

A PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH TO EUGÈNE YSAÏE'S

SIX SONATAS FOR SOLO VIOLIN, OP. 27

by

ANDREY CURTY

(Under the direction of David Starkweather)

ABSTRACT

This paper takes a pedagogical approach to Eugène YsaÏe's *Six Sonatas for Solo Violin*, Opus 27, in particular and, more generally, an overview of YsaÏe's place in his own time and in ours as violinist, teacher, and composer. Chapter 1 includes biographical information about YsaÏe, as well as a description of the overall composition and conception of the six sonatas. Chapters 2 through 7 examine each individual sonata regarding what inspired the compositions, information about their dedications, and a brief overview of the structure of each movement. Finally, a pedagogical guide offers preparatory exercises and suggested practice techniques for the most challenging passages in each movement. This serves as a practical guide for violinists interested in learning and performing these sonatas.

INDEX WORDS: Eugène YsaÏe, violin, analysis, pedagogy

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DEDICATION

This document is dedicated to my mother, Mileva Djurovic Kurti, who inspired and nurtured my love of music and the violin.

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CHAPTER 1

EUGÈNE YSAÏE AND OPUS 27

Introduction

Eugène Ysaÿe was one of the bridges between the 19th and 20th centuries in terms of violin technique. He was a master interpreter of the music for violin written before his time and by his contemporaries. In his own compositions, Ysaÿe began expanding violin technique by experimenting with new techniques, exploring every aspect of the violin including register, texture, timbre, and other sound effects. Although Ysaÿe's music exceeded the contemporary boundaries of the violin repertoire in this regard, one of the most important aspects of his compositions is how idiomatic they are for the violin. His *Six Sonatas for Solo Violin*, Op. 27 belong in the repertoire of every concert violinist, although they are often overlooked. They demand technical virtuosity but do so with the utmost understanding of violin technique. For this reason, they also serve as effective tools of study for the violinist.¹

Ysaÿe's use of chordal texture (double, triple, and quadruple stops) trains the violinist's ear and develops the violinist's technique to highlight the melody in complex passages. After playing Ysaÿe's music, it is much easier to successfully play pieces by other composers that use more than one voice on the solo instrument. The concept of theme and accompaniment is primary in Ysaÿe's sonatas. Study of these pieces will

¹ Henry Roth, liner notes from *Eugène Ysaÿe: Violinist and Conductor*, (Sony Classical, 1996), 7.

improve a violinist's interpretation of older music and serve as a solid foundation for learning modern music.

Ysaÿe's sonatas are also excellent for the study of phrasing. His expressiveness as a performer and composer is reflected in his music. Although the passages are often difficult and sometimes have a very complex texture, the phrasing is idiomatic. Besides providing the opportunity to study the delineation of two voices on the violin, Ysaÿe's sonatas contain passages featuring special timbres and sound qualities which the performer must employ in his or her interpretation.

In short, Ysaÿe's sonatas develop the violinist's ability to play double, triple, and quadruple stops, to make successful usage of string crossings, to clarify musical phrasing in complex textures, and to use different timbres to achieve contrasts between and within passages.

This chapter presents biographical information regarding the composer's life and art. It also provides details about the overall compositional concept of the six sonatas as a whole. The following six chapters take the sonatas each in turn, beginning with background about Ysaÿe's inspiration in writing them and information about their dedications. In order to help the reader study the sonatas, a brief structural description is included for each movement, pointing out the most important features. This document then includes a thorough guide to each sonata's performance, with preparatory exercises for some of the most awkward and challenging passages.

Biographical Information

Eugène Ysaÿe was born in 1858 in Liège, Belgium, to a musical family. His father Nicholas taught him to play violin at a young age. When he was seven years old, he was able to take a seat in his father's orchestra. That same year he began studying at the Conservatory in Liège, and by the time he was thirteen Ysaÿe was able to play repertoire for violin including pieces by Paganini, Bach, Beethoven, Wieniawski, and the fellow Belgian violinist Vieuxtemps.²

In 1873, Ysaÿe won the "Premier Prix" at the Liège Conservatory where the Director wrote in the margin of his score, "As a bird sings, so he plays violin." In 1876, Ysaÿe moved to Paris where he met Vieuxtemps, Franz Liszt, Anton Rubenstein, César Franck, and Camille Saint-Saëns. It was at this time that he began composing. In 1879, after hearing Ysaÿe play, Benjamin Bilse, conductor of the orchestra at the Konzerthaus in Berlin, offered him the position of concertmaster in his orchestra, which Ysaÿe accepted. That same year, he toured Russia for the first time with Rubenstein. Bilse soon offered Ysaÿe a position as concertmaster of the newly formed Berlin Philharmonic, but Ysaÿe turned it down and returned to Paris where he established himself as a member of the musical elite. In 1886, Ysaÿe married and accepted a position at the Brussels Conservatoire. Two years later, he began his first string quartet and took over the musical directorship of the "Twenty Club," an association which played an important role in the musical history of Brussels.³

² Antoine Ysaÿe and Bertram Ratcliffe, *Ysaÿe: His Life, Work, and Influence*, (St. Clair Shores, MI: Scholarly Press, 1978), 15.

³ *ibid.*, 54.

In 1889, Ysaÿe traveled to Italy, Vienna, and London. His performances between 1891 and 1895 met with great success throughout Europe. Towards the end of 1894, Ysaÿe first began to experience pain in his left hand, but this did not stop him from playing. He toured the United States for the first time. When he returned to Brussels he started “Ysaÿe Concerts,” in which contemporary Belgian and French compositions were featured, with Ysaÿe serving as both conductor and violinist. In 1900, the pain in Ysaÿe’s left hand was so severe that he was forced to stop playing during a rehearsal. Due to the pain, Ysaÿe turned his attention to conducting from 1900 to 1905, though he continued to play the violin. In 1912, Ysaÿe again took a position at the Brussels Conservatory.

When the First World War broke out in 1914, Ysaÿe decided to leave Belgium for England. He was then offered a position in the United States as conductor of the Cincinnati Orchestra, which he accepted and held for the next four years. In 1918 he returned to Belgium and resumed many of his previous activities, including the Ysaÿe Concerts and teaching private lessons. Ysaÿe continued to concertize in Europe, playing his last concert in 1930. His opera, *Pierre li houïeu*, was completed soon after, and given its premiere at the Theatre Royal in Liege a few weeks before his death in 1931.

Ysaÿe as Stylist

Ysaÿe’s playing influenced three generations of violinists. Abandoning the old style of Wieniawski and Sarasate, he combined rigorous technique and forceful sound with creative freedom as an interpreter. He is regarded as extremely important in the development of the modern style of violin playing, representing a synthesis of the

Franco-Belgian style of playing. To Ysaÿe, virtuosity was indispensable, but he used it for expressive purposes and to recreate the passion of the music, not to make an exhibition of his skill.⁴

Ysaÿe as Composer

Ysaÿe's scoring sometimes lacks subtlety, but his works are full of harmonic originality. His *Poème élégiaque* preceded and inspired Chausson's *Poème*, and expressionist tendencies can be heard in pieces such as *Exil* for string orchestra. Ysaÿe was modest about his own compositions and rarely played or conducted them. He composed a number of sonatas for violin when he was a young man which he later destroyed, considering them to be without merit. However, his witty *Caprice d'après l'Étude en forme de valse de Saint-Saëns*, a piece of sustained virtuosity, became famous. The *Six Sonatas for Solo Violin*, Op. 27 and *Sonata for Violoncello Solo*, Op. 28 written after his return from the United States, bear witness to Ysaÿe's art. The harmonic originality and virtuosity of these works makes it likely that he was composing with the next generation of violinists in mind.

Following his contacts with César Franck, Ysaÿe wrote a dozen pieces of a rhapsodic character, which are technically engaging and possess a poetic musicality. "There is here the material for several concertos," he once confided to his son Antoine, the editor of his works.⁵

⁴ *ibid.*, 222.

⁵ Antoine Ysaÿe, *Six Sonatas for Solo Violin*, Op. 27 (Brussels: Schott Freres, 1952), 4.

Introduction to Opus 27

Ysaÿe was inspired to write *Six Sonatas for Solo Violin, Op. 27* in 1923 after hearing violinist Joseph Szigeti playing a concert of music by Bach.⁶ He retired to his room, leaving instructions that he was not to be disturbed, except that meals were to be brought to him. Over the course of the next twenty-four hours he sketched out the six sonatas of Opus 27.⁷ For these sonatas, Ysaÿe had two purposes in mind. First, he wished to complete a cycle of six works for unaccompanied violin in the manner of Bach's music for solo violin. Secondly, he wanted to tailor each sonata to a different virtuoso, capturing something of each performer's style in the piece for whom it was written. The dedicatees included extremely distinguished names -- Szigeti, Kreisler, Enesco, and Thibaud -- as well as two whose fame has not lasted -- Matthew Crickboom and Manuel Quiroga.⁸

With reference to their titles, the sonatas of Opus 27 can be seen as three groups of two sonatas. The titles of the movements of Sonatas 1 and 4 are derived from the Baroque period (*Grave, Fugato, Allemanda* and *Sarabande*, among others). Sonatas 2 and 5 have programmatic titles (*Obsession, Malinconia; L'Aurore, Danses Rustique*). Finally, sonatas 3 and 6 are single-movement works.

Upon first hearing, one notes a love of melody, despite the extreme technical requirements. References to Ysaÿe's beloved Bach are as innovative as they are frequent. The harmonic language includes free movement between major and minor.

⁶ Margaret Campbell, liner notes from *Six Sonatas for Solo Violin, Op. 27*, Oscar Shumsky, violin, (Nimbus, 1982), 5.

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ Horst A. Scholtz, liner notes from *Six Sonatas for Solo Violin Op. 27*, Leonidas Kavakos, violin, (ARTE NOVA Musikproduktions GmbH, 1999), 3-5.

Ysaÿe recapitulates two centuries of Western violin tradition, yet there is always striving for new sounds. These are compositions which at once survey the past while conveying the future. The pizzicati in the left hand and the percussive beats in *Sonata No. 5* make a clear reference to Bartók.⁹ On the whole, a compendium of sentiments can be found -- descriptions of nature following the Romantic tradition of Franck, and harmonies which are indebted to Debussy.

Opus 27 was inspired by Ysaÿe's friends, musically reflecting their origins, stories and personalities. However, the work also expresses much about Ysaÿe, most obviously his immense love of music and the violin. Even though he was one of the most advanced virtuosos ever, Ysaÿe was still able to find ways to challenge himself as a performer in Op. 27. Even today, this music is not easily accessible to the less than sophisticated listener. Yet for those who can hear it, the composition is filled with virtuosic yet clearly defined phrases of great beauty and power, bringing out both the potential of the instrument and the technique of its player. These six sonatas mark the ultimate achievement of a lifetime of virtuosity; these violin works place Ysaÿe on the level of Bach and Paganini. The greatest challenge of virtuosity is making the extremely difficult seem utterly easy. It is this, above all, for which Ysaÿe is remembered.

⁹ Margaret Campbell, liner notes from *Six Sonatas for Solo Violin, Op. 27*, Oscar Shumsky, violin, (Nimbus, 1982), 7.

CHAPTER 2
SONATA NO. 1

Biography of Joseph Szigeti

Hungarian violinist Joseph Szigeti (1892-1973) studied with Jenő Hubay at the Budapest Academy (now the Franz Liszt Academy) before moving to London to begin his career. He debuted Prokofiev's concerto in Leningrad in 1924 after its 1923 Paris premier. He made a successful U.S. debut in Carnegie Hall under conductor Leopold Stokowski in 1925. Later, in 1938, he gave the world premier of Ernst Bloch's concerto in Cleveland, Ohio. A close friend of Béla Bartók, Szigeti appeared with him in concert at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., in 1940 and gave many performances of Bartók's *Concerto No. 2*.

Although Szigeti was a child prodigy, it was not until he reached his thirties that his career began to reach its potential. As his talent matured, he moved away from the showmanship often associated with the virtuoso repertoire. By making virtuosity seem easy, he returned the focus to the music. He was well known for his performances of unaccompanied Bach. Many composers' works were dedicated to him: Bartók's *Rhapsody No. 1* and *Contrasts*, Rawsthorne's *Sonata*, Bloch's *La nuit exotique* and Prokofiev's *Melody*, Op. 35, among others.¹⁰

¹⁰ Sir George Grove, *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc.:1961), 885.

Sonata Background

Sonata No. 1 in G minor was inspired by Szigeti's performance of Bach's Sonatas and Partitas. This sonata formally follows Baroque examples, however this highly virtuosic music is clearly modern. The second movement, Fugato, is a tribute to Bach, while *Finale* is reminiscent of Paganini's dexterity.¹¹

Pedagogical Approach

Sonata No. 1, I. Grave







Measure	1-10	11-14	15-34	35-38	39-41	42-52
Material						
mm. 1-10	Statement 1, chordal texture					
mm. 11-14	Statement 2, lyrical, fragile					
mm. 15-34	Developmental section, both heroic and lyrical moments					
mm. 35-38	Statement 1, partial reappearance					
mm. 39-41	Statement 2, partial reappearance					
mm. 42-52	Concluding material, sul ponticello/tremolo					

Diagram 2.1: *Sonata No. 1, I. Grave*

Measures 1-10

This *Grave* is in the manner of J. S. Bach, although Ysaÿe applies his own ideas, both musical and violinistic. The melody has a chordal accompaniment throughout this section. To preserve the integrity of the melodic line, the chords cannot all be played in

¹¹ Franz Kasperek, liner notes from *Six Sonatas for Solo Violin* Op. 27, Benjamin Schmid, violin, (ARTE NOVA Musikproduktions GmbH, 1999), 5.

the most usual way of breaking them from bottom to top. Whenever the melody note is not in the soprano or bass of the chord, the performer must return to the melody note in the chord after playing the entire chord. For example, in the first two chords of measure 1 the melody line is in the tenor as shown in Example 2.1. When the melody is in the bass, the violinist can choose to play the chord from top to bottom.



Ex. 2.1: *Sonata No. 1, I. Grave*, m. 1, practicing melody notes within chords

Throughout this chordal section, the performer would benefit from practicing the chords on open strings. As the lower part of the bow is heavier than the upper, this type of exercise can help the violinist determine how to maintain a balanced sound from frog to tip. The performer should aim for an uninterrupted sound connecting the chords, as if the violin were an organ. In this way the musical expression within the phrase might be emphasized to the fullest. Endeavoring to connect in this way will reveal the degree of physical motion needed to maintain good sound quality when connecting the most challenging chords.

Measures 11-14

The next section, marked *tranquillo*, offers a lyrical answer to the previous statement; thus it would be appropriate for the performer to vibrate each note using a connected, constant vibrato. The result will be a more assured and relaxed left hand, one

which brings a singing quality to each note. Likewise, this will give the right hand more opportunity to produce special timbres of sound to enhance the *tranquillo* marking.

Measures 15-34

This section is reminiscent of Chausson's *Poème*, which was dedicated to Ysaÿe. For the double stops in this passage, it would be a helpful exercise to raise both fingers of the upcoming double stop before executing it. By doing this, the performer naturally releases the tension in those two fingers before playing the next double stop. Later in performance, this motion should be minimized.

Since the music in this section is closer to Chausson than to Bach, and therefore of a more Romantic and free nature, the performer can play with greater flexibility regarding tempo and flow. This approach will help the performer arrive at an interpretation that serves the stylistic implications of the harmonic material.

The arpeggiated figures in measures 29 through 31 present string crossing difficulties.

One may practice by making two different double stops out of the upper three notes of each four-note group (since the bottom note is always the open D string), as shown in

Example 2.2.



Ex. 2.2: *Sonata No. 1*, I. *Grave*, m. 29, using double stops to improve arpeggiated passages

In measure 34, the last note might be approached as a natural harmonic on the D string in order to attain a more sustained sound that will lead into the section that follows.

Measures 42-52

Measures 42 through 49 feature the simultaneous use of *sul ponticello* and *tremolo*, effects which were fairly uncommon at the time the piece was written. In addition to these effects, Ysaÿe added left hand *pizzicato* in measures 44 to 47. *Sul ponticello* is the technique of playing next to the bridge, where there is usually no rosin on the strings; therefore, to ensure a consistent *sul ponticello* from the first note, it would be helpful to play a few notes with a rosined bow on the spot where the *sul ponticello* notes are to be executed.

Sonata No. 1, II. Fugato

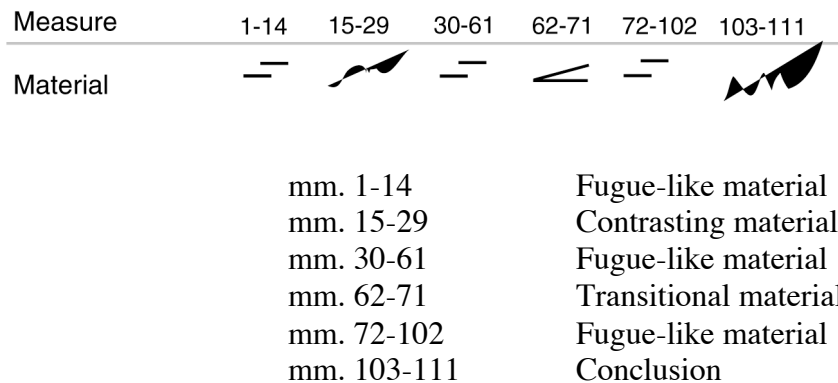


Diagram 2.2: *Sonata No. 1, II. Fugato*

As mentioned in the introduction, Ysaÿe was inspired to write Op. 27 after hearing Szigeti play the music of Bach at a concert. With that in mind, it is interesting to note the parallels between the fugato and the second movement of Bach’s *Sonata No. 1 in G minor for Solo Violin*. Both are fugues, and there are similarities between the statements of the fugue subjects.

Measures 1-14

The subject of Ysaÿe's fugue is presented in measures 1 through 3 and answered in measures 4 through 7 in the upper voice. As with all fugal material, the performer should clearly introduce the subject each time it appears.

Measures 8 through 10 present a series of double stops. The control of the left hand will result in better intonation and connection between the double stops. A helpful practice technique is to alternate the use and non-use of vibrato from one double stop to the next. By concentrating on every other double stop, the violinist will be able to focus on one double stop and then relax on the next while preparing for the following double stop. This preliminary exercise allows the player to practice the passage without feeling overwhelmed. Some combinations for practice are shown in Example 2.3.

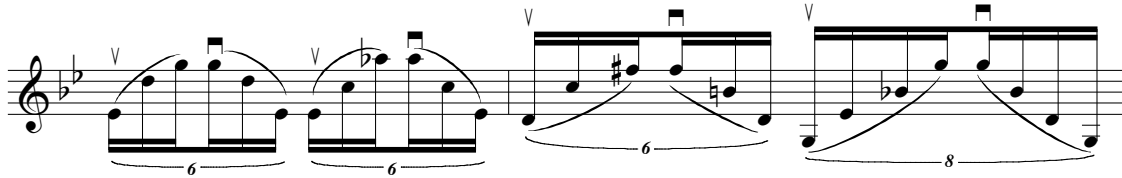
The image displays four musical staves, each starting with a measure number '8' and a treble clef. The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 2/4. Each staff contains two measures of music, each featuring a double stop. Above the first two staves, the vibrato instructions are: 'no vib. no vib. no vib. no vib.' and 'vib. no vib. vib. no vib.' respectively. Above the last two staves, the instructions are: 'no vib. vib. no vib. vib.' and 'vib. vib. vib. vib.' respectively. The double stops are: G4-B4, A4-C5, G4-B4, and A4-C5.

Ex. 2.3: *Sonata No. 1, II. Fugato*, m. 8, practicing double stops with varied use of vibrato

Measures 15-29

Since measures 15 through 18 present material which contrasts with measures 1 through 14, the performer might consider playing this passage with a contrasting, perhaps airy sound. Measure 23 creates a rapid change of mood, this being a characteristic

feature throughout Ysaÿe’s solo sonatas. Measures 23 through 29 have continuous string crossings which may be practiced using separate bows, combining them differently within the groups for better general control of the right hand, as shown in Example 2.4.



Ex. 2.4: *Sonata No. 1, II. Fugato*, mm. 23-24, practicing string crossing with varied bowings

Additionally, the performer can consider combining each group of three or four notes into double stops as shown in Example 2.5. This will train the fingers of the left hand to be in place ahead of time.



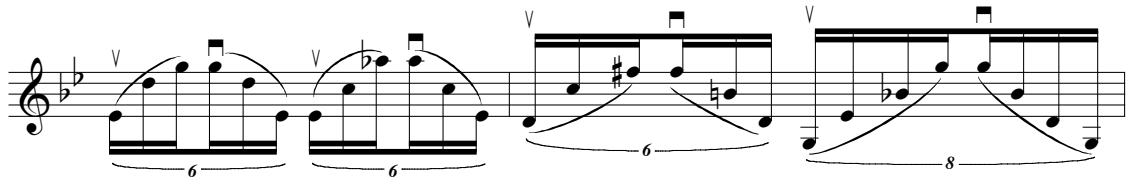
Ex. 2.5: *Sonata No. 1, II. Fugato*, mm. 23-24, using double stops to practice arpeggiations

Measures 30-61

This section contains an interesting parallel with the fugue of Bach’s G minor sonata. In Bach’s fugue as well as in Ysaÿe’s *Fugato*, a reappearance of the subject occurs in the same register on the same string (the E string) at approximately the same place in both movements.

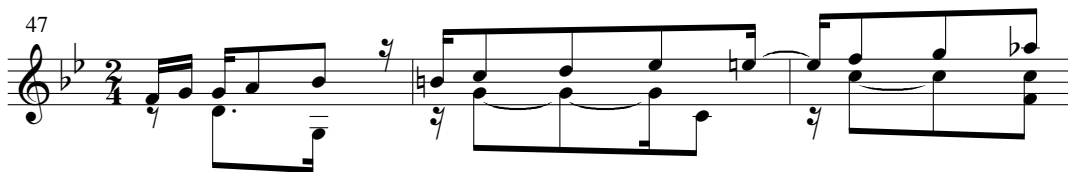
Measures 36 through 38 present groups of four sixteenth notes played on the A string. Each group begins with a double stop using the open D string. Before playing the

double stops, it would be helpful to practice the shifts between groups of notes on the A string. To begin, the player can simplify these groups as shown in Example 2.6. Playing only the first and last notes, the violinist should concentrate on the connections between these notes and the connections between the end of one group and the beginning of the next. When adding the open D double stops, a slightly slower and heavier bow needs to be used on each one.



Ex. 2.6: *Sonata No. 1, II. Fugato*, mm. 36-37, practicing position shifting

In this section, the thematic material from the fugato's subject appears again in measures 30, 41, and 54 before being developed in one way or another. Measures 47 through 50 present the subject in the top line with an accompaniment figure in the lower voice. Since this passage has syncopations, the performer should concentrate on keeping a strict rhythm. Although the melody is in the upper voice, the lower voice should not be overlooked. One way to practice this is by accenting notes in the lower voice. To solidify the relationship between the two voices, the player can practice the passage as double stops as shown in Example 2.7.



Ex. 2.7: *Sonata No. 1, II. Fugato*, mm. 47-49, using double stops when practicing a second voice

Measures 62-71

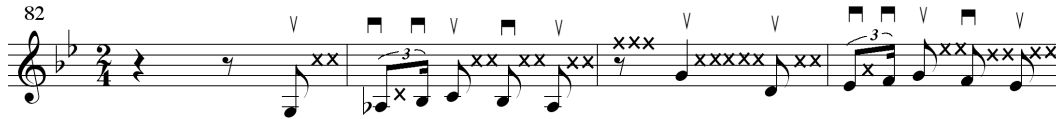
The material of the next section is again reminiscent of Chausson's *Poème*, as was seen in the development section of the first movement. These measures serve as a transition to another fugue-like section. Measures 62 through 66 contain fast moving passages of sextuplets. Even if the violinist is not ready to play the pitches of the sextuplets in tempo, it is important to practice the right hand in tempo to develop a realistic idea of how much bow is required.

Measures 67 through 71 present another challenging double stop passage. The performer can improve the strength and facility of the left hand by raising the fingers for every upcoming double stop, thus releasing tension as discussed earlier. This exercise helps the performer focus on playing from the knuckle joints of the fingers rather than the tips. A parallel might be drawn with running, as one does not focus on each leg with each stride, but on one's hips that generate the entire motion. Likewise, when playing the violin, the base of the fingers will generate the most natural motion, relaxing the finger as well as the entire left hand.

Measures 72-102

Measures 72 through 102 present the loudest setting of Ysaÿe's fugal subject. The writing is chordal, with triple stops played at a fast tempo. To perform this, it would be helpful to play every triple stop with one motion, using the bow across all three strings at the same time, rather than two by two. Due to the use of alternating bows on these triple stops, the performer may need to balance the sound with a slight accent on every up bow.

In measures 82 through 85, the theme, indicated by accents, is hidden among a forest of triplets. When practicing this section, a first step would be to isolate the melody by playing only the accented notes, initially under tempo. However, it is important to practice using the bow directions indicated by Ysaÿe, as shown in Example 2.8.



Ex. 2.8: *Sonata No. 1, II. Fugato*, mm. 82-85, isolating the melody

Measures 103-111

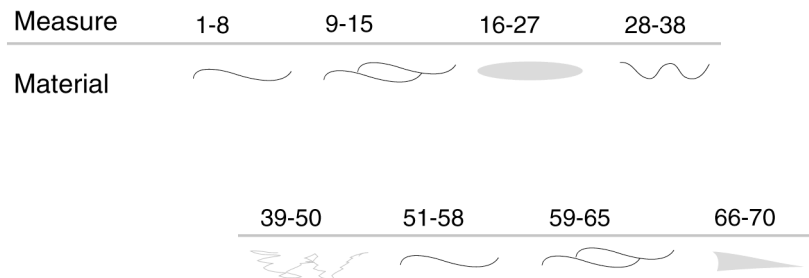
Measure 110 begins with a six-note chord, expected to be played with a down bow. However, the performer might consider playing the first indicated bracket by the composer (the first double stop of the chord) with an up bow and then finishing the chord with a down bow as written. This will not only create a more continuous sound, but will also provide more bow for the chord.

The dotted eighth note on the last beat of measure 110 requires connecting an octave at the top of the triple stop to a tenth on the last sixteenth note of the measure. To secure this connection in the left hand, the violinist might first practice reaching for an octave instead of a tenth. When that is secure, one can then practice the octave to the tenth as shown in Example 2.9.



Ex. 2.9: *Sonata No. 1, II. Fugato*, m. 110, practicing the tenth

Sonata No. 1, III. Allegretto Poco Scherzoso



mm. 1-8	Bach-like theme 1 (these mm. are repeated)
mm. 9-15	Bach-like theme 2
mm. 16-27	Debussy-like material
mm. 28-38	Development of Bach-like material
mm. 39-50	Ysaÿe -like material
mm. 51-58	Bach-like theme 1
mm. 59-65	Bach-like theme 2
mm. 66-70	Closing material

Diagram 2.3: *Sonata No. 1, III. Allegretto Poco Scherzoso*

Measures 1-8

Before shaping the phrasing of measures 1 through 8, the melody should be practiced without double and triple stops, and at a consistent dynamic level, setting the bow placement and weight for each note. Since this passage is reminiscent of Baroque style, it may be appropriate for the performer to add a slight emphasis at the beginning of each beat, followed by a diminuendo for the remainder of the beat. The downbeat of measure 6 is a triple stop with the melody note in the bass, therefore it is advisable to play the upper two notes first and then the bass note. See Example 2.1 for more detail on this approach.

Measures 9-15

In measures 9 and 11, this marking, |--|, is notated only over the first note. This seems to indicate that Ysaÿe heard the two following groups as echoes of the first, though this is not marked in the score.

Measures 39-50

Measure 44 presents a technique that is not common in Western music, the usage of the quarter-tone. Ysaÿe introduces the quarter-tone not to suggest oriental or Indian scales, but as a way of continuing the descending line of fourths. In the previous measure, the harmony allowed Ysaÿe to keep a sequence of perfect fourths. However, in this measure Ysaÿe would have had to use the B-natural twice. To avoid to doing this, he chose instead to use the quarter-tone between the B-natural and the B-flat to preserve motion in the line.

Sonata No. 1. IV. Finale con Brio

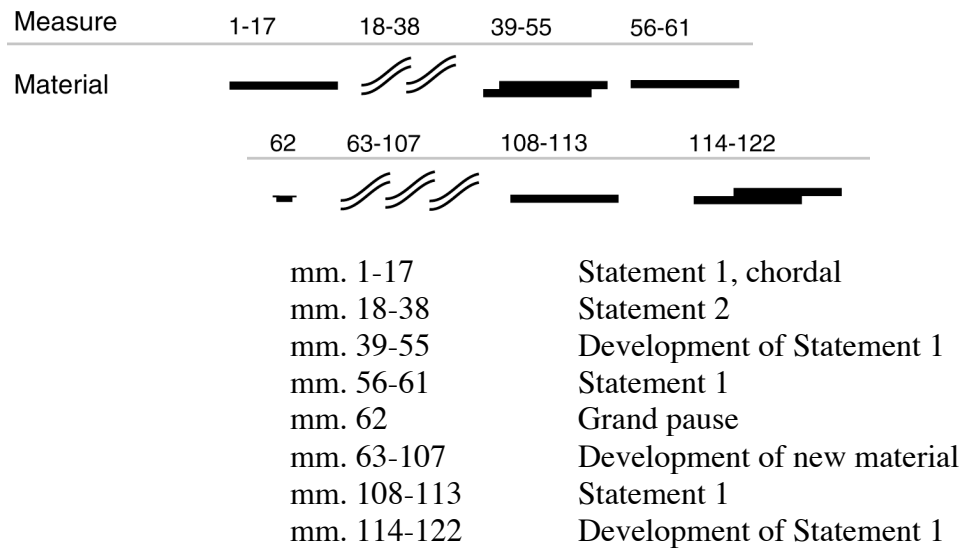


Diagram 2.4: *Sonata No. 1, IV. Finale con Brio*

Measures 1-17

Some variety can be given to the chords, which are the main material in Statement 1, as indicated in Example 1.10 (the bow direction is indicated by *Ysaÿe*).

Two curved shapes indicate to play as a pair of double stops.
A vertical bar indicates to play three notes at once.




The image shows four staves of musical notation in 3/8 time, featuring various chord bowings. The notation includes vertical bars and curved shapes indicating specific bowing techniques. The key signature has two flats, and the music is written in a single melodic line.

Ex. 2.10: *Sonata No. 1, IV. Finale con Brio*, mm. 1-18, chord bowings

Measures 39-55

Measure 48 and 49 include slurred double stops of thirds, and measures 50 and 51 continue this idea with tenths. This presents an intonation challenge. To check the accuracy of intonation for each voice, a possible approach for practicing would be to finger the double stops, but play only one voice at a time, as shown in Example 2.11.



The image shows a single staff of musical notation in 3/8 time, starting at measure 48. It features slurred double stops of thirds and tenths, with 'x' marks under the notes to indicate fingering. The key signature has two flats.

Ex. 2.11: *Sonata No. 1, IV. Finale con Brio*, mm. 48-49, simplifying double stops

In measures 52 through 55, Ysaÿe develops the double note passage in tenths by alternating the double stops with a sixteenth note open D string. It would be helpful for the performer to practice the connections between the double stops by first leaving out the open D string.

Measures 63-80

Measures 63 through 80 present an extended passage of double stops, which again can be practiced by raising the fingers in advance of each double stop, except where it would create more tension. See movement 2, mm. 62-71, for more information on this approach.

Measures 100-103

In measures 100 through 103, practicing the first and last two notes of each grouping as double stops, as shown in Example 2.12, will allow the left hand to be more prepared for the second and sixth notes of each group. This will also add security for the right hand string crossings.

The image displays two musical staves for measures 100-103. The top staff shows the original notation with groups of notes. The bottom staff, labeled 'becomes', shows the same measures with double stops (chords) placed under the first and last notes of each group to strengthen the left hand.

Ex. 2.12: *Sonata No. 1*, IV. Finale con Brio, mm. 100-103, using double stops to strengthen left hand

The downbeats of measures 104 through 106 are triple stop chords that are part of a fast moving section. As mentioned before, it is advisable to play the notes of these chords simultaneously rather than two by two.

CHAPTER 3
SONATA NO. 2

Biography of Jacques Thibaud

Ysaÿe dedicated his second sonata to the French violinist Jacques Thibaud, born in 1880 in Bordeaux. Thibaud played with both elegance and an enchanting style. He was particularly well-known as a performer of Mozart, and he was one of the members of a memorable trio with cellist Pablo Casals and pianist Alfred Cortot. His performances were marked by technical polish and purity of tone, yet with a natural expressiveness. For some years he played a violin by Carlo Bergonzi, and later acquired the Baillot Stradivari.

Owing to the contest that he founded in 1943 with Marguerite Long, Thibaud also devoted himself to a teaching career in L'École Normale de Musique and L'Académie Chigiana de Sienna. He died and his 1720 Stradivarius was destroyed in a plane crash in 1953 on a trip to Japan.¹²

Sonata Background

Thibaud was a very close friend of Ysaÿe. Ysaÿe knew of Thibaud's dedication to the music of Bach, specifically that Thibaud warmed up every day with the Prelude from

¹² Sir George Grove, *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1961), 389.

Bach's *Partita in E major*.¹³ The title of the first movement of Ysaÿe's sonata, "Obsession," reflects not only Thibaud's obsession with Bach but with the violin as well. The opening movement interweaves quotes from the Prelude from Bach's *Partita in E major*, BWV 1006, and the "Dies Irae" motif. The second movement, "Malinconia," is a duet between two voices, setting an atmosphere of gently restrained mourning which is reinforced by Ysaÿe's marking of *con sordino*. It has been said that everything Ysaÿe ever regretted in his life, he put into this movement.¹⁴ The third movement, "Dance with the Shadows/Spirits," is a set of variations. The composition's final movement is one of the most effective dances of death ever written, the "Dance of the Furies," which explores the idea of the three Furies by using triple stops.

As for the meaning of the entire sonata, some have suggested a mystical yearning for death. Franz Kasperek writes in the liner notes of that the second sonata was "conceived as a chapter from the world of necromancy."¹⁵ Since there is nothing written directly by Ysaÿe, we do not know the exact connotations of the titles and references. However, one can deduce from the movement titles that there must be some connection with tragedy and death, more so because of the use of the "Dies Irae" theme.

¹³ Margaret Campbell, liner notes from *Six Sonatas for Solo Violin, Op. 27*, Oscar Shumsky, violin, (Nimbus, 1982), 6.

¹⁴ Antoine Ysaÿe and Bertram Ratcliffe, *Ysaÿe: His Life, Work, and Influence*, (St. Clair Shores, MI: Scholarly Press, 1978), 223.

¹⁵ Franz Kasperek, liner notes from *Six Sonatas for Solo Violin Op. 27*, Benjamin Schmid, violin, (ARTE NOVA Musikproduktions GmbH, 1999), 5.

Pedagogical Approach

Sonata No. 2, I. Obsession

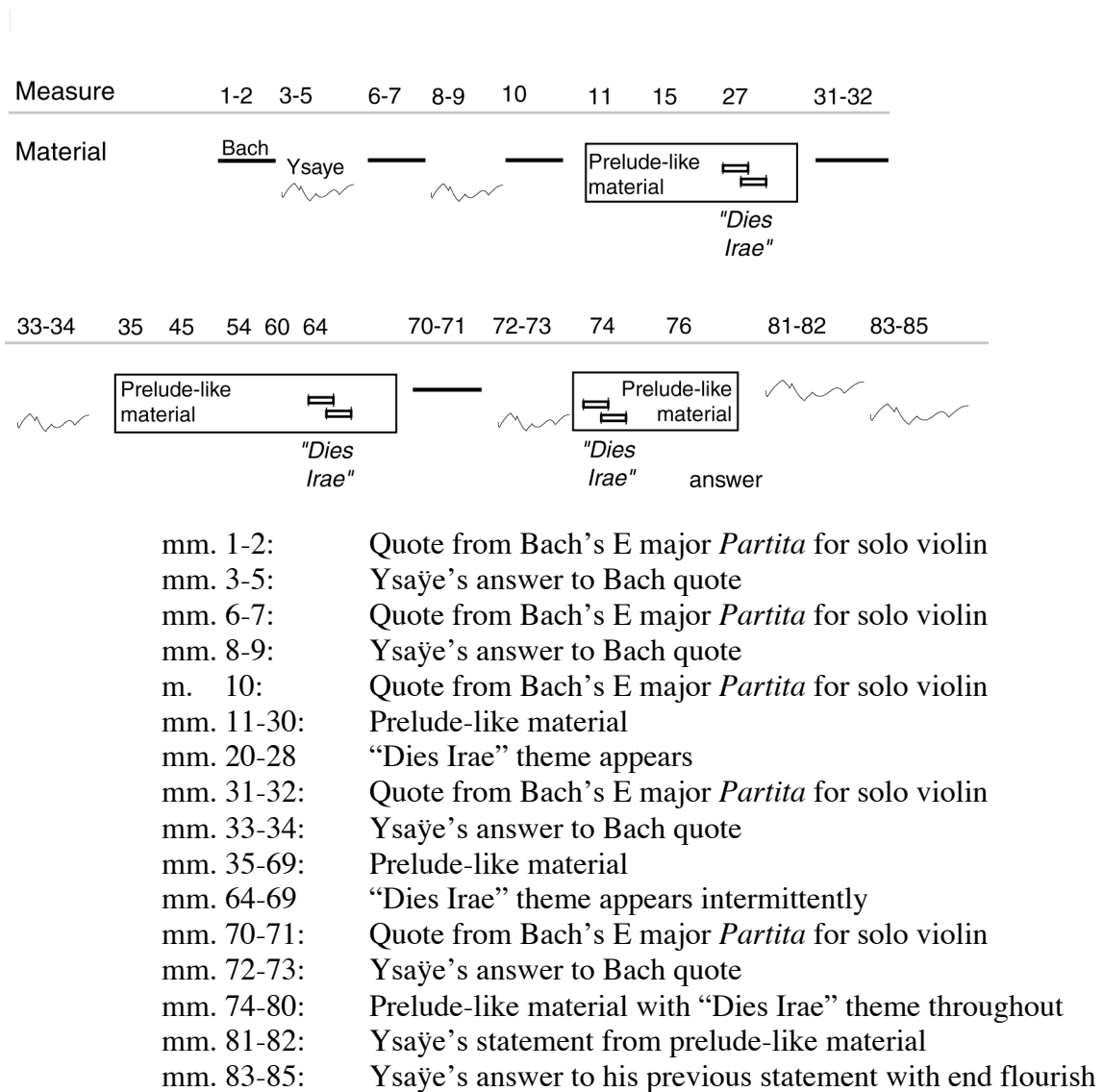


Diagram 3.1: *Sonata No. 2, I. Obsession*

Measures 1-2

The opening two measures contain a quotation from Bach, which is one of several Bach quotations that Ysaye uses throughout the movement. These passages are

consistently marked with soft dynamics requiring light bow strokes. In terms of phrasing, the first two measures should be played as a single musical idea. Measure 2 ends with a fermata with which the performer can make a quiet transition to the change of mood in the following measure.

Measures 3-5

These measures, marked “brutalement,” contain Ysaÿe’s contrasting answer to the Bach quotation. This pairing happens throughout the movement. Although it is not marked, the performer should crescendo throughout the phrase, as the melody moves from the highest string to the lowest string. Since each string crossing moves towards a thicker string, the violinist will need to increase the weight on the bow to make a crescendo.

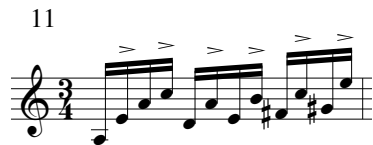
Measure 10

This measure includes another quotation from Bach that is marked up bow staccato, a challenging bow stroke for most performers. The violinist might first practice this passage legato. Once this is comfortable, the player should begin stopping the bow between each note, as it is written on the page, at a tempo in which the bow stroke can be controlled. One can then gradually increase the tempo, never sacrificing precision, until reaching the tempo marked by Ysaÿe.

Measures 11-30

This section is comprised of prelude-like material. Ysaÿe uses different harmonies and dynamics to develop the section, and concludes it with a statement of the “Dies Irae” theme (mm. 20-28).

Usually, when playing sixteenth notes with separate bows, violinists tend to produce a stronger sound on down bows than on up bows. To strengthen the up bows, one might practice with a slight accent at the beginning of every second and fourth note, as shown in Example 3.1. By practicing in this manner, the performer strengthens the beginnings of the up-bow strokes, thus achieving an evenness in sound and tone between down and up bows.



Ex. 3.1: *Sonata No. 2, I. Obsession*, m. 11, practicing with accents

This passage also contains several combinations of bowings within groups of four sixteenth notes. In order to achieve a consistent, sure right hand in sections such as this, one can practice using a variety of bowing patterns, regardless of how the passage is marked in the score. Example 3.2 offers three ways of practicing with this approach.



Ex. 3.2: *Sonata No. 2, I. Obsession*, m. 11, practicing with varied slurs

After practicing in this way, the violinist should concentrate on the exact bowings indicated in the score so as to make them automatic.

At measure 20, one should make sure the “Dies Irae” theme, marked with accents above the notes, is audible. If played in the tempo Ysaÿe suggests, there is not much time to emphasize each note separately with the bow. Even though there are three string changes within four notes in certain passages, the violinist should feel this as one general motion of the arm (made up of four small motions). If a certain note is marked with an accent or needs to be emphasized, the performer needs to apply a little more weight and bow speed at that point.

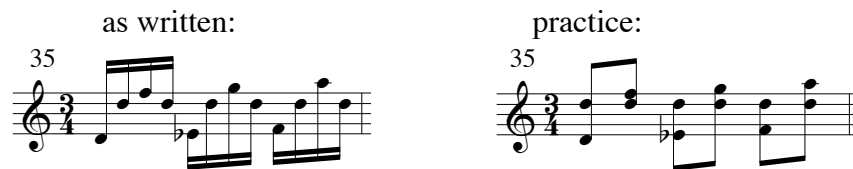
Measures 31-32

These measures include another quotation from Bach. It makes sense to play these two measures on the G and D strings, as this will help produce a consistent color. The performer will need to play the first sixteenth note of measure 32 with the first finger.

Measures 35-70

To improve intonation throughout this section, every group of four sixteenths, which are spread out on three strings, can be practiced by playing double stops, combining each note with the note immediately following, as shown in Example 3.3.

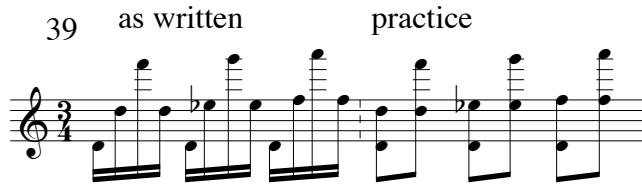
as written: practice:



35 35

Ex. 3.3: *Sonata No. 2, I. Obsession*, m. 35, practicing with double stops

In measures 39 through 41, the performer faces the major technical challenge of playing a series of tenths. To maintain proper intonation throughout, one should apply the practice method illustrated in Example 3.4.

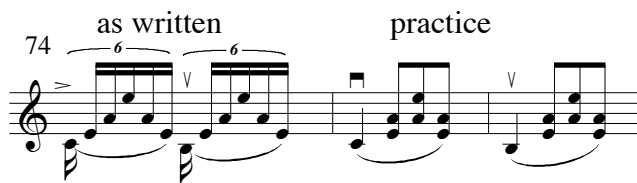


Ex. 3.4: *Sonata No. 2, I. Obsession*, m. 39. practicing with double stops

A suggestion particular to the interval of a tenth is to place the upper note in tune first and then stretch the lower finger to the pitch. This is more natural for the hand, with less opportunity to create tension.

Measures 74-75

In these measures, the “Dies Irae” theme appears in the accented bass notes of the arpeggiated passage. Practicing as shown in Example 3.5 will help the performer bring out these bass notes.



Ex. 3.5: *Sonata No. 2, I. Obsession*, m. 74, practicing with double stops

To be comfortable playing this passage, the violinist should avoid too large of a vertical amplitude in the bow arm motion, reducing the necessary arm motion through use of the wrist and fingers, as illustrated in Diagram 3.2.

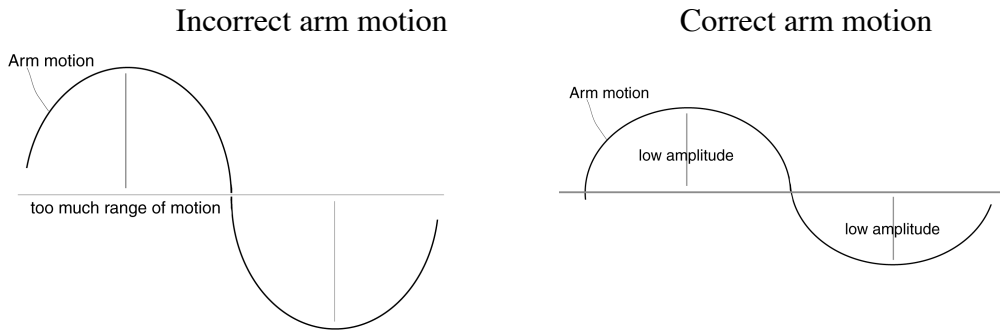


Diagram 3.2: String crossing arm motion

Instead of dividing each bow into six parts, the violinist should make one smooth arm motion, which takes the bow across all of the strings.

Sonata No. 2, II. Malinconia












Measure	1	2	3-6	7-8	9-11											
Material	 motive	 motive in 2nd voice/ ctr. mel	 devel.	 motive 8va												
	12	13	14-18	19	20-23	24-25										
		 ctr. mel. 8va		 climax of movement	 dim. of climax	 "Dies Irae"										
	m. 1	m. 2	mm. 3-6	mm. 7-8	mm. 9-11	m. 12	m. 13	mm. 14-18	m. 19	mm. 20-23	m. 24-25					
						Motive	Motive with Countermelody	Motivic development	Motive octave higher with Countermelody	Motivic development	Motive	Motive with Countermelody	Motivic development	Climax of movement	transition to "Dies Irae"	"Dies Irae"

Diagram 3.3: *Sonata No. 2, II. Malinconia*

Malinconia is marked *con sordino* because Ysäye sought a certain timbre to match the movement's character, which is very peaceful and marked with soft dynamics. One might first practice the entire movement unmuted to achieve the desired expression. Later, with the mute added, one can then give full attention to utilizing the muted quality without diminishing the expression and tone.

Measures 1-6

Measures 2 through 6 of the second movement bring an immediate answer to measure 1. To emphasize each appearance of the subject in the second voice, the performer should slightly accent the first note of the subject, as shown in Example 3.6.



Ex. 3.6: *Sonata No. 2. II. Malinconia*, m. 2, emphasizing subject

Throughout the movement the performer might choose to play with a very legato, connected sound even between double stops, regardless of how the bowings and slurs are marked in the score. It is helpful to practice this movement more slowly than the written tempo. Doing so increases the difficulty of executing the double stops and building one's technical ability to sustain with the bow.

The speed of the vibrato throughout this movement should remain calm and unagitated, although generally consistent and connected. A faster vibrato would not support the meditative character of "Malinconia."

Sonata No. 2, III. Danse des Ombres

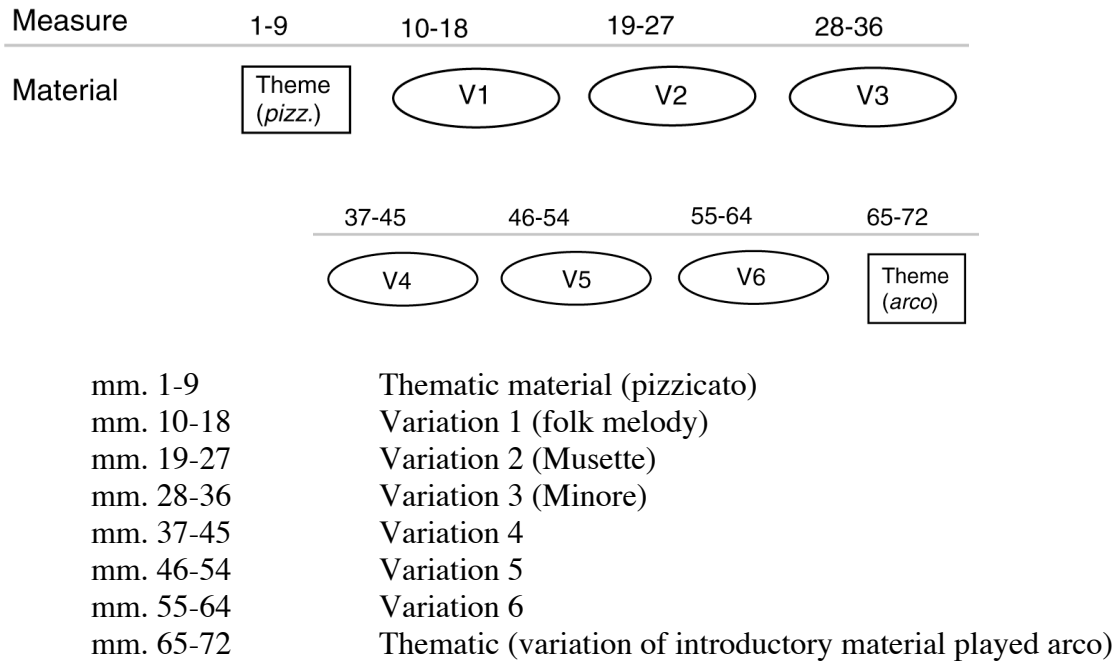


Diagram 3.4: *Sonata No. 2, III. Danse des Ombres*

Measures 1-9

In this *pizzicato* section, the performer has the option of using the first finger or the thumb to pluck the notes. However, in measure 8, which is marked *marcato*, the thumb is recommended because of the need for greater strength in the arpeggiated, chordal texture.

Measures 10-18

In measures 14 through 18, the folk-like melody is accompanied by another voice. Regardless of this second voice, it is important to bring out the melody.

Measures 19-27

In the second variation, “*Musette*,” the theme is written on the D string with a drone on the open G string. To increase the resonance of the theme, the violinist might

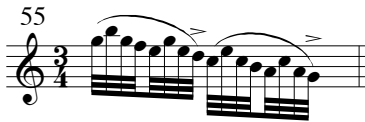
consider angling the bow towards the A string in order to concentrate more of the bow on the D string.

Measures 46-54

In the fifth variation, the texture changes with a high degree of unpredictability. The performer has the freedom to phrase accordingly, using slight *accelerandi* and *ritenuto*.

Measures 55-64

This variation is like a whirlwind of shadows. The very fast moving thirty-second notes, sometimes slurred sixteen on a bow, present the problem of achieving smooth slurs over the string crossings. The practice technique of adding an accent every time the bow crosses from string to string should aid this greatly. This approach is more difficult than what is written, but the hand and arm will learn the correct feeling when moving from one string to another, as shown in Example 3.7.



Ex. 3.7: *Sonata No. 2, III. Danse des Ombres*, m. 55, accenting string crossings

During sequential passages, e.g., measures 57 through 61, the performer may add a slight *accelerando* to support the intensity of the passage. This will also keep the passage from having a mechanical feel.

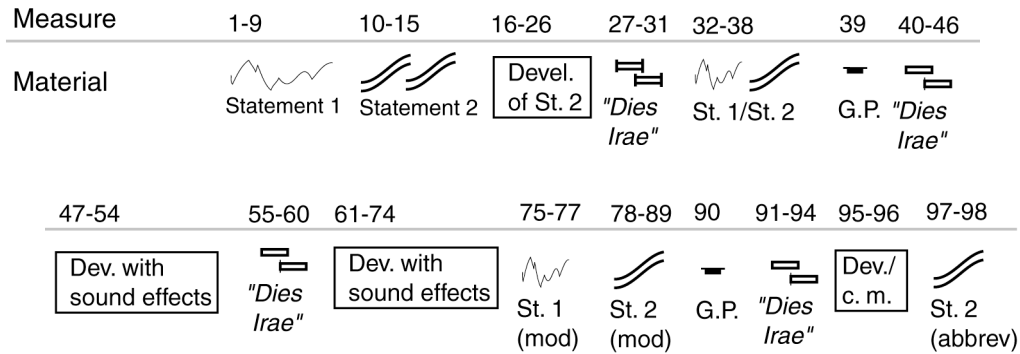
Measures 65-72

In this final chordal section, Example 3.8 demonstrates one way to approach the chords. Two curved shapes indicate to play as a pair of double stops. A vertical bar indicates to play three notes at once.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major. The first staff contains five measures of music. The first measure has a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature. It features a series of chords: G4-B4-D5, G4-B4-D5, G4-B4-D5, and G4-B4-D5. The second measure has a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a common time signature. It features a series of chords: G4-B4-D5, G4-B4-D5, G4-B4-D5, and G4-B4-D5. The third measure has a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a common time signature. It features a series of chords: G4-B4-D5, G4-B4-D5, G4-B4-D5, and G4-B4-D5. The fourth measure has a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a common time signature. It features a series of chords: G4-B4-D5, G4-B4-D5, G4-B4-D5, and G4-B4-D5. The fifth measure has a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a common time signature. It features a series of chords: G4-B4-D5, G4-B4-D5, G4-B4-D5, and G4-B4-D5. The second staff contains five measures of music. The first measure has a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a common time signature. It features a series of chords: G4-B4-D5, G4-B4-D5, G4-B4-D5, and G4-B4-D5. The second measure has a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a common time signature. It features a series of chords: G4-B4-D5, G4-B4-D5, G4-B4-D5, and G4-B4-D5. The third measure has a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a common time signature. It features a series of chords: G4-B4-D5, G4-B4-D5, G4-B4-D5, and G4-B4-D5. The fourth measure has a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a common time signature. It features a series of chords: G4-B4-D5, G4-B4-D5, G4-B4-D5, and G4-B4-D5. The fifth measure has a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a common time signature. It features a series of chords: G4-B4-D5, G4-B4-D5, G4-B4-D5, and G4-B4-D5.

Ex. 3.8: *Sonata No. 2, III. Danse des Ombres*, mm. 1-18.

Sonata No. 2, IV. Les Furies

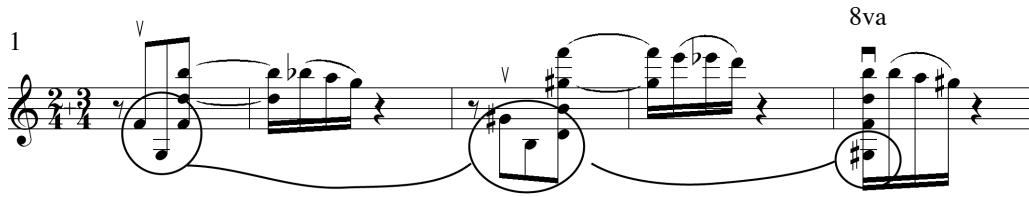


mm. 1-9	Statement 1
mm. 10-15	Statement 2
mm. 16-26	Development of Statement 2
mm. 27-31	"Dies Irae" theme
mm. 32-38	Material from Statements 1 and 2
mm. 39	Grand pause
mm. 40-46	"Dies Irae" theme
mm. 47-54	Development with special sound effects
mm. 55-60	"Dies Irae" theme
mm. 61-74	Development with special sound effects
mm. 75-77	Statement 1 (modified)
mm. 78-89	Statement 2 (modified)
mm. 90	Grand pause
mm. 91-94	"Dies Irae" theme
mm. 95-96	Development/closing material
mm. 97-98	Statement 2 (abbreviated) and final cadence

Diagram 3.5: *Sonata No. 2, IV. Les Furies*

Measures 1-5

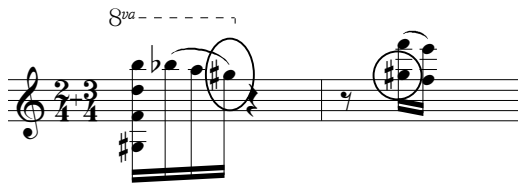
In order to establish good left hand intonation in this section, the violinist should begin by practicing the placement and connection between the circled notes in Example 3.9.



Ex. 3.9: *Sonata No. 2, IV. Les Furies*, mm. 1-5, establishing left hand position

Measures 6-9

A solid entrance on the high double stop in measure 6 demands attention to the connection between the last note of measure 5 and the higher pitch of the first double stop in measure 6, as shown in Example 3.10. When this connection is solid, the higher pitch of the double stop serves as a foundation for the upcoming lines.



Ex. 3.10: *Sonata No. 2, IV. Les Furies*, mm. 5-6, practicing position shifts

Measure 10-26

This is the section for which “Les Furies” is often best remembered. The series of double stops beginning in measure 10 might be practiced by dividing each measure into two three-note slurs or one six-note slur. The last three sixteenth notes of measure 14 and the first three sixteenth notes of measure 15 are triple stop chords. Since the tempo is fast, there is not enough time to break the chords into two double stops. Therefore, the performer should apply the bow on the middle string slightly further from the bridge,

playing all three strings at the same time, and perhaps imagining that those strings are one very thick string. The player needs to use slightly more weight in the right hand.

Measures 21-22

Passages such as this can also be practiced without the bow. One should try to change chord to chord by fingering all three notes at the same time.

Measures 27 and 31 mark the first appearance of the “Dies Irae” theme in this movement, in the bottom voice. In order to highlight this theme, the performer should be sure to vibrate each note.

As in measure 1, the player might consider using the open string and fingers 1, 2, and 3 for the chord in measure 32, instead of the open string and fingers 1, 2, and 4, since the third finger is stronger. One might also play the pizzicato note in measure 38 with the thumb of the right hand instead of the first finger, as this section is at the end of a fortissimo passage, which would benefit from a fuller sound.

Measures 40-73

Sul ponticello appears for the first time in this movement in measure 40. See Sonata 1, Movement 1, mm. 42-52 for a discussion of this effect.

CHAPTER 4
SONATA NO. 3, BALLADE

Biography of Georges Enescu

Born in 1881, Romanian composer, violinist, conductor, and teacher George Enescu was the leading figure in Romanian musical life in the first half of the 20th century. He was considered to be the best living Romanian composer, and was one of the most well known violinists of his generation. He studied at the Konservatorium der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna and later at the Paris Conservatoire under composers Massenet and Fauré. There he met composer Maurice Ravel and violinist Jacques Thibaud, to whom Ysaÿe's *Sonata No. 2* was dedicated.

Not only an accomplished violinist and composer, Enescu also conducted famous orchestras such as the Berlin Symphony Orchestra and the Concertgebouw Orchestra in the Netherlands. In 1912 he established the Enescu Prize for Romanian composers, and in 1921 he created the first national opera company in Romania.¹⁶

As a violinist, Enescu had an extreme reverence for music itself, and avoided the showmanship that often accompanies such a prodigious talent. Rather, he tended towards a self-effacing performance in which all attention would be focused on the music. His tone has been described as warm and intimate, modeled on the cantabile of the human

¹⁶ The Romanian Opera's first production was Richard Wagner's *Lohengrin* performed on December 31, 1921.

voice. He had a tremendous memory and knew most standard literature by heart, including every note of Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* and most of the Bach/Gesellschaft's edition of Bach's complete works.¹⁷

Enescu's concert in San Francisco in 1925 inspired the young Yehudi Menuhin to come to Europe and study with him. By all accounts, Enescu had a remarkable influence on everyone who encountered him, both in a musical and a personal context. The strong impression he made on Ysäye led to the dedication of the third sonata.

Sonata Background

Of the six sonatas, *Sonata No. 3* was played most often in the 20th century, although performers are now including all six sonatas in their concert repertoire. This third sonata in D minor, entitled *Ballade*, is lyrical in character, but also highly virtuosic. The ballade form, used in both poetry and music, is characterized by a certain freedom and irregularity of form. Ysäye uses this characteristic as a point of departure for this somewhat freeform one movement work. Ysäye himself wrote, "I have let my imagination wander at will. The memory of my friendship and admiration for George Enescu [who was a court musician at the Romanian Court] and the performances we gave together at the home of the delightful Queen Carmen Sylva have done the rest."¹⁸

¹⁷ Sir George Grove, *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1961), 199-201.

¹⁸ Margaret Campbell, liner notes from *Six Sonatas for Solo Violin, Op. 27*, Oscar Shumsky, violin, (Nimbus, 1982), 6.

Pedagogical Approach

Sonata No. 3, Ballade

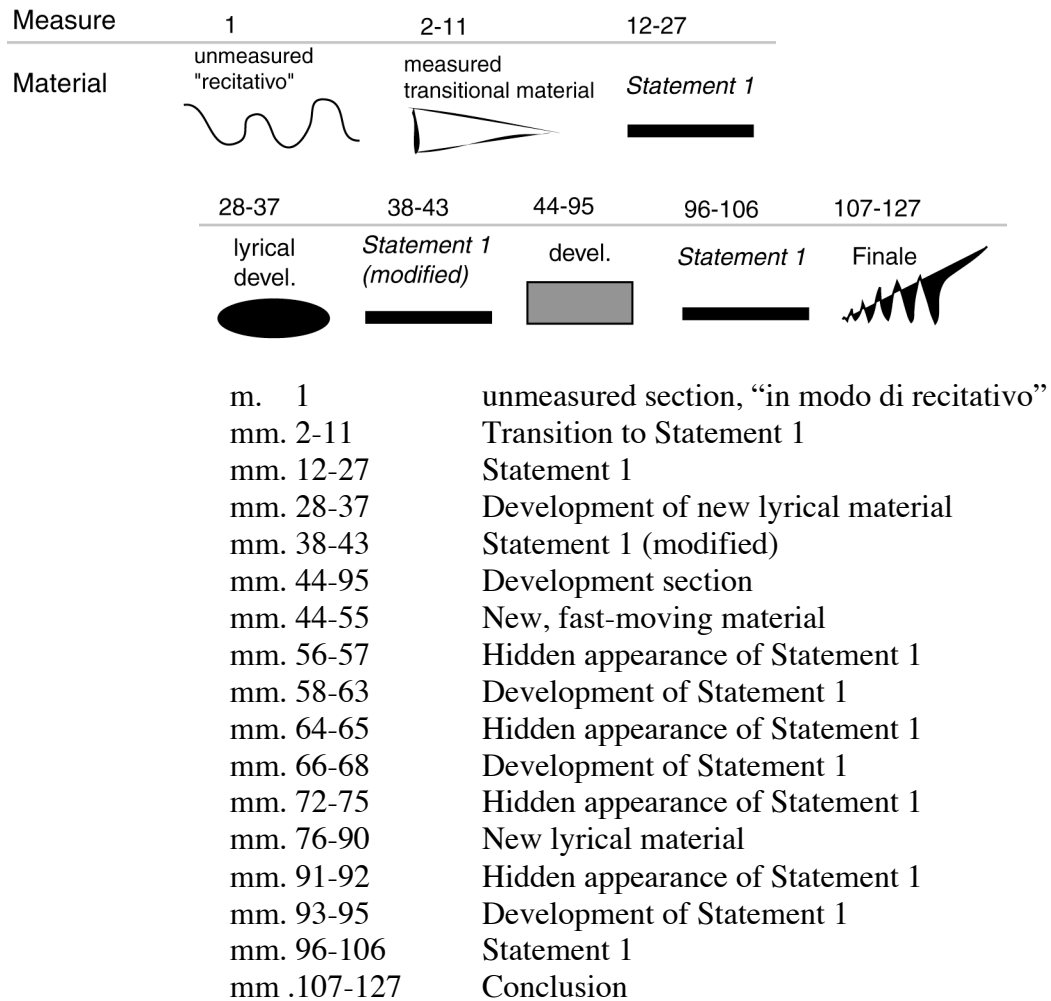


Diagram 4.1: *Sonata No. 3, Ballade*

Measure 1

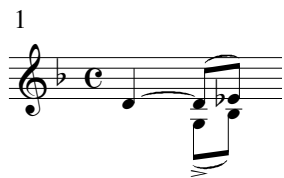
The opening of this sonata is an unmeasured section marked "in modo di recitativo." The material is monologue-like and could be described as an emotional meditation. There are many changes of color and mood, as well as freedom to vary the tempo from phrase to phrase and attach to them certain emotions or ideas. The opening

section suggests a person who is thinking about what kind of decision to make, with rapid changes between questions and answers. There are several fermatas that can be understood as pausing to take a breath, as a transition from mood to mood, or as the end of a musical thought. Even though this section is unmeasured, the “4/4” marking is indicated in the score. Therefore, it would be appropriate to maintain a steady quarter-note pulse throughout the section.

In this section, and throughout all six sonatas in Op. 27, Ysaÿe uses the technique of starting a passage with a single note and then adding another note, making it a double stop. Usually, he then varies the combination from single stop to double stop and double stop to single stop. When practicing, the violinist may find it helpful to add a slight accent with the right hand every time a single stop becomes a double stop, as shown in Examples 4.1 and 4.2. The extra emphasis serves to more quickly develop secure bow control of the string crossings.



Ex. 4.1: *Sonata No. 3, Ballade*, m. 1, string crossings



Ex. 4.2: *Sonata No. 3, Ballade*, m. 1, emphasizing the double stop

Measures 2-11

Measures 2 through 11 are a smooth continuation of the opening recitativo section. These measures contain many sudden dynamic changes, which give the listener the feeling that something is about to happen. Throughout this section, the connections

between slurred groups of double stops present a technical challenge to the performer. When practicing, one might play the last double stop of the first slurred group longer than written before playing the first double stop of the next group, as shown with fermatas in Examples 4.3 and 4.4. This will help the performer strengthen the connections between the two slurred groups. This extra time on the last note will give the right hand more time to prepare for the upcoming change. Additionally, by slowing down the passage, the performer is challenged to keep the sound quality consistent for a longer period.



Ex. 4.3: *Sonata No. 3, Ballade*, m. 2, practicing connections



Ex. 4.4: *Sonata No. 3, Ballade*, m. 5, practicing connections

Measures 2 and 3 present a sequential repetition with no marked dynamic change. Since this sequential material is part of a developing musical phrase, it would perhaps be advisable for the performer to increase one dynamic level in measure 3. This will not only make the repetition more interesting, but it will also move the overall musical phrase forward.

The same type of sequence is presented in measures 4 through 7. In sequential passages such as these, the performer might add vibrato at the beginning of each sequential group (see Example 4.5). This addition of vibrato further relaxes the left hand and anchors it to each position.



Ex. 4.5: *Sonata No. 3, Ballade*, m. 7, practicing with added vibrato

Measures 12-27

The next section, referred to in Diagram 4.1 as Statement 1, introduces the main and most recognizable thematic material in the sonata. As it is marked *con bravura*, this section must be approached with confidence. This is in marked contrast to the character of the opening cadenza material in measures 1 through 11. In such passages like this which have many notes and are technically challenging, it would help the left hand to practice the passage under tempo using constant vibrato. Although it is a challenge for the left hand, the use of constant vibrato is of tremendous help for the execution of the upcoming single, double, and triple stops.

The second double stop in measure 12 is marked with an accent and is obviously expected to have more emphasis than the previous two notes. Since the double stop is to be played at the weakest part of the bow (close to the tip, which is the lightest part of the bow), it may be helpful to practice stopping the right hand just before playing the double stop, beginning the double stop after a slight separation as shown in Example 4.6.



Ex. 4.6: *Sonata No. 3, Ballade*, m. 12, practicing accent preparation

Measures 44-95

The first notes of measures 48 and 49 are both musical arrival points in the harmonic phrase. The performer might use a slight vibrato on these notes to support the contour of the phrase.

Measures 56 and 57 contain hidden occurrences of the Statement 1 theme in the upper voice. To bring out the melody, it is helpful for the performer to first practice the upper voice separately, then to add the accompanying third below in the second voice, as shown in Example 4.7, and finally to play the passage as written.



Ex. 4.7: *Sonata No. 3, Ballade*, m. 56, isolating the melody

Other places which would benefit from practice with this approach are measures 69-71, 91-92, 107-112, and 119-124.

Measure 79 has three grace notes before the downbeat. Although a leisurely tempo is appropriate for this passage, the grace notes should still be played precisely and on-time. When practicing, I suggest combining them into a chord, as shown in Example 4.8. In performance, the violinist can approach the grace notes as an arpeggiated chord, and the fingers of the left hand will be ready for the bow to play the notes one by one.



Ex. 4.8: *Sonata No. 3, Ballade*, m. 79, practicing grace notes

Measures 107-127

Measure 113 contains fast passages with many string crossings. The material is similar to that of Paganini's *Caprice No. 16* for solo violin. These string crossings require extreme precision and anticipation in the left hand. To achieve this, the violinist might practice separating each group of four thirty-second notes into two pairs of double stops, as shown in Example 4.9.



The image shows two musical staves. The left staff is labeled '113' and contains a sequence of notes with many string crossings, represented by multiple beams over the notes. The right staff, labeled 'becomes', shows the same sequence of notes but with the string crossings eliminated, resulting in two pairs of double stops.

Ex. 4.9: Sonata No. 3, I. *Ballade*, m. 113, practicing with double stops

The triple stops in measures 125 through 127 are best played with all three notes simultaneously, rather than breaking each one into two double stops, due to the fast tempo (marked *vivo*).

CHAPTER 5
SONATA NO. 4

Biography of Fritz Kreisler

Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962) was an Austrian violinist and composer. A child prodigy, he entered the Vienna Conservatory at the age of seven after studying with Jacques Auber. There he studied violin with Joseph Hellmesberger, and theory with Anton Bruckner. Kreisler then entered the Paris Conservatory where he received his final formal instruction from J. L. Massart. After his American debut and a stint of military service, Kreisler made his debut with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra in 1899. This concert is regarded as the beginning of his international career.

A unique violinist, Kreisler practiced little yet achieved a fluid technical perfection. Like many of the other violinists to whom Ysaÿe dedicated these sonatas, Kreisler avoided showmanship. Instead, he focused on elegant bowing, graceful phrasing, and a sweetness of tone. His use of the bow, applying just enough pressure without suppressing the natural vibration of the strings, gave his sound significant carrying power. Using vibrato in the style Wieniawski, Kreisler had a distinct color to his tone. When referring to this vibrato, Kreisler noted that Wieniawski “intensified the vibrato and brought it to heights never before achieved.” Kreisler extended this use of vibrato, applying it to faster passages as well as long, sustained melodies. According to violinist Carl Flesch, concerning his individual style, Kreisler was ahead of his time, and

this may explain his slow rise to fame. However, time has proven Kreisler's importance, as there is hardly a violinist in the 20th century who does not cite him as an influence.¹⁹

Also a gifted composer, Kreisler dedicated his *Recitative and Scherzo*, Op. 6 to Ysaÿe.

Sonata Background

When composing this sonata, Ysaÿe said that he was guided by the memory of Kreisler's uniquely full and sweet tone; he was often called the Viennese "tone wizard."²⁰ Since Kreisler published many arrangements of older Baroque pieces, this is possibly the reason Ysaÿe used Baroque names for the movements of this sonata. Kreisler had a particular affection for Viennese music from the late 19th century. It has been suggested that this was the impetus for Ysaÿe's inclusion of folk-like material in movement three.

¹⁹ Sir George Grove, *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1961), 659-660.

²⁰ Franz Kasperek, liner notes from *Six Sonatas for Solo Violin* Op. 27, Benjamin Schmid, violin, (ARTE NOVA Musikproduktions GmbH, 1999), 5.

Pedagogical Approach

Sonata No. 4, I. Allemanda






Measure	1-7	8-19	20-32	33-42	43-69
Material	Introductory material 	Statement 1 (Bach) 	new, lyrical 	Statement 1 (modified) 	new, lyrical, Bach-style 
	mm. 1-7	Introductory material, Romantic Statement 1, in the style of Bach			
	mm. 8-19	Reminiscent of Bach's <i>Chaconne</i> in D minor			
	mm. 14-18	New lyrical material			
	mm. 20-32	Statement 1 (modified)			
	mm. 33-42	New lyrical material, in the style of Bach, broader			
	mm. 43-69				

Diagram 5.1: *Sonata No. 4, I. Allemanda*

Measures 1-7

From measures 1 to 4, it is important to indicate the arrival points of the musical phrase, which occur on the third beats of measure 1 through 3, (D#, F#, A), and the first beat of measure 5 (B). By interpreting these arrival points as a melody in themselves, the performer can build an overall phrasing for the whole section. Even though it is not marked, one might use a gradual crescendo throughout this section, supporting the intensity of the overall musical thought.

To successfully create a melody out of the above-mentioned arrival points, the sequential material can first be practiced in a simplified version. By omitting the smallest note values, one can outline the arrival points as demonstrated in Example 5.1.



Ex. 5.1: *Sonata No. 4, I. Allemanda*, m. 1, practicing arrival points

Measure 5 presents a challenging string crossing technique. String crossings are usually played from string to string in consecutive order – from the E to the G string when descending and from the G to the E when ascending. However, in the descending line on the downbeat of measure 5, Ysaÿe does not follow this approach, instead using the open A string for the lowest pitch, giving the performer an additional challenge. In this case, the performer ought to practice the upper three pitches as chords, later combining them with the lowest (open A) pitch, as shown in Example 5.2. This approach will give the performer more time to focus on this unusual string crossing.



Ex. 5.2: *Sonata No. 4, I. Allemanda*, m. 5, practicing with triple stops

Measures 8-19

As before, it would be helpful to first practice the main melodic idea in this section separately in order to isolate the interpretation of the melody.

Measures 20-32

This section ushers in a new atmosphere while maintaining a Bach-like style. Within three measures (mm. 20-22), Ysaÿe notes three different markings: *tranquillo*, *sensibile*, and *con espressivo*. In measure 22, Ysaÿe puts < > above certain notes. This marking leaves the performer room for freedom of expression, however, the primary tool of expression should be vibrato.

Measures 22 through 24, marked *espressivo*, have three groups of four thirty-second notes in each measure. Ysaÿe marks the bowings 2 + 4 + 4 + 4, etc. One practice

method to develop greater bow control would be to slur more than four notes on one bow, as shown in Diagram 5.2.

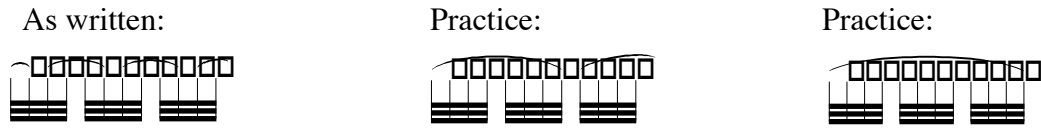


Diagram 5.2

Sonata No. 4, II. Sarabande

Measure	1-11	12-30	31-43	44-46
Material	Statement 1 (pizz.) * * *	Statement 1 (arco, Bach-like) —————	Statement 1 (prelude-like) ~~~~~	Closing Material >
mm. 1-11	Statement 1, pizzicato, guitar-like, reminiscent of Bach's sarabandes			
mm. 12-30	Statement 1, arco, moving eighth-notes through single, double and triple stops, in the style of Bach			
mm. 31-43	Statement 1, prelude-like, string crossings			
mm. 44-46	Closing material, very peaceful			

Diagram 5.3: *Sonata No. 4, II. Sarabande*

Measures 1-11

Ysaÿe bases the entire *Sarabande* on the folk-like motive shown in Example 5.3.



Ex. 5.3: *Sonata No. 4, II. Sarabande*, main motive

The score presents this motive as part of a polyphonic texture beginning immediately in measure 1. Surprisingly, violinist Benjamin Schmid (b. 1968) plays two full measures of this motive as an introduction to this movement before starting the first measure as written by Ysaÿe. Although it is obviously not following Ysaÿe’s intentions, this interpretational choice clearly establishes the material upon which the entire movement is based, and for the listener, it is helpful to hear the motive alone in order to recognize Ysaÿe’s compositional use of it throughout the movement.

Measures 31-46

In this section, the main motive is hidden within an arpeggiated, harp-sounding texture. Even though accents are not indicated over the notes outlining the motive, the performer should bring out the melody by playing the melody notes slightly longer and adding vibrato.

Sonata No. 4, III. Finale

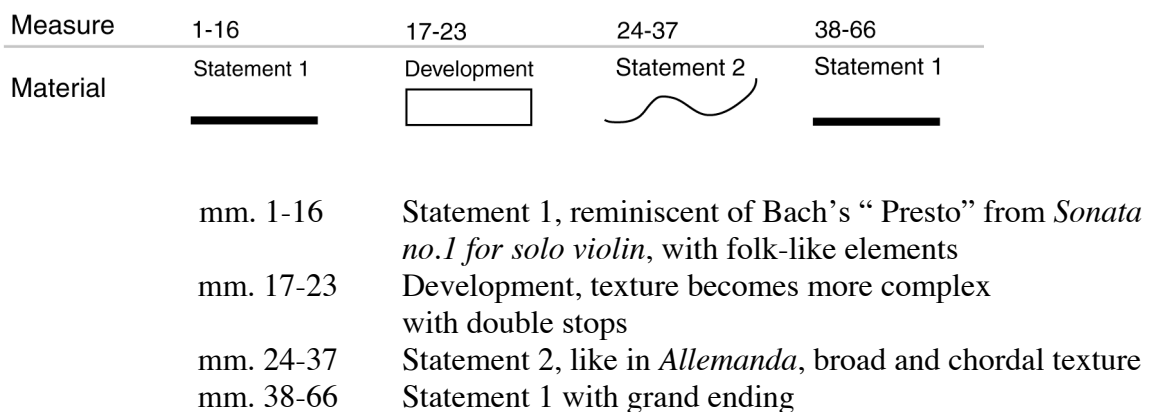
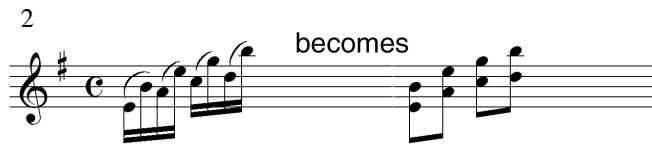


Diagram 5.4: *Sonata No. 4, III. Finale*

Measures 1-16

Measures 2, 8, and 9 present groups of four sixteenth notes, slurred in pairs, as a continuation of the fast-moving sixteenth notes in measures 1, 3, 5, etc. When practicing this section, each pair of the slurred notes can be played as a double stop in the left hand. As shown in Example 5.4, one might first practice the double stops alone, followed by using the bow as originally notated, but retaining the double stop approach in the left hand. The player then has more time to give attention to the bow execution of the slurs and string crossings.



Ex. 5.4: *Sonata No. 4, III. Finale*, m. 2, practicing with double stops

Measure 12 includes a sequential passage in the high register. Since each of the three groups of four sixteenth notes begin with the first finger (as shown in Example 5.5), the violinist should first concentrate on the successful execution of the first finger shifts to prepare the left hand for the passage.



Ex. 5.5: *Sonata No. 4, III. Finale*, m.12, practicing position shifts

In such passages, the violinist should isolate the connections between the first note of each group of sixteenths, making those shifts quickly and accurately before adding the remaining notes. This will help to establish a secure feeling of the positions, especially since they are in the high register.

Measures 17-23

In measure 17, the third group of four sixteenth notes is not marked *spiccato* like the previous two groups, but is to be played slurred. One might consider taking more time on this last grouping, although it is not indicated in the score. As an interpretational detail, this would increase the contrast, which perhaps suits this moment in the movement. It would also give a greater sense of arrival at measures 17 and 18.

Measures 24-37

The middle section of this movement is based on the rhythmic figure shown in Example 5.6.



Ex. 5.6: *Sonata No. 4, III. Finale*, rhythmic motive

Since the melody is interwoven into this chordal figure, practicing the melody line alone is a recommended first step.

In measure 28 and following, the melody line is not in the top voice of the chords. Rather, as shown in Example 5.7, it is in a lower voice. One might easily assume that the top note is the dotted note and therefore the carrier of the melody. Since this is not the case here, the performer should be careful to move quickly to the longer (dotted) note after playing the chord.

28



Ex. 5.7: *Sonata No. 4, III. Finale*, m. 28, practicing the melody note within a chord

CHAPTER 6
SONATA NO. 5

Biography of Mathieu Crickboom

Belgian violinist Mathieu Crickboom (1871-1947) was Ysaÿe's best student, a long-time friend, and later a very close associate. There is not much biographical information available about him. However, it is known that in 1888 Crickboom joined his teacher Ysaÿe to spend many years as the second violinist in Ysaÿe's string quartet. This was the quartet that gave the premiere of Debussy's *String Quartet*. Additionally, in approximately 1892 Crickboom was part of a successful piano trio founded by the composer and pianist Enrique Granados, with Pablo Casals as cellist. Moreover, in 1897, he (together with Casals and Granados) founded a piano Quartet including violist Galvez. Crickboom taught at the Conservatories in Liege and in Brussels.²¹

Sonata Background

Franz Kasperek remarked in the liner notes to Benjamin Schmid's CD, *Ysaÿe: Sonatas for Solo Violin* that this sonata was "technically relatively 'simpler'" than the

²¹ University of Virginia, McIntyre School of Music, 29 April 2001, available from <http://www.virginia.edu/music/releasesarchive/releases00-01/releasewinterstein.html>; Internet; accessed 13 March 2003.

others.²² The naturalistic mood in the first movement of this sonata, and the folk dance melodies in the second movement suggest a tribute to Ysaÿe and Crickboom's shared Belgian homeland. According to some, the second movement carries some memories from picnics that Ysaÿe spent with his students. Apparently, some of the violin exercises that students practiced under the trees are included in this Sonata.²³ The innovative effects with left hand pizzicato indicate the high level of Crickboom's technical ability.²⁴

Pedagogical Approach

Sonata No. 5, I. L'Aurore

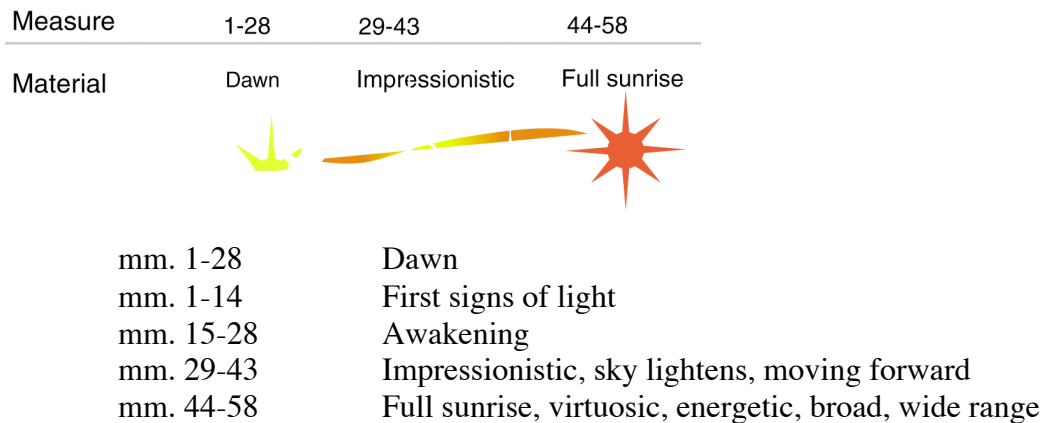


Diagram 6.1: *Sonata No. 5, I. L'Aurore*

²² Franz Kasperek, liner notes from *Six Sonatas for Solo Violin Op. 27*, Benjamin Schmid, violin, (ARTE NOVA Musikproduktions GmbH, 1999), 5.

²³ University of Virginia, McIntyre School of Music, 29 April 2001, available from <http://www.virginia.edu/music/releasesarchive/releases00-01/releasewinterstein.html>; Internet; accessed 13 March 2003.

²⁴ Margaret Campbell, liner notes from *Six Sonatas for Solo Violin, Op. 27*, Oscar Shumsky, violin, (Nimbus, 1982), 6.

Measures 1-28

Ysaÿe marks this section *Mesure très libre* (“very freely measured”). As *L’Aurore* literally means “daybreak” or “sunrise,” the performer can take time to fully express each stage of the process.

In measure 7, the first note, played arco, is marked *sforzando* and is followed immediately by five notes played with left hand pizzicato. The first note of the pizzicato passage is marked *forte* before the diminuendo. If the arco *sforzando* is matched with the dynamic of the first pizzicato note, an effect of an immediate reverberation is created, which then trails off as an echo.

Measure 11 presents another combination of arco and pizzicato. While holding the arco note with the second finger on the D string, one can pluck the second and fourth quarter notes (open G string) with the third finger of the left hand, and the third quarter note (open E string) with the fourth finger. However, in measure 23 one might play the arco note on the A string with the second finger of the right hand, and pluck the double stop (Eb-G) with third finger of the left hand. Since the double stop requires plucking two strings at the same time, this approach may be more successful because the third finger is physically stronger than the fourth finger.

Measures 29-43

The beginnings of measures 29 and 30 each present four grace notes preceding the downbeat quarter note. A slight glissando effect can be used to connect the last grace note to the quarter note on the downbeat. Although this is not marked in the score, it adds to the impressionistic quality of the passage suggested by the meditative and colorful arpeggiated figures.

Measure 31 presents six descending double stops, all but one a half step apart. To avoid reducing the passage to a descending glissando, one can practice the passage at a slow tempo using continuous vibrato, moving from double stop to double stop. When the passage is sped up, the vibrato motion becomes a ‘set and release’ action for each double stop. This approach (shown below in Example 6.1) allows the violinist to feel each of the notes more distinctly while keeping the wrist loose.



Ex. 6.1: *Sonata No. 5, I. L’Aurore*, m. 31, practicing descending double stops

Measures 44-58

In measures 44 through 49, the performer must focus on successfully connecting accented chords, double stops, and highly arpeggiated material. Although the rhythm and tempo markings are very specific in the score, approaching the chords with some freedom of tempo before answering with the arpeggiated material can help to create a contrast between the two.

In measure 56, Ysäye puts an additional bass note in the arpeggiated string crossing figure which previously contained only four notes. Before practicing this passage as written, one might first play it as a four-note figure, omitting the bass note open G string, as shown in Example 6.2. This makes it possible to learn the melodic part of this passage before adding the rhythmic challenge of the new rhythm.

55

56

Ex. 6.2: *Sonata No. 5, I. L'Aurore*, mm. 55-56, preparing quintuplets

Sonata No. 5, II. Danse Rustique

Measure	1-21	22-44	45-64	65-90	91-126
Material	Dance 	Lyrical Section 1 	Lyrical Section 2 	Dance w. development 	Finale
	mm. 1-21	mm. 22-44	mm. 45-64	mm. 65-90	mm. 91-126
		Peasant dance, broad, chordal, 7/8 3/4 5/4 4/4	Lyrical, meditative part, all in double stops, impressionistic	Lyrical, meditative part, more active, left hand pizzicato	Peasant dance and its development
			Final dance, triplets, quadruplets		

Diagram 6.2: *Sonata No. 5, II. Danse Rustique*

Throughout the second movement, one senses that Ysäye wanted to challenge his best student technically. Aside from its musical value, this movement can be described as a summary of various violin techniques for an advanced student. The movement also challenges the performer to delve into his or her expressiveness.

Measures 1-21

The greatest technical challenge in the opening section of the movement is the execution of the chords. One possible approach to these chords is shown in Example 6.3

Measures 22-44

Measures 25 and 26 contain a figure reminiscent of laughter. Perhaps this is a reference to Ysaÿe and Crickboom's close friendship. In the fast-moving descending sequential passages in measures 37, 38, 40, and 42 through 44, a slight *accelerando* (although not marked by Ysaÿe) would add intensity and give direction towards the arrival point at the next down beat. In the ascending passage of measure 44, a slight *ritenuto* would support the transition to new material.

Measures 45-64

In measure 45, Ysaÿe again uses left hand pizzicato, as seen in the first movement. The first three groups of sixteenth note triplets in measure 62 might best be fingered as shown in Example 6.4 because the third finger is stronger to pluck with than the fourth.

stronger weaker

The image shows two musical staves for measure 62. The first staff, labeled 'stronger', shows three groups of sixteenth note triplets with fingerings 3 1 0, 3 1 0, and 3 1 0. The second staff, labeled 'weaker', shows three groups of sixteenth note triplets with fingerings 4 2 0, 4 2 0, and 4 2 0. Both staves are in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C).

Ex. 6.3: *Sonata No. 5, II. Danse Rustique*, m. 62, fingerings

Musical score for Ex. 6.4: Sonata No. 5, II. Danse Rustique, m. 1-21, chord bowings. The score consists of eight staves of music in G major, 5/4 time. The first staff (m. 1) features a melody with eighth notes and chords. The second staff (m. 4) has a melody with eighth notes and chords, including a triplet. The third staff (m. 7) continues the melody with eighth notes and chords. The fourth staff (m. 9) features a complex rhythmic pattern with eighth notes and chords. The fifth staff (m. 11) shows a series of chords with a melodic line. The sixth staff (m. 14) continues the chordal texture with a melodic line. The seventh staff (m. 17) features a series of chords with a melodic line. The eighth staff (m. 20) concludes the passage with a final chord.

Ex. 6.4: *Sonata No. 5, II. Danse Rustique*, m. 1-21, chord bowings

CHAPTER 7
SONATA NO. 6

Biography of Manuel Quiroga

Manuel Quiroga Losada (1892-1961) was one of the greatest Spanish violinists. Critics called him “the finest successor of Pablo de Sarasate.”²⁵ Unfortunately, his career as a violinist was cut short by an accident in 1937. For this reason, Quiroga is the only dedicatee who did not debut Ysaÿe’s sonata. Nevertheless, he gained the reputation of being one of the best violinists of his time. He was also an artist and composer, writing forty-four pieces for solo violin, violin and piano, and violin and orchestra.

Sonata Background

Essentially Spanish in style, this sonata reflects the brilliant playing of Quiroga. Using a freer rhapsodic form, it has fewer inflections of Bach and is closer to the work of Paganini than Ysaÿe’s other sonatas.

²⁵ Ana Luque Fernández “The Works of Manuel Quiroga: A Catalogue” (DMA diss., Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 2002), 1.

Pedagogical Approach

Sonata No. 6









Measure	1-31	30-71	72-75	76-97											
Material	Introduction 	Lyrical section 	Build-up 	Proud section 											
	98-104	105	106-158	159-201	202-218										
	Transition 	Grand pause	Tango 	~ m. 14 + devel. 	Finale 										
	mm. 1-31	mm. 32-71	mm. 72-75	mm. 76-97	mm. 98-104	mm. 105	mm. 106-158	mm. 159-201	mm. 201-218						
							Introduction, cadenza-like	Lyrical section, meditative, Spanish character	Transitional build-up	Technically demanding section	Transition, calming down	Grand pause	Tango	Development of parts of opening material	Finale, virtuosic

Diagram 7.1: *Sonata No. 6*

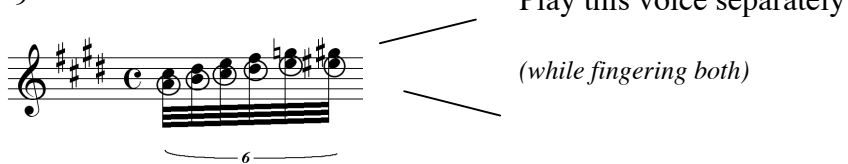
Sonata No. 6 combines many difficult techniques into one movement. There is passage after passage of technical challenges, such as long up and down bow linked staccatos and long lines of slurred double stops which include thirds, sixths, and tenths. Nonetheless, Ysaÿe still maintains grace and charm in this sonata. Written in a Spanish style, it contains flourishes of rapid, difficult passages, as well as lyrical sections incorporating a *tango* or *habanera*-like rhythm.

Measures 1-31

The opening material resembles a virtuosic cadenza, indicating early on that this will be a technically engaging sonata. The nature of the texture in the opening section allows the performer the option of taking more time than indicated, especially when executing the most challenging chords.

Measures 8, 9, and 11 present one of the main challenges in this sonata: fast-moving slurred thirds and octaves. One practice technique to attain greater precision in these three measures is to finger both notes of the double stops with the left hand while playing only one string at a time with the bow, as shown in Example 7.1. This will allow the performer to focus on the intonation of each note.

9



Play this voice separately
(while fingering both)

Ex. 7.1: *Sonata No. 6*, m. 9, isolating voices of double stops

In measures 14 through 16 every other up bow note is marked with a *sforzando*. One might begin by practicing every up bow note with a *sforzando*, giving the right hand an easier task as shown in Example 7.2. It is then a simple matter to reduce the number of *sforzandos* when the right hand is secure.

20



Ex. 7.2: *Sonata No. 6*, m. 20, practicing *sforzandi*

Measures 32-71

Measures 38 and 39 present the challenge of the up bow staccato. Here, the performer may wish to consider use of a “flying staccato.”²⁶

Measures 47 and 48 present descending broken octaves. The player might consider practicing these as double stop octaves first, breaking them later. It may also be helpful to practice this passage backwards, from the last octave to the first.

Measure 50 makes use of descending chromatic thirds, which should be played without a glissando. See Sonata No. 5, movement 1, measures 31 to 32 for a discussion of this technique.

Measures 54 and 56 include arpeggiated chords. These might be practiced first as non-arpeggiated chords, starting with the bow direction indicated in the score. On the down beat of measure 55, it is helpful to play the chord with 2 on the bottom B, and 4 playing both the G and D as harmonics. Even though this fingering is not indicated by Ysaÿe, using harmonics on the chord can produce a more resonant, ringing quality, and assures that the notes will be in tune.

The difficult string crossing passage in measure 70 can be practiced by making every string crossing into a double stop first, as shown in Example 7.3. The purpose of this exercise is to maximize smoothness of the bow.



Ex. 7.3: *Sonata No. 6*, m. 70, practicing string crossings using double stops

²⁶ “Flying staccato” differs from linked staccato in that the bow bounces off the string. An image to help visualize this technique is that of a rock skipping across water.

Measures 76-97

Measures 84 and 85 are especially challenging due to the use of both down bow staccato and double stops. One may first practice the staccato stroke on open strings, later adding the left hand while making sure the bow never plays before the fingers arrive on the double stop. Measures 94 and 95 alternate single notes on down bows and triple stops on up-bows.



Ex. 7.4: *Sonata No. 6*, m. 94, using double stops to practice triple stops

Practicing this passage as double stops as shown in Example 7.4 will develop the ability of the lower two fingers to press at the same time. Later, when playing this part as written, single note first, the other finger will automatically be on the appropriate spot, serving to lead the upper notes.

Measures 98-104

This “calming down” section is the first—and only—time the performer is allowed to relax in this sonata. It provides the work with a contrasting texture, as well as creating space for the player to briefly release the mind and loosen the muscles, in preparation for the next difficult passage. One might consider playing the downbeat of m. 104 on the D string to maintain a balance of color. In the same measure, Ysaÿe indicates three different notations of grace notes. While the first is indicated by four notes, the last one is a trill. The middle one is an ornament best played using a note

speed somewhere between the other two. The ornament should be part of a gradation over the measure; faster than the four grace notes, but slower than the trill.

Measure 105

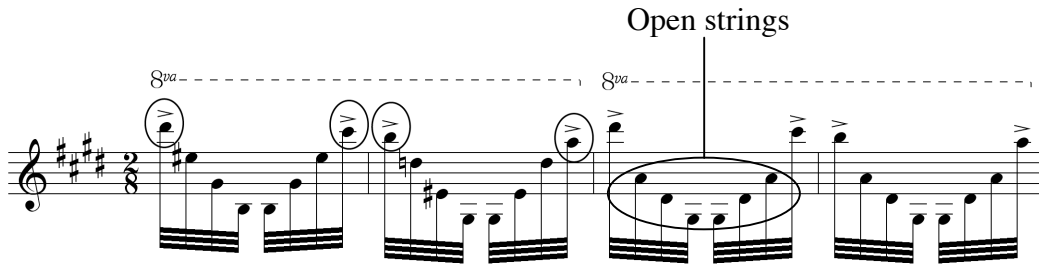
Clearly, Ysaÿe wanted more silence than that indicated by a fermata, thus he inserted a grand pause. This serves to deepen the drama of the following pronounced change in mood.

Measures 106-158

The next passage presents a charming tango with jazz-like harmonies. The singing quality needed here, such as in measure 149 where there is a long slur connecting many notes, can best be achieved using a heavy right hand and very light, articulate left hand.

Measures 159-201

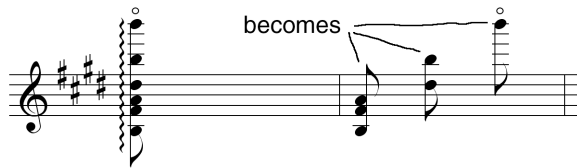
As in the passage beginning with measure 14, the material becomes gradually more difficult to play, having a texture full of thick, fast double stops. Practicing measures 186 through 191 can exploit the use of open strings, first using the bow across the open strings alone. When the left hand is added to these measures, the player should isolate the top accented pitches, playing them very carefully and quickly, so as to develop phrasing of the musical line (the circled notes shown in the first two measures of Example 7.5). Later, one may add the other strings, but leaving them open. These exercises fully prepare approaching the passage as written.



Ex. 7.5: *Sonata No. 6, I.*, m. 186, isolating the melody with arpeggiations

Measures 202-218

Measure 214 contains a six-note chord on the downbeat. This may best be broken by playing the first three notes together, followed by the next two together, and, finally, the last one (a harmonic) by itself.



Ex. 7.6: *Sonata No. 6*, m. 214, practicing a six-note chord

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

Each sonata of Op. 27 brings out the unique personality of its dedicatee, conveying Ysaÿe's friendship with his colleagues for whom the works are written. The works also demonstrate Ysaÿe's mastery as a composer and violinist. The musical language within each sonata is, on one hand, a tribute to violin repertoire written before Ysaÿe, and on the other hand, opens the doors to innovations for the modern violin. Throughout the opus are found references to the music of J. S. Bach and Nicolo Paganini, two composers who greatly influenced Ysaÿe.

In my opinion, these sonatas should be approached by the performer as a whole. For this reason, I do not suggest a particular movement or sonata as a starting point. However, I would note that *Sonata No. 3, Ballade* (Enescu) is the most often performed sonata of Opus 27. It is one movement, and the technical demands are moderate. The most challenging are *Sonata No. 1* (Szigeti) and *Sonata No. 4* (Kreisler) because of their length and variety of technical demands. *Sonata No. 2* (Thibaud) and *Sonata No. 5* (Crickboom) are slightly technically simpler than the other sonatas. *Sonata No. 6* (Quiroga), also a single-movement work, is the most reminiscent of Paganini's style of writing.

I strongly encourage violinists of moderately good technical ability to choose any of the six sonatas for study. Not only does each sonata explore a number of violin techniques, but each also provides a composition of the highest level of artistry.

Although the sonatas are challenging and innovative, the writing is extremely idiomatic for the violin. Studying and performing these sonatas will help the violinist approach other modern works with a fuller understanding of the instrument's natural potential.

I believe the sonatas of Opus 27 should be in the repertoire of every concert violinist. Fortunately, they are becoming less over-looked as more international violin competitions require them for performance. My deep hope is that this recognition of Ysaÿe's works will continue. This document serves as a helpful guide through these deserving and rewarding pieces.

APPENDIX A

Selected list of works by Eugène Ysaÿe

Operas:

Pierre li houïeu

Works for violin and orchestra:

Les neiges d'antan, Op. 2

Scene au rouet, Op. 14

Caprice d'apres l'Etude en forme de valse de Saint-Saens, Op. 20

Divertimento, Op. 24

Fantasia, Op. 32

Works for orchestra:

Meditation, Op. 16

Serenade, Exil, Op. 25

Amitie, Op. 26

Poeme nocturne, Op. 29

Harmonies du soir, Op. 31

Other chamber music:

Variations on Paganini's Caprice No. 24

Trio de concert, Op. 19

Sonata for Violoncello Solo, Op. 28

APPENDIX B

Works dedicated to Eugène Ysaÿe:

César Franck: *Sonata in A major*

Ernest Chausson: *Concert and Poeme*, Op. 25

Fritz Kreisler: *Recitativo and Scherzo*, Op. 6

Claude Debussy: *String Quartet*

Vincent d'Indy: *First String Quartet*

Jules Debeve: *Invocation*

Louis Vierne: *Sonata*, Op. 23

Sylvio Lazzari: *Sonata*, Op. 24

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