

4. THE COLLECTION OF STUDIES “VIOLINSCHULWERK” IN KLAUS HERTEL PUBLISHING HOUSE - ULFERT THIEMANN - METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO VIOLIN TECHNIQUE

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Abstract: *The education of technical-interpretive skills from various methodical perspectives, with disciplinary tangents, represents a topic of great importance and topicality of instrumental pedagogy. The collection of studies “Violinschulwerk” edited by the renowned pedagogues and performers Klaus Hertel and Ulfert Thiemann welcomes violin students, future teachers, with a selection of studies and caprices of great variety and technical complexity, belonging to prominent representatives of the main violin schools. The included contents guide the instrumentalist towards a complete approach in interpretation, with the inherent realization of the correlation between technique - musical theory - style.*

Key words: *Education, Skills, Disciplinary tangents, Methodical analysis, Work techniques*

1. Introduction

The education of technical-interpretive skills from various methodical perspectives, with disciplinary tangents, represents a topic of great importance and topicality of instrumental pedagogy. The collection of studies “Violinschulwerk” edited by the renowned pedagogues and performers Klaus Hertel and Ulfert Thiemann welcomes violin students, future teachers, with a didactic repertoire of great diversity, concentrating the elements of violin technique in a selection of 64 studies and caprices.

It should be noted that the editors of the collection belong to the violinist school of the first half of the 20th century, but the concept of the multidisciplinary approach with disciplinary tangents to the repertoire contents places them in the context of the current instrumental pedagogy. The advantages that the Hertel – Thiemann method brings are in the interdisciplinary correlations, indispensable for the training of the violinist:

- the accumulation of technical elements and theoretical notions that will be used in the following years of instrumental study;
- thorough clarification of some musical theory issues necessary for instrumental performance;
- application of violin technique knowledge in different contexts;
- approaching the elements of violin technique from various methodical angles¹⁰.

Working together in the quartet “Thiemann Quartet - Rostock” for ten years, they collaborated on the editing of the three volumes of “Violinschulwerk” studies. The selected repertoire belongs to established violinists and pedagogues, founders or representatives of the main violin schools, “whose methodical contributions cannot be ignored”¹¹ by no violinist. Structured on lesson complexes (in the current pedagogy - learning units), studies for “legato”, “arpeggios”, “intonational studies”, for the technique of doubles, chords, bow modes, polyphonic studies are addressed.

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¹⁰ Filimon, Letiția, (2003), *Predarea în “Psihopedagogia pentru formarea profesorilor”*, Volum I, p. 140, Oradea

¹¹ Hertel, Klaus, Thiemann, Ulfert, *Violinschulwerk Etüden III*, Editura Peters, Leipzig

The “Violinschulwerk” collection, a synthesis of the main violinist schools, through its extremely varied contents, represents a real methodical acquisition.

2. Methodology

In the course of my research, using didactic materials, works in the field of violin pedagogy available, I started from:

- studying the specialized bibliography in order to document the problems of violin technique;
- observing some ways of approaching the technical elements within the researched didactic material;
- the collection of biographical data, the acquisition of useful information for my research, regarding the authors of the studies and whimsies included in the “Violinschulwerk” collection: violin schools, representative works, disciples, methodical contributions to the development of violin technique;
- the analysis from a methodical perspective of some whims: the problem addressed, methodical angles of approach, applied work techniques;
- comparing and interpreting some technical situations;
- conclusions.

3. History

Klaus Hertel was born on January 14, 1936 in Leipzig. Representative of the German violin school, performer, composer and methodologist, he is one of the complex personalities of the beginning of the 20th century. Between 1953 and 1958 he studied violin with Ruth Kester - Boche and composition with Paul Schenk at the “Felix Mendelssohn - Bartoldy Academy of Music” in Leipzig. He worked as a violin and method teacher in Leipzig. As a performer he played in the “Gewendhaus Orchestra”. As a performer, he enjoyed the collaboration with the famous publishing houses “Peters” and “Friedrich Hoffmeister Musikverlag”. He was also invited as a member of the jury of the “Henri Marteau International Violin Competition”.

Ulfert Thiemann was born in 1931 in Leipzig. Renowned violinist and pedagogue, he studied between 1943 - 1947 at the “Felix Mendelssohn - Bartoldy Academy of Music” in Leipzig. At the age of twenty, he was employed at the “Quedinburg Theater”, being the youngest concertmaster. Between 1961 - 1993 he worked as a teacher at the “Rostock Conservatory” and the “Hochschule fur Music” Berlin, in 1990 being appointed head of the violin department. He retired from teaching in 1992, becoming a freelancer. He worked in the quartet “Thiemann Quartet Rostock” for ten years with Klaus Hertel, collaborating together on the editing of the three volumes “Violinschulwerk”.

4. The authors of the studies and caprices included in the collection “Violinschulwerk”

Alard Delphin (1815 – 1888), was a representative of the French violin school, performer and pedagogue. His most famous disciple was Pablo de Sarasate. He wrote a method for the violin¹².

¹² Barbu, Casiu (1987), *Metodica predării și a studiului instrumentelor cu coarde (cu arcuș)*, ed. II-a, Conservatorul de Muzică „Gh. Dima”, Cluj Napoca, p. 56

Blumenthal Jacob (1829 – 1908), German pianist and composer. Born in Hamburg, he studied piano with Friedrich Wilhelm Grund, Carl Maria von Bocklet and Simon Secher. He continued his studies at the “Paris Conservatory”, perfecting his technique under the tutelage of Professor Henri Herz. He is known especially for his short pieces and miniatures for the piano.

Bériot Charles (1802 – 1871), founder of the young Belgian violin school, performer, composer and pedagogue, had Henri Vieuxtemps as his disciple. Author of nine concertos for the violin, he also wrote the methodical work entitled “The Transcendent School of the Violin”¹³.

Dancla Charles (1818 – 1907), representative of the French school, disciple of Hector Baillot, founder of the school. He is known for his violin method, the methodical work “Mechanism School” and the volume “48 studies for the violin” which deals with all the elements of violin technique¹⁴.

Dont Jacob (1815 – 1888), representative of the Austrian violin school, disciple of Professor Georg Hellmesberger (founder of the Austrian school) and Joseph Boehm. He had the famous pedagogue and violinist Leopold Auer as his disciple. He is especially known for the “24 caprices for violin opus 35” in which he deals with violinist issues prefacing Paganini's “24 caprices for solo violin”¹⁵.

Hubay Jenő (1856 – 1937), representative of the Hungarian school, professor at the “Franz Liszt” Academy in Budapest, known especially for the volume entitled “Violin Teaching Methodology”¹⁶.

Ondricek Franz (1859 - 1922), violinist, composer, pedagogue, representative of the Czech school. He is the author of a work on the physiology of violin technique¹⁷.

Rode Pierre (1774 – 1850), representative of the French school, student of Viotti, renowned violinist and composer. He bequeathed a series of violin concertos, used in the training of high school violinists. He is also known for the “24 caprices for the violin” which preface the caprices of Jacob Dont¹⁸.

Ludovic Spohr (1784 – 1859), conductor, composer, pedagogue, representative of the Mannheim school. He wrote the “Violin Method” published in 1832, which has survived to this day¹⁹.

Tartini Giuseppe (1692 - 1770), is the founder of the Padua school, violinist, composer and pedagogue. Along with his famous violin sonatas, he is known for his didactic works: “L'Arte del arco” and “Trattato di musica”²⁰.

In the present paper, I have analyzed from a methodical point of view two different ways of approaching the “legato” issue captured in the studies of Charles Dancla and Jacob Blumenthal (adaptation made by Hertel - Thiemann) from volume III of the “Violinschulwerk” collection.

¹³ Barbu, Casiu (1987), *op. cit.*, p. 46

¹⁴ Ibidem

¹⁵ Idem, p. 49

¹⁶ Idem, p. 47

¹⁷ Idem, p. 53

¹⁸ Beaujon, M. E., *Histoire du Violon et des grands Violonistes (Traité de Violon)*, Elite Edition nr 548, Leipzig Musikverlag, Leipzig, p. 204

¹⁹ Idem, p. 152

²⁰ Idem, p.106

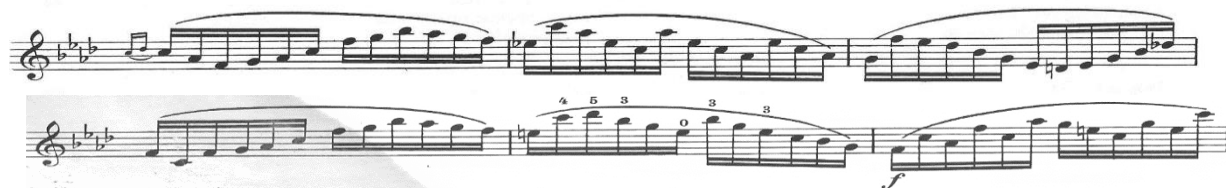
5. Charles Dancla: Study number one, in F minor.

The author deals with the “legato” technique in a derivative of it “legato” with passing over the strings. Integrated in an alert tempo, the “piano” nuance with the indications “agitato, appassionato” present in the beginning of the musical text, the study is to be approached in a virtuoso, light manner (for example measures number one - two). Ex. 1



From a technical point of view, the optimal execution of the legato with passing over the strings requires a cursive feature of the bow, aiming for the transition from one string to another to be achieved gradually through a slight anticipatory movement of the arm. The articulation of the fingers of the left hand must be prompt, the lifting and falling of the fingers on the string must be done quickly, precisely, without disturbing the flow of the stroke.

In Dancla's study, the “legato” is placed in a simple, stereotypical rhythmic context of sixteenth notes in sextlets. Maintaining the tempo and rhythmic equality will be the priority in the optimal execution of the study. Associated with singing in a fixed position (indicated by the editors Hertel and Thiemann) the “legato” becomes a technical problem due to the frequency of the undulating movements necessary to pass over the strings. From the point of view of the right hand, the handling of the bow must be supple, the forearm being located in an intermediate position so as to easily catch the two strings involved. The activity of the wrist at the heel is decisive²¹. At the same time, the fingers of the left hand will be placed simultaneously on the strings during the intervals, so as not to disturb the “legato”. We find eloquent examples of this technical situation in measures number 7 and 44. Ex. 2



For a correct arrangement of the fingers of the left hand in the fixed position and an optimal intonation, the harmonic execution of the intervals is necessary. A solution to the success of the “legato” over the strings is to study it with a slight anticipatory movement of the right arm towards the adjacent string.

The “legato” is also associated with ornamental elements (mordent and trill), in this case a fast and flexible articulation of the fingers of the left hand is required. The execution of the ornaments is required related to the alert tempo of the musical text, so the falling and raising of the fingers must take place as close as possible to the string to avoid both the rhythmic deformation of the sextlets and the interruption of the “legato”. Ex. 3

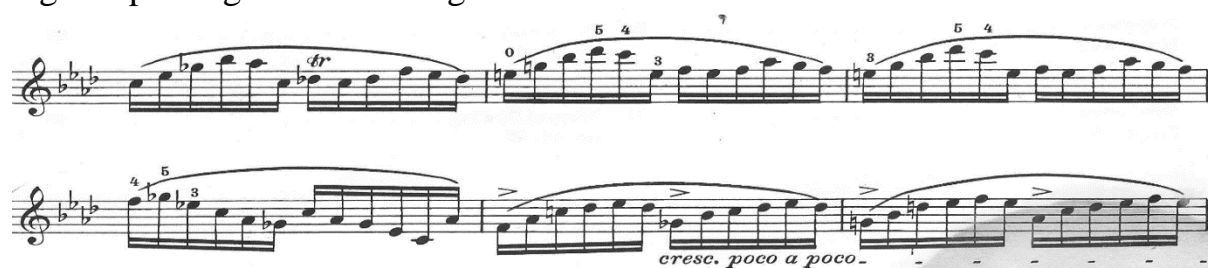


²¹ Barbu, Casiu (1987), *op. cit.*, p. 139

In the case of the mordant, an effective method of technical solution is to study with accents and pauses between the two directions of the bow for the promptness of the articulation movement of the fingers of the left hand. In the case of the trill, studying with dotted rhythms is effective in exercising the adductor and abductor muscles. The speed of articulation of the fingers on the string will be followed. The execution of the mordant and trill under the “legato” requires a slight impulse of the index finger on the bow stick for the clear rendering of these ornamental elements.

A new context in which the “legato” is placed is the association with *appliqués* (fingering) that involve the use of the extension movement of the fingers of the left hand, in this case requiring a slight modification of the basic position of the arm and its palm. For the extension to be successful, the back of the hand must remain relaxed in the same position, while the fingers, moving only from the wrist, act by stretching²². From the fingering point of view, Dancla uses the wide application and the narrow application²³, situation that involves a correct pose of the left hand avoiding any twitching of the palm muscles. Also, the frame of the hand represented by the pair of fingers 1 – 4 must remain relaxed. In this context, the intonation of increased and decreased intervals add more difficulty to the musical performance.

A difficult technical situation is the combination of the upper extension with the narrow fingering and the lower extension. The left hand must react promptly and the fingers must act quickly on the strings, without disturbing the flow of the “legato” passing over the strings. Ex. 4



In the example above, the success of the extension depends on an appropriate position of the left hand, adapted to the technical situation created. Decisive are: turning the bridge of the palm outwards and bringing the thumb slightly forward, so that the hand moves a little away from the neck of the instrument. The freedom of movement of the fingers will be much greater, both outwardly and inwardly.

From an interpretative perspective, the study should be approached in a virtuoso, passionate manner. The text is devoid of dynamic variety, the musical discourse taking place predominantly in the “piano” tone. The use of a restricted dynamic brings to the fore Dancla's intention to obtain through his study a relaxed technical execution based on an efficient control of the movements of the two hands. The indication “forte” is present only in measures 20, 31 and 41. From a dynamic point of view, it marks the culmination of a melodic outline. At the same time, it is integrated in a context subject to technical imperatives, namely the mordant

²² Barbu, Casiu (1973), *Contribuții la metodică studiului și predării instrumentelor cu coarde*, Conservatorul de Muzică „Gh. Dima”, Cluj Napoca, p.168

²³ Cumpătă, Dan (2005), *Elemente de metodică a studiului și predării instrumentelor cu coarde*, Editura Universității Naționale de Muzică, București, p. 51

approach under “legato”. The execution of the sequence in a large tone is beneficial in mobilizing the movements of the fingers rising and falling on the string. Ex. 5



From a rhythmic point of view, the study is stereotyped, the only formula used being the sextet of sixteenthths. The association with the dynamics without variety draws attention to the purpose of this study: the cursive feature of the bow under “legato”.

6. Jacob Blumenthal – Study number 3 in E minor (transcription by Hertel – Thiemann)

From another angle, the problem of “legato” is treated in the transcription according to Blumenthal. By combining types of “legato” with other bowing modes superimposed with technical elements of the left hand in a varied dynamic framework, the musical text becomes a real violinistic challenge. The “allegro vivace” tempo is approached in the “piano” tone. The fluctuating dynamics present from the very beginning of the study give it a malleable character. Ex. 6



A difficult technical execution situation. resulting from the combination of the asymmetric “legato” on a short portion, with the bow modes “spiccato” and “legato” we find it in meas 26 – 29. Ex. 7



For an adequate technical success, the precise delimitation of the execution area and the optimal use of the portions of the right arm that act are necessary. The issue of “legato” is also addressed in the context of the alternation of two bow modes: “spiccato” and its derivative “spiccato volant”. The technical situation calls for the suppleness and agility of the movements of the wrist and phalanges. For an optimal technical execution, it is essential to keep the bow close to the string, in its lower half. The alert tempo in which the sequence unfolds requires the use of a small amount of bow. Emphasis will be placed more on the horizontal component of the movement of the right hand within the “spiccato”, than on the vertical one, of falling of the bow on the string, constantly following the clarity of the sound emission.²⁴

From the point of view of the left hand, the articulation of the fingers as close

²⁴ Barbu, Casiu (1987), *op. cit.*, p. 150

to the string as possible is decisive in the synchronization of the two hands. Associating the types of “legato” with types of applications increases the degree of difficulty of the study. The approach to fingering in the chromatic passages involves the use of the narrow position of the fingers. The present study frequently addresses this type of apicature in the semi-position.

In measures 32 and 33, a difficult technical situation is created due to the awkward arrangement of the fingers on the string. For an optimal solution, it is necessary to arrange the fingers on the tips in such a way as to ensure the placement of the fourth finger, without touching the free string. “Legato” is also associated with sequential changes of position, semi-position, substitution and asymmetric changes of bow direction.

The difficulty of the execution resides in the fact that the speed of movement of the left hand is subordinated to the alert tempo of the musical text. In the context of combining the types of fingers, the created situation requires an optimal synchronization of the fingers of the left hand. An effective technical solution is the execution of the sequence with dotted rhythms, to stimulate the movement of the fingers of the left hand and their articulation on the string. Awareness of the distances to be covered along the keyboard is a priority in the context of exchanges at close positions.

An effective working technique in obtaining fluency and agility of the movements of the left hand is the practice of the sequence under “legato”. From an interpretive point of view, the approach of bowed modes in association with “legato” gives the study a light character, the musical discourse taking place in an alert tempo. The dynamic range is varied, from low intensity to “fortissimo”. Predominant are the dynamic fluctuations “crescendo - diminuendo” present from the beginning to the end. The frequent approach to phrasing indications attributes to the study the role of a “dynamics exercise”.

7. Conclusions

Analyzing from a methodical perspective the studies of the authors Charles Dancla and Jacob Blumenthal, we found the following:

- Charles Dancla treats the problem of “legato” in a technical context of medium difficulty by:
- the approach of a single version of “legato”;
- placing the “legato” in a stereotypical rhythmic context;
- its association with the execution in a fixed position;
- association with a single type of fingering;
- placing the “legato” in a dynamic lacking variety, the emphasis being on the cursive execution of the “legato” with passing over the strings.

In the adaptation after Jacob Blumenthal made by Klaus Hertel – Ulfert Thiemann the problem of “legato” is treated at a higher level of technical difficulty by:

- the approach of several variants of the “legato”;
- their association with jumping bow modes;
- the association of “legato” with types of position exchanges;
- association with application types;

- the location of the “legato” in a musical discourse varied from a dynamic point of view, but rhythmically stereotyped;
- the emphasis is on combining the technical aspects with the interpretive ones.

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