Course: CA1004 Degree Project, Master, Classical, 30hp

2020

Master's Programme in Classical Music at Edsberg Manor | 120.0 hp

Department of Classical Music

Supervisor: Sven Åberg

Angelika Kwiatkowska

What is the “Ševčík Method”? 

Deeper understanding of Otakar Ševčík’s exercises for violin based on the example of his 40 Variations, op. 3

Written reflection within independent project

The sounding part of the project is the following recordings:

Mozart – Symphony no. 39 Finale – before
Mozart – Symphony no. 39 Finale – after

Rossini – Overture La Gazza Ladra - before
Rossini – Overture La Gazza Ladra - after

KMH Kungl. Musikögskolan
Abstract

In this thesis I have studied the so-called “Ševčík method” based on the example of his 40 Variations, op. 3. I’ve tried to achieve a deeper understanding of what the exercises are good for and how they work. I took a closer look at Otakar Ševčík’s life and work history, I also investigated other’s opinions and judgements of the “method” that were appearing in press and literature during the last hundred years.

The practical part of my project is the experiment that I’ve put myself through. I was diligently practicing 40 Variations every day, trying to improve my technique and learn by playing how to apply those exercises in real life. As a result of this process I’ve developed my bow technique and gained better understanding of how to use Ševčík’s exercises.

Keywords: Violin, technique, exercises, bow technique, right-hand technique, Ševčík
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Introduction

Otakar Ševčík (1852-1934) was a Czech violinist and one of the greatest teachers of all time. He taught over a thousand students and worked in Salzburg, Vienna, Prague, Kharkiv, Kiev, London, Boston, Chicago, and New York City. Among his pupils were well-known violinsts like Marie Hall, Jaroslav Kocian, Jan Kubelík, Eugenia Uminska and Otto Meyer. During his long pedagogical career Ševčík created his own method of violin playing that is gathered in numerous books of exercises.

Otakar Ševčík's work seems to be widely accepted by music teachers and especially violin teachers as an important part of music education heritage.

It contains a guidance from the initial stages of learning violin technique through more advanced studies until the highest levels of musical development.

However, not all his opuses are equally popular. During the last hundred years some of them found a better replacement, and some of them consists of methods that might not apply to modern musical education style anymore. Yet still, a large part of his exercises is constantly in use and continues to be appreciated and respected.

Background

I don't remember exactly when I encountered Ševčík's exercises for the first time. I believe I must've been 10 or 11 years old. My violin teacher at the time thought I could benefit from some new technical exercises, so she introduced me to Ševčík's 40 Variations op. 3 and exercises for changing positions (School of Violin Technique, Op. 1 Book 3. Shifting). I approached them with enthusiasm but as it often happens, especially among young students, my eagerness faded and after some time I lost patience and stopped practicing them. In the following years I was coming back to Ševčík, but I’ve never gotten further than first few pages of the books.

In the meantime, I’ve learnt about other books of exercises written by Ševčík, but it was rather chaotic knowledge. Sometimes, when I felt I need some help in order to overcome particular difficulties in my repertoire I was trying some exercises from Ševčík's works but I still felt like I'm guessing rather than knowing what can help me.
Ševčík’s exercises were appearing in my violin studies for the last 15 years. The problem was that my experience with them was fragmentary and unstructured. The longer I studied, the stronger I felt that my technical abilities are not the result of systematic work but are rather an effect of difficulties I’ve approached while working on my repertoire. Result of this style of work was that I had to spend much more time on each piece than I’d wish for because I would first have to overcome technical difficulties. The other consequence was that my technique became some kind of patchwork of skills I’ve learned through the repertoire, but it didn’t create a complex, wholesome set of skills I could use in any situation.

I decided to change that when I began my master studies. I discovered that Ševčík wrote much more books of exercises than I knew before and that they seem to create a complex, well thought school of violin technique.

My perspective

I’m an advanced violin student and a beginning violin teacher and those two perspectives are provoking my interest in the subject of this thesis. My goal as a student is to improve my violin technique. As I see it, my violin technique is a set of tools that allows me to express myself freely in music. I would also wish to understand my development, be more efficient in practicing and be able to work faster with new repertoire. My aim as a teacher is to learn how to help my students. I wish to be able to recommend them exercises suited for their needs. I want to understand what particular exercises are useful for and how they work. Save my students time and effort in searching for the exercises that are good for them and be a guide in their development who can respond to their needs individually.

Aim of the study

The research question

What is Otakar Ševčík’s method? That question is just a starting point for my research. I want to understand what the exercises are designed for, what kind of improvement in string player’s technical abilities we can
expect from them. Those are theoretical parts of my thesis that I wish to investigate. But there is also a practical part which is my concern. How can working on ‘40 Variations’ change my violin technique? I hope practicing those exercises will improve my control in the bow and will result in more relaxed, beautiful sound. But most important: can it make a noticeable difference in my performance?

Delimitations of the study

Why 40 Variations op. 3?
Otakar Ševčík’s work consists of twenty-six opuses. Of all these opuses only number 10 contains original musical compositions. The rest of his numerous books are fully dedicated to the teaching and learning of violin techniques and general elements of music production.

It is not possible to take all of those opuses as a subject of this research. Ševčík wrote thousands of exercises and even if we’d ignore the books written specifically for preparing particular pieces (like for example Op.19, Elaborate Studies and Analysis bar to bar to P. I. Tchaikovsky Op.35 Concerto in D Major) we were still left with overwhelming mass of material.

There are a few reasons I chose to work on 40 Variations op. 3. First, it is the most commonly used book out of all Ševčík wrote. Second, they are variations on a simple, but still very melodic theme and it just makes it more enjoyable to practise than other more abstract exercises. And third but most important, they are written specifically to improve right-hand technique and this is what I need to improve in my playing.

Research on practice routine
Even though my thesis largely focuses on practicing and gaining optimal efficiency at working with an instrument it does not concern finding an universal practice routine or researching the best technology of work. My wish is to find out what to practice to get better results and not how to practise. The question of ‘how’ is certainly important, although it depends on too many variables to dare to answer it in the thesis concerning Ševčík specifically.

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1 https://imslp.org/wiki/List_of_works_by_Otakar_%C5%A0ev%C4%8D%C3%ADk
My research approach

The research questions refer to more than one part of music domain. Therefore I have to use a few research disciplines such as historical musicology, music analysis and research through practicing.

I believe that such an approach will result in a deeper understanding of the research question. I intend to use these different areas in conjunction with each other in order to examine:

1. the historical and cultural context in which Ševčík’s exercises could emerge and gain extraordinary popularity
2. the works musical and technical construct
3. the works impact on my performance

Structure of the thesis

Historical and cultural context

In this chapter I investigate who Otakar Ševčík was and how his work became so popular. What was the historical context that allowed him gain such a fame as a pedagogue? Why did he write so many books of exercises and how did he manage to make them so widely spread in the violin teaching circles?

Critics of Ševčík’s method

I want to take closer look at the critical voices concerning Ševčík’s method. Who was against that way of practicing and what exactly was the subject of their criticism?

My experiment and analysis of 40 Variations op. 3

I intend to practice 40 Variations op. 3 and keep a track of the process. I will use two methods to document it:

1. keeping a journal where I’ll be writing down all my impressions regarding the exercises. This is the part which allows me to show my inside view of practicing, feelings that are difficult to show otherwise, like more relaxed fingers, better control of the bow, etc.
2. videorecording of the orchestra excerpts I chose as a sample of the state of my bow technique for the moment. I will record them before beginning my work on 40 Variations, op. 3 and then, after processing the whole book of exercises I will record the same sample again to see if there is any noticeable change in my technique. I will not practice the recorded material between the recording sessions.
Historical context

Ševčík’s life and work

Otakar Ševčík was born in Czech village of Horažďovice on 22 March 1852 as a son of Josef and Josefa Ševčík. His father was a teacher at a local school but had no other connections to music than conducting a choir at a local church. The contact with church hymns and vocal music was enough though for young Otakar to become involved in singing. At the age of six he started taking singing lessons from his father and learned to read music without greater difficulties. A year later (1858) the boy was already singing in church services. Soon Otakar’s father began to teach him how to play piano and not before long the violin. Young Ševčík started progressing very quickly at violin and in year 1861 had his

2 Birth register book of Horažďovice 1847-1856
3 The section below is mostly based on: Burczyk, M. Otakar Ševčík houslový pedagog. Olomouc, 2016. p. 57-113
first public appearance as a violinist in Horažďovice playing the Variations by Kalliwoda.

Although the boy was showing a talent in violin playing, his father did not wish him to pursue formal musical education. In 1862 Otakar was enrolled at the Academic High School, but because of his parent’s financial difficulties he could not count on a big support. The situation become even more difficult when his father got tuberculosis. To stay in Prague Ševčík started to sing in the choir in St Jakub’s church and later in the church in Křižovník. His musical development continued rapidly throughout time. He developed his skills in playing the violin under the supervision of a Prague Conservatory graduate Vilém Bauer (member of the German Theater Orchestra in Prague). With time combining his violin studies with more and more demanding studies at the Academic High School became too difficult. A turn in his life was a meeting with the patron Ferdinand Flammiger. He was enchanted by the singing of a boy who performed as a soloist in a church choir. When Flammiger noticed that Ševčík also has a great talent for playing the violin, he decided to take responsibility for his future musical development. The best place to continue studying was the Prague Conservatory. Josef Ševčík though wasn’t keen on the idea of his son gaining such an unstable profession, but under the influence of hard requests from both Otakar and Flammiger (who promised to financially support the young violinist throughout his studies) Josef approved the plan. Otakar Ševčík’s letter has survived, in which he thanks his father for agreeing to study at the Conservatory:

‘I have not yet received any writing with such fervent joy as this; it was a real balsam on the wound. That was easy for me! I jumped that at the same time as Mr. Flammiger! That is true! I also say: ‘Nach Regen kommt or folgt Sonnenschein’, but in Czech; Now I am as happy as before, a few levels more even, as you can see from my writing!’

He further writes:

‘Now I have to thank you, Dad, for your permission to go to Conservatory. This fulfilled my wishes, and I should only thank you, Dad and Mr. Flammiger. So accept my warm thanks and I certainly promise you that I will always try to achieve the highest possible degree of perfection in my instrument and harmony. I’ve already clung to the violin so much that I can’t even break away from it. And I can’t stop playing, as if we became almost one body and soul’

But getting into the ranks of conservatory students was not easy for Ševčík. It turned out that the next entrance exams would not take place

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4 Šefl, Vladimir: Sborník statí a vzpomínek, Státní nakladatelství krásné literatury, hudby a umění, Praha 1953, p.17 (translated by Angelika Kwiatkowska)
5 Letter from April 6, 1866, materials of the Ševčík College and the Písek Museum stored in the library and archive of the Prague conservatory
until 1867. Director of the Conservatory Josef Krejčí refused to accept Ševčík earlier. It is interesting that he was Ševčík’s superior in the choir in Křižovník. His decision might have been motivated by the will of keeping a good singer in the choir. But Ševčík and Flammiger were not discouraged by such a turn of events. Flammiger used his influences to pressure the school which resulted in the decision of its president, Count Albert Nostitz to allow the boy to pass the exams earlier, in March 1866.

Though Ševčík was excited about violin playing, he didn’t study particularly hard. But with help and encouragement of his father he changed it, as he relates in his letter to prof. Nopp 17th of December 1931 from Boston:

‘How did I come to my life’s diligence and perseverance? Again, it was my father’s fault. After I had given up my grammar school career and was admitted at the conservatoire, all I had to do was to play the violin. I lived like a carefree baron and practiced only two to three hours a day, assuming that this would be enough. During the summer holidays I went home where my father soon found out that I was not working hard at all. One day he woke me up at 6 in the morning. He took me to his study, in which a music stand with Spohr’s violin school was placed next to a small table. My father used to sit down at this table to work on his scores. This time he showed me the studies which I was supposed to practise. The clock struck 9, 10 and finally 11 o’clock. My father kept on writing at his table. I had no choice, I had to keep on practicing, even though I had the feeling that I could not go on. At noon I had lunch with my father. This schedule was repeated daily for a whole week. After a while I did not find practising as hard and sometimes I even practised 8 hours a day. One time I went as far as practising for 12 hours, but most probably this was nonsense!’

This development was not only influential for Ševčík’s own violin playing, but it created an early background for his violin ‘method’. He could experience himself that the teaching material for violinists at the time left a lot to be desired. As he tells us, in an article written much later for Cassell’s Magazine:

‘The violin training in Prague at that time was pursued much on the same lines on which it is conducted in most German Conservatoriums. The students were supposed, by some occult process, to inhale violin method from the air of the institution itself; they were never taught it systematically. Some pupils – sensitive and gifted – really do thrive in this atmosphere. They acquire facility, they themselves hardly know how; by instinct and intuition they play marvellously well, achieving effects which charm their audiences whenever they appear on a public platform. The beauty and intelligence of their interpretation are often incontestable and, in so far as their individual development is concerned, the result of their studies is eminently satisfactory; but when called upon to train others less

6 Nopp, V. Profesor Otakar Ševčík : život a dílo , Brno 1948, s. 23
gifted than themselves they are often at a loss, and sometimes fail signally. What they have never learned they cannot teach."

On the same matter, Ben Hayes has written of Ševčík that:

‘Young Ottokar, very soon after entering the Conservatorium, became conscious that there was something rotten in the state of Denmark. Feeling the necessity for gaining a good technical groundwork, he had endeavored to procure volumes of exercises, which would aid him. This was no easy matter. The Conservatorium pupils, as a rule, had not the means to purchase such works, and they used borrowed copies whenever they could get possession of them, passing them from one to the other, and sometimes copying them out in their entirety. Ševčík has still some faded old MS. concertos which, with infinite care and patience, he at this period of his life copied out note by note from editions taken out of the Conservatorium library or lent by some kind hearted music seller. The library had in former days been well furnished, but 31 technical manuals which it had once possessed had been borrowed continually, and had either been returned in a tattered condition, or very frequently had not been brought back at all; so that when Ottokar entered the institution, works of technical instruction were principally conspicuous by their absence, the shelves devoted to them being empty of nearly everything except Kreutzer Études.’

This was presumably a background from which Ševčík decided to create a violin ‘method’ that would almost thirty years later become famous all over the world.

Young Ševčík’s studies at the Prague Conservatory were finalized on 21 June 1870 when he passed his final exam. Ševčík played Beethoven’s Violin Concerto accompanied by the Conservatory Orchestra and was singled out for special praise over fourteen other candidates.

Thus began his career as a professional violinist. From the year 1870, for three years he worked as a concert master in the Mozarteum Orchestra in Salzburg. In 1872, his first solo recital in Prague was called a great success, and the next year, in 1873, he went to Vienna. There, on the 13th of February of the same year, he made such a favourable impression performing, at the Bösendorfer Hall, works by Paganini, Ernst and Bach, that he was offered a post with the Vienna Comic Opera, remaining there for a year. This was the year in which the young Ševčík would undergo the first surgery on his eye, an attempt to correct a defect in the interior of it. Unfortunately, the surgery was unsuccessful and the problem would continue to affect him for several years.

In the year 1874 Vienna Comic Opera couldn’t manage its financial problems anymore which caused its closure. Around that time Ševčík received a message from his friend from Russia, Hynek Vojáček, asking

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7 Hayes, B. Professor Ševčík’s Life Story, The Career of the Famous Violin Teacher. Article in Cassell’s Magazine (published annually). UK: Cassell and Co. Ltd, 1897
for recommendation for a concertmaster position to the orchestra in Kharkov. Ševčík, who just lost a steady income at the Comic Opera decided to accept the position in Kharkov himself. Unfortunately, as soon as he arrived there, Ševčík was struck by the state of the opera he was supposed to perform at. The institution was in a process of organising and the opera house had not been even constructed yet. Temporary performances took place in random places. The situation in which Ševčík found himself was not enviable. After his cousin’s persuasion, he decided to travel to Moscow. There Ševčík met the famous pianist D. F. Ressel, a friend from the Vienna Conservatory. Together with him Ševčík organized a series of concerts in Russian resorts, such as Kremenchuk on the Dnieper, Jelizavetgrad and Slovjansk in Ukraine. At that time, Ševčík also proved to be a decent conductor.

Concerts in various Russian towns undoubtedly influenced the growth of Ševčík’s popularity.

The head of the Kiev Conservatory was also present at one of them. Ševčík’s playing was received with much enthusiasm and shortly he got an offer for a position as professor of violin. The czech violinist began working at the Kiev Conservatory on September 1, 1875. This institution, founded in 1867, was a branch of St. Petersburg Conservatory. Thanks to that job Ševčík’s financial problems were finally solved.

Ševčík’s pedagogical work did not bring an end to his concert career. At that time he was performing all over Russia and Chechoslovakia. But he was also becoming increasingly aware that the mission of his life was teaching. In 1878, Ševčík decided to write his own teaching materials. Shortly afterwards, The School of Violin technique, op. 1 (containing four books of exercises) was published in 1880. It took him twelve years to write another collection of exercises: The School of Bowing Technique, op. 2 (six books of exercises). Ševčík’s position at the Kiev Conservatory was so strong that the school was reorganized under his influence. The following subjects were introduced into teaching: chamber music, orchestra and also a new class of wind instruments. As a proof of recognition of his merits Ševčík was awarded the Order of St. Stanislav from the hands of Emperor Alexander II. In 1887, he was offered the post of director of the school. However, unwilling to convert to Orthodox Christianity – a condition of the job – he declined the offer and remained a normal teacher.

Early in 1892 Ševčík decided to return to Czechoslovakia and accept a teaching position at the Prague Conservatory (1892 – 1906). During the first entrance exams, in which Ševčík took part as a member of jury, Jan Kubelík was applying for studies. Because he was only twelve years old, all members of the jury were against accepting his candidacy. Ševčík was the only one to protest and insisted on admitting Kubelík to the school. At the same time, he pledged to be fully responsible for the boy’s development. As we know now, Ševčík’s decision was right and Kubelík’s
technical skills and musical talent would bring his teacher great fame. The student’s success helped to spread Ševčík’s reputation as a teacher all around the world and later bore the first fruits of his comprehensive violin education system.

From the very beginning of his work at the conservatory, Otakar Ševčík was teaching with use of his own violin method. At that time, it was not yet on the official list of didactic materials used in the school. Bennewitz, the head of The Conservatory was sceptical toward Ševčík’s materials and said once: ‘With this method you’ll not come to Rome’. But after a short time, Jan Kubičík’s talent flourished. For the first time, Kubelík introduced himself to Prague’s audience in chamber music repertoire, specifically in the interpretation of Saint-Saëns’ Piano Quartet op. 41. A real sensation was his performance of the Wieniawski’s Violin Concerto in F sharp minor, Op. 14. The public was thrilled by the ease with which such a young violinist dealt with difficult technical passages of this piece.

Other successes followed one after another. At that time, other students who graduated from Ševčík’s class were Bohuslav Lhotský (1897), Emanuel Ondříček (1899), Jaroslav Kocian (1901) and also English violinist Marie Hall (1902).

Growing fame brought Ševčík many job proposals from conservatories in Europe and USA (including Munich, Moscow, Royal Academy in London). But he was rejecting all of them and inviting foreign students to Prague instead. Soon though there were much more violinists than The Prague Conservatory could accept. That situation motivated Ševčík to open private school and invite violin students first to Prague and later (1903 – 1906) to Prachatice. From today’s perspective we can say it was kind of prototype of masterclasses that are now spread all over the world.

Antonín Bennewitz retired in 1901 and the position of the head of Prague Conservatory was given to Antonín Dvořák. Otakar Ševčík became then the head of the newly opened violin faculty. His method has become the official basis of the school’s curriculum. While working at the conservatory, he did not neglect his publishing activities. In 1895, Ševčík finished Opus 8 (Exercises for Position Changes); in 1898 Ševčík completed Opus 9 (Preparatory Exercises for Double Stops), and by 1900 he had finished Opus 3 (40 Variations for the Violin), Opus 7 (Preparation for Trill Exercises and Development in Double Stopping) and Opus 6 (Violin School for Beginners). These works were devoted more specifically to matters of technique.

Details concerning issues related to the publication of his works can be found in Ševčík’s letter to the editors of Dalibor magazine from 14 December 1901. The Czech pedagogue describes there:

8Šefl, Vladimir: sborník statí a vzpomínek, Státní nakladatelství krásné literatury, hudby a umění, Praha 1953, s. 34
'I graduated from the conservatory in 1870. Right after my first public appearance in Salzburg (the same year), I realised I was missing a lot of technical perfection. I repeated the whole material I was working on at the conservatory at the time, but the shortcomings of my technique did not disappear. I was not looking for a new suitable teaching material in violin literature maybe because I didn’t have financial resources to do so, so I had no choice but to invent and write various exercises that would be beneficial to my fingers myself.

My work, however, would hardly have taken larger dimensions and certain outlines if I wasn’t thrown abroad for a teaching position, and especially if I wasn’t affected by my eye problem that has caused me full 21 years of continuous, excruciating pain and the only way to forget about it was to dive into an intensive brain work, compiling the violin studies that become the only bright point in this terrible time for me. Research in this field has therefore become my joy, a condition of my life. In 1880 I finished my first work - a school of violin technique with 4 parts, where sufficient material is given not only to the virtuoso to keep his technical perfection on stage, but also to a more advanced student to achieve that perfection. I had no hope, that a work so voluminous would find a publisher, and that’s why I decided to issue my op. 1, dedicated to my teacher Bennewitz, at my own cost. The printing was done by the Leipzig company C. G. Röder in 1880–1881, and commission were taken over by Jan Hoffman’s widow in Prague, B. Koreyow in Kiev, Russia and since 1884 also Hug & Co. in Leipzig and Zurich. The leading foreign conservatories were sent to after printout.

To my great disappointment, my violin method remained unknown in Prague until 1892, when I was called from Russia to the Prague Conservatory. On the other hand, in Germany and everywhere abroad it attracted attention and was suddenly introduced to most conservatories. By 1892, 3,000 copies had been sold abroad, in Prague (according to commission agents) none.

(...) 

After completing Op. 1 I intended to publish similar exercises for beginners, to make the school complete. Soon, however, I was forced to postpone its termination and proceed to write a material I needed the most for my students, to compile the curriculum for the right-hand. There were almost no materials for this training in violin literature. That field was completely neglected. In 12 years, I was done with my second work, and it was published at my own expense 1893–94. The School of Bowing Technique consists of over 4,000 exercises and was printed with Russian, German and French text. This work caused a stir in the violin world and the ‘Four Thousand’ became soon sought-after teaching material for beginners and advanced. As a supplement to op. 2 I published in 1894 op. 3 ‘40 Variations’ using various shears contained in op. 2. In the same year, I happily got rid of my eye ailment and hurried to arrange and print all the manuscript material that I brought from Russia. It was: ‘Violin School for Beginners’, built on a halftone system op. 6 (issued 1900 to 1901); ‘Preparation for Trill
Exercises and Development in Double Stopping’ op. 7 (ed. 1899); ‘Changes of Position and Preparatory Scale Studies in 3 Octaves’ op. 8 (ed. 1895); ‘Preparatory Exercises in Double-Stopping for the Violin’ op. 9 (ed. 1898). All those works are formed as op. 1 ‘School of Violin Technique’. New owner (Bosworth in Leipzig) has now published it in 4 volumes. Volume I. (for beginners) contains op. 6. Volume II. (for less advanced) contains op. 7, 8, 9. Volume III. (for more advanced) contains op. 2 and 3. Volume I is published in 9 languages: English, German, Czech, French, Russian, Hungarian, Italian, Spanish and Danish. I received for this a fee for this of 4½ times greater than at the time Gounod got for Faust.

That’s all I think about my school at the moment. Choose whatever you like for your letter!

Prague, 7 December 1901.

Your sincere devotee

Otakar Ševčík.

In 1904 Antonín Dvořák died and the Prague Conservatory introduced a new director in a person of Karel Knittl who applied many changes in the way the school was organised. Ševčík didn’t agree with those changes and accused them of lowering the Conservatory’s level.

It might be important to say that it was a time of growing activity of Chech’s patriots and supporters of Chech’s independency, Ševčík was not hiding his patriotic views. His open support provoked German publicists and critics to publish texts disregarding Ševčík’s teaching methods. The atmosphere at the Conservatory became hard to stand and Ševčík, feeling unsupported, decided to leave his position there.

In 1909 Ševčík accepted a job in a newly opened master school of violin at the Academy of Music in Vienna and worked there until the end of the First World War. His time in Vienna was also pedagogically successful. His most famous student at the time was Erica Morini. In addition to her, Ševčík’s other successful students were: Vladimir Reznikov, David Hochstein, Rosa Ehrlich, Nora Duesberg, Daisy Kennedy and Franck Williams. Those six performed at a concert in London’s Queen’s Hall on December 12, 1911. They were accompanied by an orchestra conducted by Ševčík himself. They also played on the 14th and 20th December in the Bechstein Hall. The repertoire that Ševčík had prepared for the English tour with them made a great impression on the audience.

The time of the First World War resulted in certain restrictions for Ševčík’s pedagogical activity.

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It influenced in particular his private lessons. His students from abroad had no possibility to travel to participate in the lessons. Ševčík used this period to continue working on other books of exercises. In 1912 he wrote Op. 5 (Preparation for 24 Etudes or Caprices, Op.35, by Jakob Don’t) which still remains in the manuscript. In 1915 Ševčík wrote op. 4 (Expansion of the Fingers), which was published in 1999 by ARCO Iris. Otakar Ševčík then also began work on the School of Intonation on an Harmonic Basis for Violin op. 11. However, this work was not completed until after the war.

In 1912 Ševčík received a honorary title from the Prague Conservatory and the year after he came back to teach there in the new Master School of Violin. Few years later Ševčík got an invitation from his old student Grant Egbert, the head of Ithaca Conservatory, to come to USA and teach there. Ševčík accepted the invitation and from 1921 to 1923 was giving lessons in New York and Chicago.

Ševčík was very active in the musical life. He corresponded with Carl Flesch in Berlin, B. Sinsheimer in Paris and M. Jacobsen in Milan. From 1929 to 1930 he was giving lectures at summer music and art courses in Mondsee near Salzburg, which were an occasion for meetings and debates of the most famous violin teachers of the world. At the age of 79, Ševčík decided to go to his third trip to America. At the turn of the year 1931/32 he again taught in Chicago and New York. The place where he spent the last years of his life was Písek. But his intensive work and active life made him ill. Ševčík was working and writing his exercises till the end but after a long and eventful life Otakar Ševčík died on 18 January 1934, in the small Czech town of Pišek.

**Others about Ševčík’s method**

As we can see Ševčík’s life and career was filled with teaching and travelling. During his long pedagogical work his method had a chance to spread all over the world and gain incredible fame. Thus many members of the musical life at the time like famous violinists, teachers, students or journalists had opinions about Ševčík’s exercises and happily for us, made them public in one way or another.

I will begin with the words of Carl Flesch, the author of the Scale System – a material which is used by most violinists. Flesch doesn’t treat Ševčík as a rival but appreciates his contribution into violin pedagogy. In his work, The Art of Violin Playing, Carl Flesch wrote:

*A characteristic feature of the modern generation of artists born between 1870 and 1900 is their far better technical mastery, greater attention to flawless sound than has been practiced in previous years. Undoubtedly, the basic reason for this change lies in the simplification of mastering the technique introduced by Ševčík. Even vigorous opponents of Ševčík were*
certainly (although unconsciously) influenced by his method, both in the way they practise themselves and in their approach to students, as well as the choice of the material they choose to practise with.'

Hans Sitt, violin teacher and composer said that the exercises ‘are monumental; my daughter practices them daily’.

Professor Stoeving from London Guildhall School of Music and Trinity College suggested that ‘Opus 6 is the foundation of left-hand technique. Opus 1 is the most monumental work ever written for the left-hand, but the crown of all is Opus 2, the Bowing Technique’.

Additionally, in his book Story of the Violin Stoeving suggests that:

‘No one who has given these works a close and unprejudiced perusal can fail to see there a will and a master mind fathoming the depth of violin didactics. It is a whole Darwinian world of finger and bowing development. Unless another comes next with a sort of flying balloon method to carry fiddle students into the promised land, O. Ševčík’s remarkable works may stand a good chance of becoming the violin method of the twentieth century.’

But comments on Ševčík’s method were not only expressed by violin professors. Ševčík’s exercises began to gather an interest of the global artistic community and many prominent newspapers and magazines at the time published articles about him. Praising Otakar Ševčík and his pedagogical system, the Strad magazine for instance proclaimed that:

‘Opus 8, for teaching the positions, is Ševčík’s greatest achievement. There is nothing like this in the violin literature. A book for advanced players and young students alike’.

The Sunday Times (December 1911), offering a critique of a relevant concert and referred to Ševčík and his teaching results, wrote:

‘Professor Ševčík’s concert afforded an interesting demonstration of the results of his methods on a cosmopolitan range of temperaments, the six pupils whom he presented being respectively of Canadian, Galician, Australian, Russian and Austrian nationalities. It is sufficient to say that one and all of them demonstrated that while the Professor’s methods are singularly effective for the cultivation of a brilliant and resourceful

11 Hayes, B. Something New About Ševčík, Three sketches. UK: Bosworth 1912
12 Hayes, 1912: Critics in his Appendix
14 Hayes, 1912: Critics in his Appendix
technique, they are in no way repressive of the individuality of the student, but on the contrary helpful to its artistic development.’15

Even the Pall Mall Gazette, criticising one concert by Ševčík’s students, wrote that:

‘...they [the students] showed, too, that it is possible to combine individuality of character with the highest technical efficiency, and that the most thorough training in the mechanism of violin playing that has yet been conceived is no hindrance to the development of artistic faculties.’16

But it might be important to give the voice to Ševčík’s former students. Their opinions varied greatly, but there is one thing that comes back often in their words and it’s the overly mechanical studies and lack of spontaneity.

Leon Sametini, a director of the violin department of the Chicago Music College:

‘Musical beauty, interpretation, in Sevčik’s case were all subordinated to mechanical perfection. With him the study of some inspired masterpiece was purely a mathematical process, a problem in technic and mental arithmetic, without a bit of spontaneity. Sevčik—with all the deficiencies of his teaching methods, he had one great gift. He taught his pupils how to practice! And—aside from bowing—he made all mechanical problems, especially finger problems, absolutely clear and lucid.’17

Part of this view is also supported by Hayes – an important musician and critic of that time – who wrote in his article Professor Ševčík’s Life Story (Cassell’s Magazine [1897]), that ‘other masters tell the pupil how he should play; Ševčik is almost the only one who can show him how to work’18

David Hochstein, American virtuoso violinist who studied with Ševčík in Vienna said:

‘Sevčik was in many ways a wonderful teacher, yet inclined to overemphasize the mechanical side of the art. He literally taught his pupils how to practice, how to develop technical control by the most slow and painstaking study.’19

15 Hayes, 1912: Critics in his Appendix
16 Hayes, 1912: Critics in his Appendix
17 Martens, F. H. Violin Mastery, Talks with Master Violinists and Teachers, Comprising Interviews with Ysaye, Kreisler, Elman, Auer, Thibaud, Heifetz, Hartmann, Maud Powell and Others. New York, Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1919, p. 54
18 Quoted in Hayes, 1912: 35
19 Martens, F. H. Violin Mastery, Talks with Master Violinists and Teachers, Comprising Interviews with Ysaye, Kreisler, Elman, Auer, Thibaud, Heifetz, Hartmann, Maud Powell and Others. New York, Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1919, p. 54
And that’s what Nathaniel Vallois seems to agree with on the pages of the Strad magazine: ‘The downside of this method, effective as it may be, is that the technical work can become detached from musical context.’

The famous virtuoso Yehudi Menuhin writes about history of the violin pedagogy in his book The Violin and also presents Otakar Ševčík. He writes there:

‘To the most infamous teachers also belongs Czech violinist Otakar Ševčík, who taught at the Prague Conservatory and to whom young violinists from all over the world were coming longing for a career. He used to be called the ‘executioner of violinists’: only a few of his students succeeded because only a few of them were able to withstand the drill; the exercise which he introduced took up most of the day. Pupils ‘recharged’ an abundance of desolate technology. Discipline and thoroughness are essential, but they should not hamper personal expression and temperament, because it harms and turns the student’s energy into something destructive and infinitely boring.’

Ivry Gitlis said in The Strad:

It is, however, possible for Ševčík to be damaging to students. As Shakespeare said, nothing is good or bad, but thinking makes it so. There is no such thing as exercise for exercise’s sake, and repeating the same movements endlessly is as senseless as it is dangerous. Failing to establish balanced relationships between different parts of one’s body can create the cramps and pains which are fatal to the natural development of a violinist.

Both teacher and student should avoid using exercises as a substitute for responsibility and thinking. They are only a means towards an end, the end being music. Thank you Mr Ševčík for trusting our intelligence.

In another issue of The Strad Martin Prchal writes:

‘Unfortunately, Ševčík often seems to be automatically associated with extremely thorough and boring exercises, which apparently were especially designed to spoil the pleasure of playing the violin. This idea often stems from a wrong implementation of Ševčík’s exercises and a lack of knowledge about the work of this man.

The most striking feature of Ševčík’s complete works is their comprehensiveness. There is no movement or technique which is not discussed. This is the strength of Ševčík’s work for every single technical

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21 Menuhin, Y.: Skrzypce i ja, Arkady, Warszawa 2000, s. 156
22 How useful are Ševčík exercises for violinists, violists and cellists? The Strad, 9 March 2018
problem he offers a variety of different exercises which can be applied directly. This makes them unique and beyond comparison.\textsuperscript{23}

I will also bring words of Tadeusz Wroński, Polish pedagogue and violinist. In his book Aparat gry, Wroński compares books of exercises by various authors that deal with an issue of improving the technique of a left-hand. He states:

‘I consider three collections of exercises worthy of attention: Ševčík’s Opus 8,’ Treffsicherheit auf der Violine ‘by Sigfried Eberhardt and a ‘Ćwiczenia zmian pozycji na skrzypcach‘ by Witold Krotkiewski (PWM 1965). I consider all these collections to be ‘timeless’, meaning suitable for learning position changes by beginners and advanced violinists, throughout their whole life or temporarily.’ He continues: ‘The exercises I mentioned are boring, the most boring is probably Ševčík.’

The fact remains that a large part of the opus of the Czech pedagogue is not one of the most interesting compositions, but its goal is completely different. It helps preparing the violinist to play the most beautiful compositions of music literature. In the next part of the mentioned book Wroński follows opus 8, and interprets this question as follows:

‘Changes in position become everyday bread, the easiest thing under the sun, and we pay a small price for it: a few minutes of daily boredom. And for the violinist who loves his work in both terms of art and craftsmanship it will not even be boring. As in the case of Brahms’ Concerto, we would not seek a solution for our technical problems, so we shouldn’t demand musical emotions from Ševčík. But seeing the goal of the work, its usefulness, the joy of eliminating every mistake - all this can be very pleasant. Such as cleansing shower certainly does not give as rich experience as a trip to the Tatra Mountains, but it can be very pleasant anyway!’\textsuperscript{24}

As we see, the reception of Ševčík’s method was in some cases extremely enthusiastic, in some truly negative. To sum it up, what was said was that Ševčík’s exercises are:

- simplifying the process of working on a technical aspect of playing
- a foundation of right-hand and left-hand technique
- comprehensive method for students on every level
- dry, mechanical material detached from musical context
- boring

\textsuperscript{24} Wroński, T. Zagadnienia gry skrzypcowej, cz. III Aparat gry. PWM, Kraków 2015, p. 68-69
My practicing experiment

Now it's the time for the practical part. I decided to proceed a practicing experiment to experience on my own skin if the exercises were of any help for my technique. First, I made a recording of two orchestra excerpts:

- W. A. Mozart – Symphony No. 39 in E flat Major, Finale
- G. Rossini – Overture La Gazza Ladra

I chose them for two reasons. Both of them can expose some problems with right-hand technique and they're also very commonly used at orchestra auditions. Those recordings will be our litmus test for the exercises' effectivity.

Then I began practicing the exercises from Ševčík’s 40 Variations, op. 3. I was working on them in the order they appear in the book. I practiced each of the exercise only once, usually spending around 30 minutes on a single variation, but the exact time varied depending on the difficulties I was encountering and the variation's variants. On average I was going through 4 variations daily.

I’ll try to describe how I was practicing them. First thing I was doing when approaching a new exercise was checking the tempo suggested in the music on metronome. Then I played it through in that tempo once to check how it feels and see if it's even possible for me to do it in the suggested tempo. If it was not, I was slowing down and observed what was the problem. Sometimes it was the whole exercise but other times only some part of it needed corrections. After I found out which aspect of the variation was problematic, I had to diagnose what was wrong in my technique. To do so, I was checking if there's maybe some unnecessary movement disturbing my bow, or tension somewhere in the body. I was often using a mirror to check if I can spot any problem with my posture or anything positioned in a strange way. The solution depended on the problem's character. Sometimes it was simple, for instance when I noticed that my little finger didn't give enough balance to the bow, I just rebalanced my hand and practiced the exercise consciously putting more weight on the little finger until I felt I got used to it. Other times finding the solution required more searching. I was experimenting with changing the angle of the bow, it's contact point, tilting, position of fingers, wrist, elbow, shoulder, relaxing different places, etc. After finding the solution, I was playing until it felt more natural.
I practised the exercises every day and to help myself keeping track of them I kept a practicing journal. I was noting what those particular variations are for, what technique or articulation each of them was supposed to develop/improve. I then described if there were any special difficulties or struggles for my playing.

Practicing through all of the exercises took me 10 days. For the whole period of working on the Variations I was not practicing the previously recorded orchestra excerpts nor any other repertoire. During that time, I played only the exercises. Otherwise, any improvement would not have to be connected to the fact of practicing Ševčík.

After finishing all 40 variations I recorded the excerpts again to see if there were any visible changes in my bow technique. But before I reveal the results of the experiment, I describe all the exercises.

40 Variations

The book opens with a simple theme based on half notes.

![Allegro](image)

Things to take care of:
- keeping a straight bow
- to not bend the bow
- keep the same contact point
- pressure in different dynamics
- smooth changes of the bow directions
- precise string crossing
Variation 1:
- playing at the frog
- retakes at the frog
- effort of the little finger

My personal difficulties:
- flexibility of the hand – especially the thumb
- effort for the little finger and for the biceps

Variation 2:
- spiccato down and upbow
- string crossing in spiccato

Variation 3:
- detaché + retakes upbow in the middle of the bow
- string crossing with upbow retakes

My difficulties:
- softer beginnings of the upbow eight notes
- slight bow shaking at the upbow eight notes
- position of the elbow
- to not bend the bow

Variation 4:
- up and downbow retakes at the frog
- position of the elbow

My difficulties:
- quick downbow retake at the frog
- flexible hand
- stronger little finger
- active hand instead of the wrist
- soft attacks

Variation 5:
- the weight of the bow in whole bow fast détaché in forte
- bow division
- control over taking the bow off in up strokes
Variation 6:
- changes sub. \textit{p} / sub. \textit{f}
- switching between detaché and spiccato

My difficulties:
- keeping the bow straight
- smooth articulation changes without disturbance
- string crossing
- same sounding up and downbow spiccato

Variation 7:
- ease in taking off upbow notes
- switching between legato and staccato

My difficulty:
- ease in taking off the notes in upper half of the bow

Variation 8:
- sixteenth notes at the frog
- balancing with the little finger
My difficulties:
- weight in the sound but without harsh brushing
- string crossing at the frog (correcting the pressure and balance in the hand)

Variation 9:
- siciliana rhythm
- division of the bow
- changes of dynamics

My difficulties:
- soft attack after raising the bow
- control over soft attacks in upper half

Variation 10:
- spiccato + accented slurs
- same length of the notes upbow and downbow
- to not rush at the change from spiccato to accents

My difficulty:
- to not tilt the bow. The stick hits the strings when transitioning from spiccato to accents
Variation 11:
- detaché + spiccato
- string crossing in spiccato

My difficulty:
- to not overuse the wrist at the transition to spiccato – it disturbs the bow’s straight line

Variation 12:
- bow division
- \( f \) detaché at the point of the bow

My difficulties:
- playing fast in \( f \) with the whole bow
- ringing open strings (especially D)

Variation 12:
This variation has six variants.
1. \( p \), down and up in the middle of the bow
   - string crossing in spiccato
- equal sound on all the strings

My difficulties:
- sound and balance on D and G string
- activate the hand instead of the elbow
2. \( p \), up and down in the middle of the bow
- the same as the previous one + difficulty in controlling downbows at the string crossing to the highest string
3. \( f \), at the frog, down and up
- big role of thumb and little finger
4. \( f \), at the frog, up and down
- the same as the previous one
5. spiccato + slur
- attack on upbow spiccato after the slur
6. spiccato \( p \) + detaché \( f \)
- transition from \( f \) to \( p \) – particularly if there’s a bigger string crossing at the same time

Variation 14:
- upbow staccato + detaché (in different dynamics and parts of the bow)

My difficulty:
- to not tilt the bow

Variation 15:
- spiccato, upbow retakes

My difficulties:
- control of the sound, to not hit the string and to not squeak
- upbow string crossing in fast spiccato

Variation 16:
- four-note sautille
- precision in string crossing

Variation 17:
- double-note sautille + hammered half note after an upbow retake

My difficulties:
- string crossing in sautille
- attack of the sforzato half note from the point of the bow (without shaking)

Variation 18:
- spiccato + legato up and downbow
- bow division
- moving the bow to the upper half
My difficulties:
- soft spiccato with a flexible hand
- limit unnecessary movements

Variation 19:
- upbow spiccato + downbow legato

My difficulties:
- position of the thumb – keeping the thumb in the place I’m used to stiffens the whole hand and causes bending the bow
- identical eight notes spiccato. Again, the thumb – my usual way of holding the bow results in hitting the second eight note too hard, the problem disappears after moving the thumb higher on the stick.

Variation 20:
- double-note spiccatto up and downbow

My difficulties:
- to keep fingers closer to each other and not spread them like a rake
- flexibility in the hand and proper position of the elbow
Variation 21:
- whole bow détaché and staccato

My difficulty:
- ringing open D and G string

Variation 22:
- triplets spiccato
- seven variants: different bowings (détaché + spiccato, sautille)

My difficulties:
- to not get tensed after a long playing spiccato
- upbow string crossing

Variation 23:
- détaché + jumping bow
- control over unnecessary movements
- to not tilt the bow

My difficulty:
- other strings ringing when playing the fast whole bow note in f
Variation 24:
- upbow spiccato + double-note upbow sautillé
- light upbow retakes to the middle of the bow

My difficulty:
- keeping jumping sautillé when played upbow

Variation 25:
- ricochet
- position of the elbow and the angle of the bow optimal for the balance of the bow and well sounding both ricochet notes
- spiccato attack after the ricochet – without disappearing and softening

Variation 26:
- precision and control at the point of the bow
- retakes at the frog: long notes, fast retakes)

My difficulty:
- the role of the thumb in playing at the point of the bow
Variation 27:
- sautille with string crossing
- tree variants with different moments of crossing the string
- position of the elbow – to find the optimal one for bow jumping on both strings (despite the string crossing)

Variation 28:
- volant (flying bow stroke)
- same effect in different bow parts

My difficulties:
- to keep all the volant notes the same (also the last note in the slur)
- not to get tensed

Variation 29:
- spiccato + legato in the middle of the bow and at the frog
- transitions between articulations upbow and downbow
- + five variants:
  1. off the string slurs
  2. double-note legato + spiccato
  3. double-note spiccato + accentuated upbow legato
  4. the same as variant no. 2. but faster
5. sautillé

Variation 30:
- staccato volant

My difficulties:
- fast tempo
- position of the elbow
- string crossing to the lower strings

Variation 31:
- upbow portando

My difficulties:
- hard in this tempo
- I accidently change into staccato

Variation 32:
- accents in the point of the bow + jeter
- contrast between heavy accents and light thrown sixteenth notes

My difficulties:
- control of the number of the thrown notes
- rushing the sixteenth notes

Variation 33:
- staccato in upper half

My difficulties:
- hard in such a fast tempo
- lighter but without losing precision

Variation 34:
- string crossing
- twenty-one variants in different dynamics, articulations, parts of the bow, with different patterns of string crossing

Variation 35:
- quick, light bow strokes
- control of putting the bow off and on the string
Variation 36:
- hopping staccato
- keeping the arm relaxed
- angle of the bow (a little bit more away from the body than normally)

Variation 37:
- hopping staccato in the whole bow length

My difficulties:
- to keep control of the bow while quickly using the whole bow length
- to not overuse the wrist

Variation 38:
- string crossing
- similar to variation 34. But this time the string crossing is from the higher to the lower string
- twenty-two variants of different bowings, rhythms and articulations
Variation 39:
- 3-voice arpeggio
- eleven variants: different articulations, different ways of breaking the arpeggios

Variation 40:
- 4-voice arpeggio
- 10 variants: different articulations, different ways of breaking the arpeggios

Some of the variations do not have comments about my difficulties. That’s because they did not cause me any particular problems. I practised them and analysed though in the same way as all the other exercises.

Those exercises present a big variety of bowings and offer help at working on many problems of right-hand technique. The level of difficulty is diverse therefore the exercises can be useful for young pupils, semi-advanced students and advanced violinists. The exercises require though some level of self-awareness so I would not recommend them for complete beginners. The exercises are arranged the way that a new technique is first presented in easier variant and later it comes back in more complex, difficult version.

As my response to the critics of Ševčík’s method I must say it did not seem boring to me. Conscious and focused practicing those exercises is far from mechanical and automatic playing that could be boring. But for me this is the key. As Ivry Gitlis said in previous chapter, practicing Ševčík will do no good if it’s done without thinking. It’s not a magical, miraculous way of fixing everyone’s technique, but a useful guidance helping to find a direction.

I personally feel that 40 Variations helped me improve my technique. They gave me the opportunity to work on problems I was previously aware of, for example tilting the bow, overusing the wrist to compensate missing flexibility in the hand, and others. But they also exposed some difficulties I was not aware of before like my problem with upbow sautilé, position of the thumb for balanced spiccato or upbow string crossing. In the introduction I mentioned my wish of assembling a set of
technical skills that would be ready to use in any situation. I definitely did not achieve that yet but fixing all the aspects of bow technique in 10 days is not a reasonable goal. I see it rather as a life-long journey and thanks to the experiment I’m closer to achieving my goal than before.

**Recordings**

But is it possible to hear any difference in my playing? It’s time to compare the recordings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>W. A. Mozart</th>
<th>W. A. Mozart</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Symphony No. 39 in E flat Major, Finale</td>
<td>Symphony No. 39 in E flat Major, Finale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>before</em></td>
<td><em>after</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- accidental noises</td>
<td>- less noises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ringing open strings</td>
<td>- no open strings ringing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- lack of lightness – especially in the moment with the slurs</td>
<td>- overall lighter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- rhythmically uneven slurs</td>
<td>- rhythmically more even – I don't slow down for slurred string crossing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- stiff hand while playing sixteenth notes in the lower half of the bow (after the slurs)</td>
<td>- more relaxed hand in the sixteenth notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- imprecise string crossing</td>
<td>- better string crossing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- stiff hand in slurred string crossing</td>
<td>- more relaxed hand in slurred string crossing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>G. Rossini</th>
<th>G. Rossini</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overture La Gazza Ladra</td>
<td>Overture La Gazza Ladra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>before</em></td>
<td><em>after</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- disturbed upbow accents – noises and uncontrolled hitting</td>
<td>- more precise accents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- more stable tempo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- lack of dynamics changes
- tempos changing depending on the articulation
- stiffening hand after a longer while of playing off the string
- pressing the bow too much and stiffening the hand while trying to make a crescendo
- still stiffening the hand while making crescendo, but much less than before
- overall lighter and with more ease

There are differences. I’m reminding that I didn’t practice the excerpts between the recording sessions so the differences are a result of only practicing the 40 Variations, op. 3.

Conclusions

This project helped me gaining deeper knowledge about Otakar Ševčík and his work. I got first-hand experience of practicing his exercises, analysing them and thoroughly following the 40 Variations, op. 3. That resulted in better understanding what the exercises are for in general and what can I, in particular earn from them. This is useful on two levels: for my own skills as a violinist, always seeking for improvement in my playing, and for my future career as a teacher. Now I know what exercises to recommend for developing particular techniques to my students, but I also know where exactly find help for my own problems.

I’m glad that I could debunk the myth of Ševčík ’s exercises being so horribly boring and arduous. I now know they can be quite pleasant and even inspiring!

This project allowed me to not only gain theoretical knowledge but also motivated me to improving my right-hand technique. I proved on myself that those exercises work, and the visible effect of the successful experiment are the attached recordings.
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Appendix

List of works by Otakar Ševčík

- Op.1, School of Violin Technique
  - Book 1: Exercises in 1st Position (1881)
  - Book 2: Exercises in the Exercises in the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th positions. (1881)
  - Book 3: Exercises on the shift combining the various positions. (1881)
  - Book 4: Exercises in double, triple, and quadruple stoppings, pizzicato, and harmonics. (1881)

- Op.2, School of Bowing Technique -- 6 books, published 1894 by Hug (Prague branch).

- Op.3, 40 Variations - from the Violin Studies (1892, published 1893)


- Op.4, Expansion of the Fingers, 1999. (This work remained in manuscript until compiled and introduced by Prof. J. Folty’n of the Prague Conservatoire in 1999). Prague: ARCO IRIS.
  
  41 examples, and the stretching of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th fingers.

- Op.5, Preparation for 24 Etudes or Caprices, Op.35, by Jakob Dont (1912) (This work also remained in manuscript until it was later revised by J. Kocian.)

- Op.6, Violin School for Beginners (1904)
  
  Seven books of exercises based on the half tone system, including the Little Ševčík, and the melodic notes as the supplement for Op. 6, 1909.
  
  1 – 5: Exercises in the 1st position.
  6: Exercises preparatory to the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th positions.
  7: 5th position, combining the various positions.

  
  1. Exercises in the 1st position.
  2. Exercises in the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th positions.

  
  Haidee and Helen Boyd’s transcription for the violoncello, 1929. Leipzig: Bosworth.

  
  Exercises in seconds, thirds, fourths, sixths, octaves, tenths, and harmonics.
  

  
  The girl with blue eyes (dedicated to J. Kubelík). = Holka modrooka
  
  When I used to come to you (dedicated to J. Kubelík).
  
  Untitled (dedicated to J. Kubelík).
Fantasy
Bretislav Furiant (dedicated to J. Kubelík)

  
  Op. 10 and 10a were based on national songs and popular social songs in Czechoslovakia.


- Op.12, School of Double Stopping (manuscript).

- Op.13, School of Arpeggios and Modulations (manuscript).

- Op.14, School of Chords (manuscript).

- Op.15, School of Flageolets (Harmonics) and Pizzicatos (manuscript).
  

  
  45 pieces in 2 parts, with technical studies

  Part 1, 1-30, Introduction to Solo Playing

  1. Rode: Melody, Concerto No.6, 1st Movement. (Styles of bowings on eighths)

  2. Rode: Introduction to Rondo Concerto No.6. (Styles of bowing on eighths in 6/8 time)

  3. Fiorillo: Andante, Etude No.13. (Shifting of position in various forms)

  4. Wieniawsky-Warlamoff: Romance from Souvenir de Moscou. (Bowing styles on triplets)

  5. Ševčík: Andante on the G string, Op.10/5. (Rhythmic studies)


  7. Paganini: Theme from Non piú mesta. (Repeated raising of the bow at the up-stroke)

  8. Mendelssohn: Melody in G, Concerto E-minor I. (Shading and nuance of the tone)

  9. Rode: Adagio, Concerto No.7. (Studies on the G String)
10. Rust: Gigue. (Bowing style Spiccato)
11. Beethoven: Melody G-minor, Concerto in D-major III. (Rhythmical exercises in 6/8 time)
13. Wieniawski: Theme original from Op.15. (Drawn and sharp notes by turns)
14. Ševčík: Introduction to the natural and artificial harmonic tones.
15. Spohr: Introduction to I. Movement, Concerto No.2.
16. Ernst: Melodic Scene in A-major from the III. Concerto in F-sharp minor.
17. Rode: Introduction and Melody to the Concerto No.7-III. (on the dotted rhythm)
18. Molique: F-major Melody, Concerto No.5-I. (Bowing styles accompanied by 2nd violin)
20. Spohr: Marchscene, Concerto No.8-III.
21. Viotti: Melody with Double-Stop Passages, Concerto No.18-I.
22. Wieniawski: Cantabile A-major Concerto 1-I. (Rhythmical exercises in triplets)
23. Vieuxtemps: Theme from the Fantasia Appassionata. (Softness of the tone)
24. Paganini: Theme from I Palpiti. (Shading of the tone)
25. Viotti: Rondo with Double-Stop Passage, Concerto No.28.
26. Wieniawski: Theme from Carneval Russe.
27. Molique: Ricochet-Scene from the Concerto No.5-III.
28. Ernst: Andante from the Hung. Melodies. (Graded Studies of tone)
29. Wieniawski: Melody with Octaves from the Concerto No.1-III.
30. Paganini: 7 Variations from the Carneval of Venice. (Rhythmical Studies)
Part 2, 31-45, Introduction to Virtuoso Playing

1. 31. Vieuxtemps: Serenade A-major on the G-string, Concerto No.1-III.
3. 32. Beriot: Melody in Octaves, Concerto No.9-I. (Independence of the fingers)
4. Tartini: Larghetto from the Devil’s Sonata. (Independence of the fingers)
5. 33. Ševčík: Theme in Octaves Op.10/4. (Preparation for the sautille and glissando)
6. Paganini: Secondary Subject form the Concerto No.2-II.
7. 34. Beriot: Adagio from the Concerto No.7. (Chain-trills)
8. Laub: Melody and Octaves from the Polonaise in virtuoso form. (Study of Nimbleness)
9. 35. Tartini: Largo and Allegro from the G-minor Sonata. (Double-stops and suppleness of the wrist)
10. 36. Beriot: Air varié No.1. (Double-stops and Chords in virtuoso form)
11. 37. Rust: Gigue for Solo Violin. (Pizzicato with the left-hand)
12. Rust: Courante. (Suppleness of wrist in crossing two and three strings)
13. 38. Spohr: Larghetto in Double-Stops. (Third double-stops in virtuoso form)
14. 39. Vieuxtemps: Andante sostenuto from the Concerto No.2 (Pliancy of Bowing)
15. 40. Wieniawski: Scherzo -Tarantelle
16. 41. Sarasate: Gipsy-Melodies
17. 42. Ernst: Hungarian Melodies
18. 43. Bazzini: Dance of Gnomes
19. 44. Paganini: Moses-Fantasy
20. 45. Paganini: Witches Dance


Op. 16 — Op. 21 cover two violin parts and the piano score.


Op. 23, Chromatics in all positions (Manuscript).

Op. 24, Left-hand Pizzicato with Simultaneous Right-hand Arco Technique (manuscript). (released only recently)


Four books of exercises.

Unnumbered: Analytical Studies for Concerto in a, Op. 53 by Antonín Dvořák (manuscript). (The copyright of this Ms. is owned by Simrock, Berlin.)

Sheet music examples of the recorded excerpts