

Mastering **THE BOW** PART 3 STUDIES FOR BASS

THEME AND 32 VARIATIONS ADAPTED FROM **OTAKAR ŠEVČÍK**,
OP. 3 FOR VIOLIN, COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF STROKES

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THEMATIC INDEX

Theme

mf

Variation 1 Variation 2 Variation 3 Variation 4

f *p* *f* *f* *p* *f*

Variation 5 Variation 6 Variation 7

f *f* *p* *mf*

Variation 8 Variation 9 Variation 10 Variation 11

f sempre *mf* *mf* *mf*

Variation 12 Variation 13 Variation 14 Variation 15

f *f* *mf* *f*

Variation 16 Variation 17 Variation 18

p *p* *p*

Variation 19 Variation 20 Variation 21

f *f* *mf*

Variation 22 Variation 23 Variation 24 Variation 25

p *f* *p* *p*

Variation 26 Variation 27 Variation 28 Variation 29

mf *mf* *p* *mp dolce*

Variation 30 Variation 31 Variation 32

mp *mf dolce* *mp*

INTRODUCTION

When I was a graduate student in Jeffrey Turner's class in Pittsburgh, he assigned me the *Ševčík for Bass*, which Abe Luboff had produced, to help solidify the core strokes: détaché, martelé, spiccato, brush and ricochet. We would work through these weekly in my lessons, but to "graduate" out of this volume, I had to perform all the twenty variations in one sitting at studio class. This kind of study really showed me how to focus on the details of physical execution and what sets each stroke apart from the others. As the variations are shorter duration, it also made me switch gears quickly the way we often have to in an orchestral audition.

The book we used in Mr. Turner's class had fallen out of print by the time I was assigned to work on it and was full of misnomers and confusing instruction, things that applied perhaps to gut strings and a different mindset than what we are now using. After working on an earlier project which ultimately became *Mastering the Bow, Vol. 1*, I felt it was time to tackle this wonderful set of etudes again and make them available to our bass community. These variations make a great capstone to the learning that happens in volumes 1 and 2, and they are just good fun to work on.

The double bass has come so far in the last few decades; better tools like strings and new bow makers, incredible modern bass luthiers, and now pedagogy that is catching us up to our other string colleagues. I was delighted to see that because of all this, there are now more variations that could be brought over from the violin original; the 32 I am presenting here. There are still some left that I feel do not suit our tuning in fourths. I hope my colleagues who tune in fifths will take up the challenge of those remaining eight variations!

My hope is that this new transcription is fleshed out with enough instruction to help the player get specific goals in mind for each variation. As you work through the three book series of *Mastering the Bow*, stay open and curious about how the bow is interacting with the string, listen to and watch great models of tone production and efficient physical form, and think of this book as a starting point to your own development, not the end goal. Push the envelope of tempos, stretch the dynamics or invert them! And as you go along, share what you are learning with others. The rising tide lifts all boats.

—Gaelen McCormick
Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra
Eastman Community Music School
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GLOSSARY OF BOWING TERMS

Brush	This stroke is related to spiccato, but grazes the string more than bounces off the string. The forearm is more involved in managing this stroke.
Circling	In multiple down bows or up bows, the fluid motion of the right hand to repeatedly bring the frog back to the string. The shape is more of a flat oval that happens as the bow leaves the string and then resets to the string.
Détaché	A stroke that is smooth and even, using a separate bow for each note. There is no break between the notes. The bow is drawn parallel to the bridge. The amount of bow can be as much as a full bow or a very small amount.
Legato	Notes which are played smoothly connected, without interruption.
Martelé	An accented, non-legato stroke produced by pinching the string, then releasing the weight and allowing the bow to travel.
Masking	Hiding the sound of the shift by lightening the weight of the bow and slowing the speed momentarily while the left hand shifts.
Ricochet	A thrown bow stroke, played in the upper half of the bow, the speed of which is controlled by the firmness of the right-hand fingers and the height from which the bow is dropped into the string.
Sautillé	A bouncing stroke that sounds off the string but feels on the string in the bow. Typically played near the middle of the bow, this stroke happens at tempos faster than spiccato.
Slur	Notes grouped under a curved line (slur mark), which are played legato unless marked with articulation such as dots or dashes.
Spiccato	A bounced bow stroke that is played near the balance point, keeping the right upper arm relaxed and using the lower arm and wrist to keep the stroke in motion.
Staccato	Short, non-connected strokes played with a space between each note.

FAMILY TREE OF BOW STROKE DEVELOPMENT

DÉTACHÉ

- smooth, even stroke
- no breaks between the notes
- any part of the bow

MARTELÉ

- articulated stroke
- small break between notes
- any part of the bow

BRUSH

- a wide, off-ish stroke
- played near balance point

SPICCATO

- leaves the string
- played in lower half, balance point area

SAUTILLÉ

- springing stick
- hair stays on string
- played in the middle

RICOCHET

- thrown stroke, bounce controlled by pressure on stick and height of drop
- played upper half to middle

Theme

The Theme provides an easy warm-up. Focus on clean shifts that are masked by the bow weight and speed. Keep a clean, lyrical *détaché* stroke throughout.

OTAKAR ŠEVČÍK, Op. 3

Arranged by Gaelen McCormick

Allegro $\text{♩} = 132$

Musical score for the Theme section, measures 1-17. The score is written in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The tempo is marked Allegro with a quarter note equal to 132 beats per minute. The dynamics are marked *mf* (measures 1-8), *p* (measures 9-16), and *f* (measures 17-18). The music consists of a series of eighth notes with slurs, indicating a *détaché* stroke.

Variation 1

As you begin this variation, reset the bow on the string between each upbow. Working on this at faster tempos, the wrist will circle the bow, and the upbows will come from the air. Our goal is to make all the upbows sound the same. The whole variation is played at the balance point.

$\text{♩} = 116-144$

Musical score for Variation 1, measures 1-24. The score is written in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The tempo is marked with a quarter note equal to 116-144 beats per minute. The dynamics are marked *f* (measures 1-4), *p* (measures 5-8), *f* (measures 9-12), *p* (measures 13-16), and *sim.* (measures 17-24). The music consists of a series of eighth notes with slurs, indicating a *détaché* stroke. The score includes a large watermark '©' and a diagonal line across the page.

Variation 2

This variation is solely spiccato, with a goal to make measures starting upbow sound the same as those starting downbow. Strokes after the rest should start from the string. Once the bow is placed on the string during the rest, feel the resistance of the string before starting the new stroke. Listen carefully at string crossings for attack and volume that match those before the crossing. Notice the different amounts of bow needed to make each string speak clearly. For instance, the G-string will require more bow than the lower strings to give the same sounding length of note. The right upper arm should remain relaxed as you perform this variation.

$\text{♩} = 144$

f spiccato

set bow

set bow

sim.

5

9

p

13

mf

17

f

21

Variation 23

Here the challenge is the clarity of the two slurred notes followed by the two brush strokes under the same slur. As you slur, release the second note then begin the brush stroke. Keep the bow moving to keep the sound from choking. Plan your bow speed for m. 3; the upbow has one more note than in the previous measures. Always think musically! Taper at the end of m. 4 and anywhere you hear the phrase ending.

$\text{♩} = 72-80$

f

5

9

13

17

p

21

Variation 24

This variation takes control and thoughtful placement near the middle of the stick for the execution of the upbows in the first two measures and the sautillé of the next two measures. The sautillé stroke stays in one spot, even when it changes from starting upbow to starting downbow on the beat.

Allegro ♩ = 126–144

p

sautillé

4

7

f

10

13

16

p

19

22

f