

Foreword

For the wide and ever - increasing number of teachers who want to impart to their pupils the elementary technical principles of violin playing in a more scientific and rational way, this work has been especially written.

The material contained herein is presented not only with this view in mind, but is also in such manner arranged as to enable the young violinist to lay a solid technical foundation in order to meet successfully, later on, the exigencies of modern music.

As already stated in my method "The Artist's Technique of Violin Playing," technique does not consist merely in training the fingers and the arm but, principally, in training the brain and the memory. Technique should be a process of mental training. The student should be accustomed from the very beginning of his studies to think each movement *before* making it; he must have a distinct picture of each physical movement reflected in the brain before he makes it actual, spontaneously, through will power. Technique should be nothing else but a series of brain-reflected movements.

Scientific analysis along psycho - physiological lines shows that in the execution of any physical act three factors have to be considered: the mental factor which conceives the movement, the nervous factor which transmits the movement to the muscles, and the muscular factor which performs the movement. The purpose of practice is to co - ordinate the mental, the nervous, and the muscular factors to such a degree of swift responsiveness as to develop the whole process into a reflex action. Here the difference between mechanical and intelligently guided and controlled - practice must be pointed out:

The result of mechanical practice is uncontrolled reflex action.

The result of mentally directed practice is controlled reflex action.

One of the principal aids for the higher development of technique should now be mentioned, namely, the control of speed. Paradoxical as it may seem,

it must be stated that active interference of the brain during the execution of a rapid passage acts as a brake and hinders velocity. In other words, it is impossible for the player to control each note of the passage when playing it at a fast tempo. The explanation is that in a rapid passage, individual reflex actions become so swift as to be automatic-involuntary - because even the swiftest mind, on account of the great speed, cannot control each one of them. The secret of controlling these involuntary, swift reflex actions - control of speed - lies in the ability of the mind to analyse them in detail by dividing them into groups.* The control of these groups of reflex actions - and not of each reflex action separately - makes for absolute certainty and freedom in technique, whenever rapidity is the aim.

The much prevailing habit and belief among violin players of repeating every day blindly and unintelligently scales, arpeggios, etc., in the hope that this will, in some magic way, solve all technical difficulties, cannot be too strongly condemned. Under this come also all those so-called discoveries of secret systems to acquire technical proficiency on the violin and which have been offered to the violin world from time to time by teachers whose good will is beyond doubt, but, unfortunately, without Paganini's permission for the use of his famous name.

The student should never be allowed to perform a movement in a mechanical way without thinking first. Such practice is useless. The mechanical repetition of a passage does not produce results, except fatigue. On the contrary, by a patient, persistent and above all, intelligent practice along scientific lines not only certain and permanent results will be obtained, but the student will save himself time and nervous energy, two prerequisites for the success of a professional career at the present time. "Obtain the maximum of results with a minimum of time and toil" should be the motto of every student; this is also the motto of the present work.

D. C. DOUNIS.

* I have adopted this method for developing the staccato bowing. See my Op. 21: "The Staccato."

Directions for Practising

(To be strictly observed)

1. Try to keep the back of the knuckle joints of the four fingers of the left hand parallel to the strings.
2. Remember to vibrate on every note as freely as possible; contrary to general belief, this is of paramount importance for a correct technical foundation of the left hand.
3. The playing finger should be placed on the string firmly, with a decided, non-quivering, independent and vigorous finger action. Keep all other non-playing fingers relaxed; the fingers preceding the playing one should touch lightly, relaxed, the string on their respective tones. But do not forget to use the playing finger as vigorously as possible.
4. Raise the fingers in their entirety, retaining their natural curved state; the finger away from the string should have the same curved shape as when on the string.
5. Cultivate the feeling of raising the finger from the string and letting it drop on it, dropping the finger in order to play an ascending tone, raising it for a descending one.
6. Avoid any "breaks" in the continuous flow of tone.
7. When crossing strings with the bow, approach the new string gradually and by a co-ordinated, elastic movement of the arm, hand and fingers obtain a perfect binding of the tone during the change of string level.
8. Let your elbow describe a round line following the curve of the bridge.
9. Imagine that you are moving the bow on a round surface.
10. Once again: think before playing. Visualize the correct movement required to play the desired tone and then, and only then, proceed to the actual playing of it.

Fundamental Technical Studies

ON A SCIENTIFIC BASIS

For the Young Violinist

D. C. DOUNIS, Op. 23

I

CULTIVATING THE FEELING OF BALANCE BETWEEN THE FINGERS OF THE LEFT HAND

The main objective of the young violinist, as far as the left hand is concerned, should be to acquire the "feeling of balance" between the fingers. We know that the third and fourth fingers are by nature weaker than the first and second. No amount of finger exercises for strengthening the weak third and fourth fingers will achieve the desired result if the student does not constantly bear in mind that what should be aimed

at is not the development of strength but the cultivation of balance between the fingers. To attain this purpose the following specific exercises are offered. Their sole aim is to divide the natural power and strength of the fingers equally between the four fingers, thereby enabling the student to acquire the feeling of balance in his hand and between the fingers.

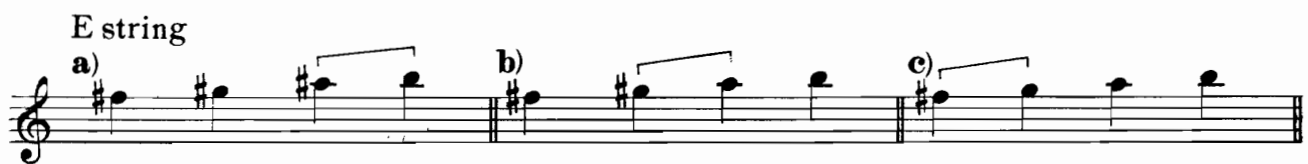
This musical score is written for guitar in 3/4 time. It consists of two systems, each with two staves. The first system is labeled with a large '3' at the beginning. The second system is labeled with a large '4'. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. Many notes are marked with a '4' above them, indicating a four-finger fingering. The score includes repeat signs (double bar lines with dots) and various phrasing slurs. The notation is clear and detailed, showing the specific fingering and articulation for each note.



The ability to space the fingers at will, i.e., the formation of tones, semitones, etc., between them, is of primary importance not only for developing the intonation, but also for developing flexibility

in the setting of the fingers on the strings. Following are three groups of different spacings of the fingers in the natural first position.

Group I- TWO TONES AND ONE SEMITONE



Group II- WHOLE TONES



Group III- TWO SEMITONES AND ONE TONE AND A HALF

G string
 a) b) c)
 D string
 a) b) c)
 A string
 a) b) c)
 E string
 a) b) c)

The exercises 1) to 6) should be practised in the different spacings of the fingers, as exemplified in the above three groups.

Each position on the violin has three forms: the natural, the lower and the higher. The lower and higher forms are often called intermediate positions. The lower form of the first position is

called half-position. The exercises 1) to 6) should also be practised in all three forms of the first position, as this will greatly aid the student to acquire a correct mental picture of the relative position of the tones in the first position in any key. Following is an illustration of the three forms of the first position.

Example a) of Group I is used as illustration:

	LOWER POSITION	NATURAL POSITION	HIGHER POSITION
G string			
D string			
A string			
E string			