

APPROACHES TO THE AMPLE-FORM WORKS IN MUSIC SCHOOLS

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SUMMARY. Working on ample-form creations is a process consisting of certain phases, which a professor must go through with his/her students. In order to be able to approach this type of work, the student must be instructed by his/her professor to take the following steps: 1.Practice and study the scales and the crosshatches thoroughly, so that the left-hand and right-hand techniques are equally developed; 2.Become familiar with the studies that contain crosshatches from the concerto, which will be approached later. In addition to the previously mentioned steps, we emphasize the fact that studying smaller works is also very important. Prior to exercising the concerto, the professor must explain to the student what an ample form is and what the specifics of this form are, that is its phrasing mode and its method of interpreting hatches, accents, nuances, the melodic course and rhythm. To help the student study the work more easily and approach it correctly from an interpretative and stylistic point of view, the professor should present him/her with information regarding the composer's biography, the style of the concerto and the period in which it was composed.

Keywords: Ample-form, music school, violinist, left-right hand techniques, steps of studying.

Due to the fact that performing ample-form creations requires thorough preparation and impeccable technique, beginners (students of musical schools) find this type of work challenging, which generates all sorts of problems. Overcoming all obstacles successfully is only possible if one prepares systematically and thoroughly before commencing the study of ample-form works.

These obstacles become visible when new interpretation tasks are created, such as understanding the ample form as a whole, sensing the connection between seemingly separated episodes of the work and being able to combine various types of interpretative techniques in the given work, which include musical images that contrast each other from the point of view of character and means of expression.

Beginning the study of ample-form creations represents a determining phase in the future musical and technical development of the students.

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Practice shows us that, although they study a significant number of works, the students are often unprepared for such a task. The biggest problems one encounters are poor interpretative techniques and rather limited musical thinking. It is therefore necessary for the students to develop the ability to see the studied material as a musical language and form personal ideas about the work, its character, its melody, its rhythmic and dynamic plan, its emotional coloring and its shape.

In the absence of a deeper understanding and conceptualization of the work, its interpretation will be meaningless and constitute nothing more than a simple and primitive lecturing of the musical text. A major deficiency when studying ample-form works is represented by the unequal development of various types of interpretative techniques. The professor often pulsates more and emphasizes aspects of the interpretative technique that are already very familiar to the student, while neglecting to exercise, polish and work the other elements. The left-hand and right-hand techniques must be equally developed. We would like to point out the fact that one can often notice an underdevelopment of the right-hand technique, which is to say that the quality of the emitted sound, of the accents and hatches leaves much to be desired.

An important role in solving this problem is played by the thorough practice of the scales and of the studies. Studying these two elements helps us develop qualities such as a clear, soft, silky, balanced sound, an indistinguishable passing to positions, a perfect intonation in scales and the logical emphasis of dynamic nuances, accents, phrasing and impeccable crosshatches.

Ample-form works (such as concertos or sonatas) are very good means through which the students can display all of their creative capabilities. Nonetheless, the chosen work must correspond with the level of musical and technical development of the student. When working on previously studied miniature works, the student must master the notion of musical form and the bases of the logical artistic phrasing. In selecting these pieces and studies, we must take into consideration the ample-form work which will follow later. In this way, to help develop the student's technique, we will select the studies that contain hatches from the concerto, which he/she will perform in the near future.

For example: In the first part of Antonio Vivaldi's Concerto in A minor, we often find the following rhythmic formula (an eighth and two sixteenths + an eighth and two sixteenths), which will be studied and practiced by students with the help of the studies. His formula can be found both in G. Volfart's studies (Study No. 4) and in G. Kaizer's studies (Study No. 3). These studies are usually performed very phlegmatically by the students (without dynamics or accents), who often make erroneous allocations of the bow. The eighth does not gain an active, pregnant beginning, and the sixteenths from the lower part of the bow sound louder

than the ones which are performed at the tip of the bow. There are also cases when the students interpret the sixteenths with an ampler sound than the eighths. The bow must be correctly used proportionally, which means that for the eighths we use the entire bow and for the sixteenths we use half of the bow, in the upper part or the lower part (talon). Pay attention to the rhythmic accuracy – the sonorous equality of the sixteenths with the eighth belonging to that rhythmic group is not respected.

If these studies are exercised and practiced in order to be applied later in Antonio Vivaldi's Concerto in A minor, one will have to work on the rhythmic formulae in different parts of the bow, with different nuances, with a correct allocation of the bow, using various accents (from soft to energetic accents), while simultaneously combining the correlation between the power of the eighth note with its two sixteenth notes – this will prevent the emergence of new obstacles during the study of the concerto. For the same purpose, we can recommend "Gavot" by Martini. The work on this particular piece helps in learning how to correctly distribute the bow and to execute the soft accents. The metric correlation of the sixteenth notes and eighth notes in this piece (Gavot) corresponds with that of the eighth and sixteenth notes from the first part of the Concerto in A minor by A. Vivaldi. Although the same rhythmic pattern persists in this concerto, it shouldn't be played in the same way, from a dynamic standpoint, so as to make the interpretation expressive and dynamic. In Vivaldi's Concerto in A minor we must draw the attention on the thematic material, which has a different character in the various episodes from the first part. Hence, the rhythmic and melodic formula (one eighth and two sixteenth notes) that can be heard at the beginning of the energetic, solemn concerto later turns into a softer fragment, more refined and delicate, in *piano*. Before starting to study ample-form works, it will be very useful to work on several small pieces, but of a different character. Assimilating and playing these miniatures develops the students' ability to learn a more significant number of musical pieces. Most importantly, they also gain the ability to pass from one musical piece to another, each of them with their own various artistic, musical and technical problems to be faced. All these musical works must be chosen according to the student's own abilities and degree of training. The violin variations are also very useful for the development of the students' technique and musicality.

Further on, I will try to describe the preparation stage for the method of studying Bach's A Minor Concerto (the first part). This work has earned itself a significant place in the teaching practice of music schools for children.

The Concerto in A Minor by J. S. Bach has a high-class melodiosity, a harmonic clarity and a laconic style. The musical idea is very exact, the piece is lively, energetic. All these qualities are so attractive that this concerto is not played only by virtuoso violinists, but also by children, who are not very familiar

with the character of Bach's music, yet study it with great interest and passion. When you start studying the concerto, it can be useful to give your students some information regarding this composer, for instance some biographical data and useful insight about his main works. Regarding the A Minor Concerto, we can say that it is one of his early instrumental works, written in a period when he resided in Cheoten (1717-1723). During this period, he also wrote the Concerto in E Major for Violin, the Concerto in D Minor for Two Violins, Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin, and so on. We should explain the musical character of the first part of the Concerto, so that the students can differentiate the three basic themes: - the 1st theme: lively, resolute; the 2nd theme: soft, lyrical, melodious; - the 3rd theme: gracious and danceable.

The technical elements that the student must master are: firstly, the use of the *détaché* stroke with great ease, in all the parts of the bow and, at the same time, attaining a varied sonority – from a lyrical, melodious exposition, which resembles a *legato* – to a lively, energetic *détaché*.

Working on perfecting the *détaché* stroke is essential in obtaining an equal sound, with the bow heading both downwards and upwards. Of course, one must not ignore the character of this manner of attack. It is common knowledge that, during the interpretation of a *détaché* stroke with the bow headed downwards, the power of the sound decreases noticeably at the end of the bow. If the bow is not properly adjusted when it reaches the top, then, during its upward movement, we will have a rough sound and it will be much too strong, dynamically speaking. This is why, an important factor in this case is the auditory control, which helps us to correctly adjust the distribution of the right hand's weight on the bow.

The skillfulness in playing the strong accents with the bow going upwards is equally important, as, when we interpret the strokes with the bow upwards, on a strong accent – usually, the correlation between strong and weak accents is infringed or disturbed. In order to master these procedures, we recommend the studies of I. Mazas, namely Studies no. 5 and 6 or similar studies by other composers. In Study no. 5 by I. Mazas one must aim at executing a large *détaché* stroke, neatly opened, with no auxiliary sounds, carried out with smooth, free movements of the right hand and in coordination with the movements of the left hand. In the working process with the students, one must explain the structure of the study and relate it to the correct, prosodic accentuation of the musical piece. In the first 10 measures, it is not necessary to emphasize each group of four sixteenth notes through accents. In this study, the students get acquainted with the sequential-type movements starting with the third measure, which is also highlighted by the means of accents.

After analyzing the professor's explanations, the students will be able to execute a more logical and much clearer musical phrasing. In I. Mazas' No. 6 study, an emphasis will be made on the second, the fourth and the sixth

measures, particularly on the hard time signatures played with the bow oriented upwards, which must sound as strong and forceful as the hard time signatures from measures 1 and 3, which are interpreted with the bow oriented downwards. To produce accents with a qualitative sound, one will use the accelerated movement, simultaneously applying a light and elastic pressure with the help of the right-hand poignier. This way, the application of excessive pressure on the strings will be prevented.

In order to practice the accents, we can approach F. Mazas's No. 2 study. The beginning of each forth belonging to this study requires a soft and expressive accentuation, equally divided between the bow's upward and down movements. It is very important that one studies the combinations of *legatos* and *detaches* thoroughly. Any major errors occurring while executing these combinations of crosshatches become easily apparent because the separated sounds are sometimes louder than the ones connected through legato and break the smooth course of the melody. The use of auditory control and the formation of the habit to correctly allocate the bow and the bow pressure on the strings in correlation with the sonorous character demanded by the work, help the student avoid erroneous accents. To become familiar with the different constructions of crosshatches, one can analyze Dont's studies (studies 6, 7 and 10). A major improvement in the use of these crosshatches can be obtained by studying pieces such as J. S. Bach's "Gavot", Vivaldi's Concerto or A. Fiocco's Allegro. The intonation's stability and the mastery of the five violin positions are essential for the practicing of Bach's Concerto. When studying this concerto, educating the rhythm plays a particularly important role.

The stylistic features of Bach's music require that particular attention is paid to the rhythm, which emphasizes the content of the melody. While performing, special attention will be paid to the second and the fourth sound in each group of sixteenths. Orienting the bow upwards will prevent the contraction of time signatures. The tendency to speed up also appears in the group of sounds that are united through the *legato* crosshatch. We can execute these groups first through the *detache* crosshatch, and then through the *legato* crosshatch, thus obtaining an equal rhythm. In Bach's "A minor Concerto", the first musical theme has a strong character and must be played with an active and accentuate crosshatch. Very often, the students' desire to play in a dynamic and active manner makes them apply excessive pressure on the strings and gives the theme a cloddish character. It is necessary that one regains the active and free movement of the right hand. The eighth of the auftakt must not be executed curtly, like the sixteenth with a subsequent pause. The duration of the eighth must be played end-to-end, with a slight decrease in the power of the sound before the fourth. A major role within the concerto is played by the following rhythmic formula: the first sixteenth represents the hard time signature, but it usually sounds too

harsh, because it is being played with the separated bow together with the three sixteenths united by a *legato*. The sounding of the sixteenths united by *legato* often suffers from rhythmic inaccuracy. One needs to incline oneself towards the singing character of the separated formula and the improvement of the rhythmic inaccuracy of the movements of fingers in the left hand, especially when playing the three sixteenths united by *legato*. The special warmth, the singing character of the second theme and its development are all imposed by the procedures used to obtain a very expressive performance.

The third theme, delicate in nature, poses serious difficulties from a rhythmic and dynamic point of view. The thirty-second notes are usually played more rapidly than they should be and are transformed in *förslag* ("before-hit" ornament) towards the A sound, which, in turn, acquires a useless accent and will be perceived as the hard time signature of the measure.

We emphasize the fact that the normal combination of fingers – the changing of the first finger from F to D sharp – often employs an unwanted stop, in which the E chord gets touched. When using this combination of fingers, it is necessary to place the first finger on both chords.

In I. Ioachim's version, the *staccato* crosshatch is mentioned. However, the use of this crosshatch is not recommended, because it does not correspond to the nature of the work. When working on the concerto, it is important that the students are presented with the construction of the sequence, which was often used by Bach. This will help them to clearly understand the musical form and the logical phrasing of the work and will facilitate the retention of the musical text. Since the students must also know the part of the accompanying piano, they will be aware of the fact that the melody of the violin and that of the accompaniment are linked.

The musical schools' syllabus contains the first parts of the concertos of G. B. Viotti, P. Rode, L. Spor and of other late 18th century – early 19th century composers. The form and musical language of these concertos differ greatly from those of Vivaldi and J. S. Bach. The form of the Allegro used in the first parts of these concertos, contains a much larger set of musical images. When working on these concertos, the students must execute new assignments. The presence of high positions, of double notes and of *spicato* crosshatches, forces the professor to start preparing and developing the students' technique very early on. For example, the studies of Mazas, Dont and Kreutzer help the students develop both the left-hand and right-hand techniques. The scales and the double notes are also of great help to us.

To perfect and improve on the small details of the work, one needs to divide it into smaller fragments. During the working period, it is crucial that the student forms a clear image of the concerto and of the nature of the music. To the students of music schools, we can recommend the following repertoire of concertos, which are often used by these institutions:

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Concerto in A minor by A. Vivaldi – part 1
Concerto in A minor by A. Vivaldi – part 2 and 3
Concerto No. 23 by G. B. Viotti – part 1
Concerto in A minor by J. S. Bach– part 1
P. Rode's Concertos 7 and 8.

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