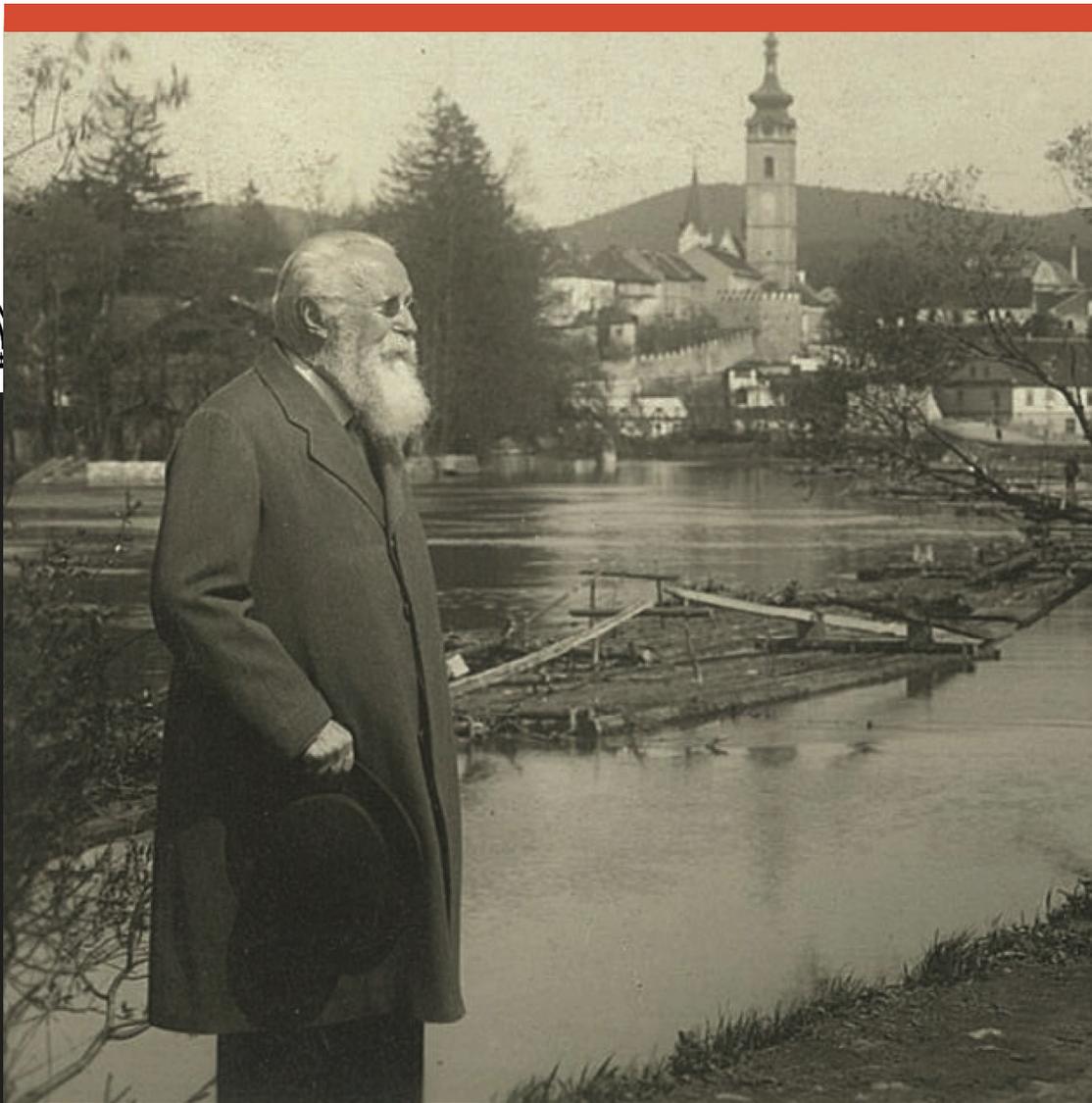


THE ESSENTIAL ŠEVČÍK

A Critical Collection
of the Most Important Exercises
for Violin Technique by Otakar Ševčík



Edited by Endre Granat & Stephen Shipps



PREFACE

The Essential Sevcik is a concise compendium of the finest and most efficient learning material for violin culled from the complete works* of the great Czech Master. The straightforward organization of this volume will prove indispensable for building a thorough, virtuoso technique and an important part of the daily practice regimen for the accomplished artist.

** Includes selected studies from:*

- Op. 1. School of Violin Technique, Volumes 1, 2, 3 and 4
- Op. 2. School of Bowing Techniques, Volumes 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6
- Op. 3. Forty Variations
- Op. 8. Changes of Position and Preparatory Scale Studies
- Op. 9 Preparatory Studies in Double-Stopping

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i>	4
---------------------------	---

PART 1: LEFT HAND

I. Exercises in One Position

First Position.....	7
Second Position.....	22
Third Position.....	25
Fourth Position.....	29
Fifth Position.....	32
Sixth Position.....	34
Seventh Position.....	36

II. Shifting Exercises	39
-------------------------------------	-----------

III. Double Stops and Chords

Double Stops.....	80
Chords.....	139

IV. Pizzicato and Harmonics

Pizzicato.....	142
Harmonics.....	145

PART 2: SCALES

Scales on one string.....	151
Three-octave scales.....	152
Three-octave scales with all key signatures.....	155
Arpeggios on one string.....	156
Three-octave arpeggios.....	157
Chromatic scales.....	162
Two-octave arpeggios on one string.....	163
Octaves.....	164
Thirds.....	167
Chromatic Thirds.....	169
Sixths.....	169

PART 3: RIGHT HAND

I. Bowing Exercises	172
----------------------------------	------------

II. Strings Crossings

Crossing two strings.....	185
Skipping one or two strings.....	195
Crossing three strings.....	199
Crossing four strings.....	217

III. Theme With 40 Bowing Variations	230
---	------------

<i>Abbreviations and Symbols</i>	247
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Introduction

Otakar Ševčík was born in the small Bohemian hamlet of Horaždovice in 1852. At the age of 5, he began piano lessons and two years later switched to violin. At 13, Ševčík entered the Prague Conservatory, first as a student of Antonin Sitt. The following year he was accepted into the class of Antonin Bennewitz, the leading professor of the Conservatory. He graduated with top honors in 1870.

An outstanding virtuoso, Ševčík was immediately engaged as Concertmaster and Professor at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria. The 18-year-old violinist became a celebrated soloist in both Salzburg and Prague, earning rave reviews. He befriended Bedřich Smetana and became Concertmaster of his orchestra.

In 1873 Ševčík had a short and unhappy engagement as Concertmaster of the Comic Opera in Vienna. After resigning, he abruptly left Austria and moved to Russia. After two years in Moscow, Ševčík became Professor at the Russian Music Society's School of Music in Kiev, Ukraine. While in Kiev, he taught many students, mostly of mediocre ability. In this period, major talents in Russia either studied abroad or at the more prestigious conservatories such as Saint Petersburg and Moscow.

Violin teachers in the 18th and 19th centuries considered technique to be a special gift that could not be taught. Teachers seldom offered advice as to the most efficient motion sequence, the most efficient practice method or the most beneficial study material. Basic technical studies such as those by Schradieck, Dounis and Ševčík had not yet been written; therefore long-winded etudes and repertory were used in the futile hope of fostering technical improvement.

With such an approach, only a tiny percentage of students attained professional performance level. Ševčík's goal was to raise the technical proficiency of **all** his students. He believed that although each individual violinist possesses varying levels of talent, with proper guidance **all** could achieve substantial progress.

Ševčík refined his teaching method to develop the performance level of his students. He realized that every aspect of violin technique could be vastly improved with proper exercises. He addressed every conceivable problem and devised concise formulas that contained the key to problem solving. These single-purpose exercises, sometimes only a few notes long and seldom exceeding a bar in length, were tailor-made to the individual student's needs. Ševčík realized that solving the same problem often required different approaches for different pupils.

1878 brought dramatic changes in violin repertoire. Both the Tchaikovsky and the Brahms Violin Concertos were composed, bringing new and substantial challenges to violinists. To answer the demand of violinists everywhere and to enable them to perform the new masterpieces, Ševčík wrote his first pedagogical masterworks:

Opus 1 School of Violin Playing, Hoffmann, Prague, 1881

Opus 2 School of Bowing Technique, Hug, Leipzig, 1892

Opus 8 Changes of Position, Hug, Leipzig, 1892

These single-purpose exercises do not and were never meant to replace the standard etudes by Kreutzer, Rode, Gaviniès and Dont. The usefulness of this classic material was unquestioned in Ševčík's mind. Rather, Ševčík's exercises were meant to focus on individual components of technical difficulties and offered solutions that led to flawless performances.

As Professor at the Kiev Music School, Ševčík also taught chamber music and conducted the orchestra. He performed masterfully, but infrequently. His past students formed the backbone of the professional orchestras in Kiev, Kharkov and Odessa. Many of his Kiev pupils became important pedagogues, among them Joseph Karbulka who carried on the Ševčík legacy. In the following generation Pyotr Stolyarsky (a Karbulka disciple) taught Nathan Milstein, David and Igor Oistrakh, Elisaveta Gilels, Boris Goldstein, Eduard Grach, and many others who were all beneficiaries of the Ševčík Method.

In 1892, Ševčík left Kiev and became Professor at his alma mater, the Prague Conservatory, an institution that traditionally attracted many superior talents. Unfortunately his substantial teaching commitments, his pedagogical writing and serious health issues ended Ševčík's performing career.

Ševčík's student, Jan Kubelik, became the most successful soloist in the world during the first decade of the 20th century, bringing fame not only to him but Ševčík as well. Kubelik's recordings and Ševčík's publications reached every corner of the globe and the Master's fame was at its zenith. As a result of their spectacular success hundreds of budding violinists flocked to study with the Ševčík in Prague and Pisek, where he had established a summer workshop. It is estimated that in his lifetime Ševčík taught around 5,000 students! He commanded the highest fees among violin pedagogues internationally. Many of his other pupils became well known international performers including Jaroslav Kocian, Erica Morini, Efrem Zimbalist and Wolfgang Schneiderhan. Many famous touring virtuosos such as Jacques Thibaud, Paul Kochanski, Szymon Goldberg sought pedagogical advice from Ševčík in the middle of their respective solo careers.

In 1909, Ševčík became Professor at the Vienna Music Academy, while maintaining his private studio in Pisek. He took members of his Vienna studio to perform in London repeatedly to huge success. At the end of World War I, Ševčík returned to Prague as Emeritus Professor. He also gave master courses in London, Chicago, Boston, New York City and Ithaca, while continuing his summer classes in Pisek and Mondsee in Austria.

As early as 1875, Ševčík wrote exercises for each of his students to help overcome technical problems presented by the repertory. The first effort to organize such exercises in published form took shape in 1904, his *Op.5 Preparation for 24 Studies by Dont Op.35*. * In 1929, the 77-year old Ševčík expanded this revolutionary approach to teaching performance material. He began the colossal task of writing repertory-specific exercises for the Concertos of Wieniawski, Tchaikovsky, Brahms, (including the Cadenza by Joachim), Mendelssohn and Paganini. ** A compendium, *Op.16 School of Performing*, includes works by Paganini, Ernst, Wieniawski, Bazzini and a host of others. Ševčík's last published work is his edition of the Kreutzer Etudes with special exercises.

All these works include a sizable volume of analytical studies that guide the student through every intricacy of the work at hand. Ševčík describes these studies in his published introduction to Op. 17-21, "After having studied the separate interval and analytical studies, absolutely perfect and ideal performance, rid from technical difficulties is obtained."

The great pedagogue, Carl Flesch writes the following in *The Art of Violin Playing*, "I regard the Ševčík study works as the most important and time-saving means for obtaining a modern violin technique, provided that they are used the right way. Owing to their voluntary restriction to the mechanism of movement, have furnished the securest foundation imaginable for the acquisition of a perfect technique with the greatest saving of time."

As a daily dose, Flesch recommends a half hour per day as the maximum time expenditure for Ševčík's left hand exercises and no more than 10 bowing exercises per day. Flesch's student, Bronislav Gimpel often quoted his teacher's exhortation, "There are only two kinds of violinists--Those who do practice Ševčík and those who should."

At the time of his death in 1934, Ševčík left his sizeable fortune to violin students in need of housing, instruments, scholarships, tuition and monthly stipends. However, during the Nazi occupation of Prague, the fund disappeared. In the eighty years since the passing of Otakar Ševčík, his work has found permanent place in the practice material of violinists internationally.

* This unpublished work was lost for over a hundred years until found by Endre Granat.

**All recently published in Critical Editions with Urtext solo parts by Lauren Keiser Music Publishing.

PART 1: LEFT HAND

I. EXERCISES IN ONE POSITION

First Position

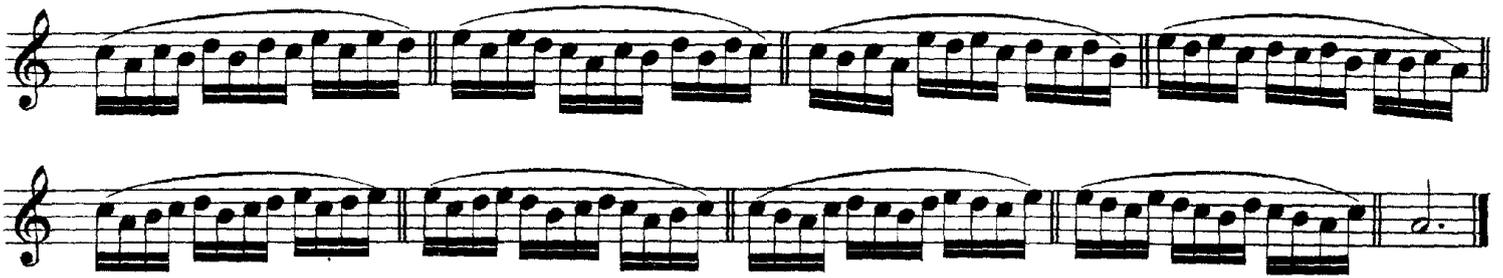
Exercises on One String.

1.

Repeat each measure several times, first slowly then quickly, *détaché* and legato. Practice this exercise on E-string, D-string and G-string as well.

Execution:





2.

Practice this exercise on E-string, A-string and G-string as well.

2. $\text{♩} = 144.$

Allegretto. $\text{♩} = 88.$

Allegro. $\text{♩} = 144.$

Var. 40.

arpeggio

Bowings

Moderato. $\text{♩} = 108.$

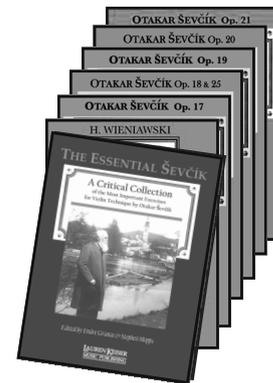
Allegro. $\text{♩} = 132.$

Abbreviations and Symbols

G.....	Whole bow
H.....	Half bow
o.H.	Upper half
u.H.	Lower half
Fr.....	Frog
M.....	Middle of bow
Sp.....	Tip
▣.....	Down Bow
∨.....	Up Bow
•.....	Martelé
—.....	Detaché
‡.....	Spiccato or sautillé
).....	Lift bow off string
1/3B.....	1/3 bow
M*.....	To be practiced at the middle, tip and frog
I.....	E String
II.....	A String
III.....	D String
IV.....	G String

Otakar Ševčík Series

In 1881, Otakar Ševčík, the 29 year-old newly appointed professor of the Kiev Conservatory, forever changed the way violin technique would be studied with the publication of his Op. 1, *Violin Left-Hand Technique*. Nearly fifty years after the appearance of this ground-breaking work, Ševčík's pioneering spirit took him in the new direction of writing repertoire-specific exercises. His method of teaching included the writing of short exercises that addressed a specific technical skill. Ševčík analyzed a concerto, or a virtuoso showpiece, and isolated the inherent technical problems in order to focus on one issue at a time. Gradually, the student would put the puzzle pieces together and be able to successfully perform a difficult work in its entirety.



Each edition includes a solo violin part, a piano accompaniment and the Analytical Studies written for the particular piece. These Analytical Studies and Exercises have been out of print for over seventy-five years. This new printing of these repertoire-specific Ševčík exercises is now available for an entirely new generation of violinists. Accompanying each volume is a modern edition of each selected work by our editors, Endre Granat and Stephen Shippis. Additional publications in the series are planned for works by Paganini, Bazzini, Ernst, Sevcik and Sarasate.

Op. 16 Wieniawski Scherzo-Tarantelle with Analytical Studies S511012

This edition is based upon years of study with Editor Stephen Shippis' teacher, Josef Gingold. Gingold studied the Scherzo-Tarantelle with Eugène Ysaye who in turn studied it directly with the composer, Henryk Wieniawski. Practical suggestions from Wieniawski are marked *ossia* in the violin part. The original manuscript and first edition published by Freidrich Kistner of Leipzig were consulted in making this the first ever edition to combine a modern version of the violin part with the historic and timeless exercises by Ševčík.

Op. 17 Wieniawski Violin Concerto in d minor with Analytical Studies..... S511014

The Violin Concerto in d minor op.22 shows Wieniawski the composer in full maturity. The thematic material ranges from the beautifully lyrical first movement to the fiery *a la Zingara*. The virtuoso violin part is brilliantly written. The composer first presented this concerto in 1862 in St.Petersburg. Though the performance was a rousing success, Wieniawski rewrote and condensed the piece during the next six years. In 1868 he performed the work in its present form. This edition is based on the original orchestra score and violin piano reduction printed in 1870 by Schott in Mainz, Germany.

Op. 18 & 25 Brahms Violin Concerto in D Major with Analytical Studies S511017

Johannes Brahms dedicated his only Violin Concerto to the great Hungarian violinist, Joseph Joachim. Joachim's suggestions have been sought by the composer for creating the solo part. At the same time he wrote a Cadenza that met with Brahms' approval and is perhaps the most often performed cadenza of the Concerto. This edition is the first to unite the critical Urtext versions of the Concerto, the Cadenza by Joachim, and the corresponding Ševčík op. 18 and op. 25 studies.

Op. 18 Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto Op. 35 in D Major with Analytical Studies..... S511013

In 1893, Leopold Auer finally returned to Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto that he had refused to premiere despite the work being dedicated to him. Nonetheless, Auer published an edition of the work with substantial revisions and cuts that catapulted it into the mainstream of the violin concerto repertoire. The unique aspect of this edition is the Violin part which includes both the original and the Leopold Auer edition. This publication presents the first opportunity for performers to utilize both versions to create their own unique interpretation of this great work.

Op. 20 Paganini Violin Concerto No. 1 in D major with Analytical Studies S511016

After being out of print for over 75 years, Ševčík's practice guide to Paganini's ultimate display piece for violin and orchestra is available for the first time with this modern and corrected publication. This Urtext edition includes a new violin part prepared from the manuscript with practical applications and suggestions throughout, as well as a corrected cadenza of Emile Sauret, edited by distinguished violin artist and professor Stephen Shippis.

Op. 21 Mendelssohn Violin Concerto in e minor with Analytical Studies..... S511011

This critical Urtext edition of Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto is derived from both the original manuscript score and the first published version by Breitkopf and Härtel. The editor has resolved the minor differences between these two sources. This edition reunites the concerto with the accompanying exercises by world renowned pedagogue, Otakar Ševčík, for the first time since its initial publication. These repertoire-specific exercises address each measure of this entire concerto and suggest solutions for its technical difficulties.

THE ESSENTIAL ŠEVČÍK A Critical Collection of the Most Important

NEW

Exercises for Violin Technique by Otakar Ševčík S510008

Edited by Endre Granat and Stephen Shippis, this compendium presents the finest, most time-saving learning material by Otakar Ševčík ever assembled in a single volume. It is indispensable for building a thorough, virtuoso technique and an important part of the daily practice regimen for the accomplished artist. These exercises are to be practiced with total concentration and attention to the smallest detail. The clear and straight forward organization of this volume will facilitate finding the most suitable practice material for every violinist.