	Ševčík Op. 7, Kreutzer 14, 30, Rode 23, Campagnoli 30
	222 - 231	214 - 224	1	shifting, finger pattern changes	Ševčík Op. 1, Rode 23, Campagnoli 30
	263 - end	251 - end	3	shifting, finger pattern changes	Ševčík Op. 1, Rode 23, Campagnoli 30

\*In addition to the studies listed for each passage, it is suggested that the Flesch and Galamian Scale Systems be revisited in the appropriate key(s) for additional practice of many of the techniques listed here.

## APPENDIX B

### DOCUMENTATION OF REPRINT PERMISSION FOR MUSICAL EXAMPLES



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