

Utilizing Standard Violin Orchestral Excerpts as a Pedagogical Tool: A New Analytical Study
Guide with Functional Exercises for Each Excerpt

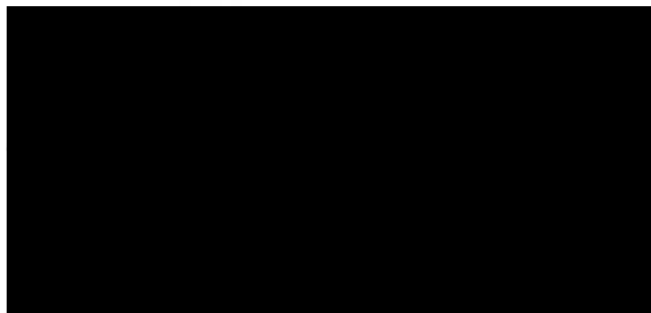


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Purpose

Orchestral excerpts are frequently requested for various types of auditions such as summer festivals, youth and college orchestras, and professional orchestral positions. Playing selected orchestral excerpts has, for a long time, been the preferred method to evaluate a musician's technique and musical understanding. Since orchestral excerpts offer technical challenges and, at the same time, incorporate musical elements, they serve as a pedagogical tool to improve violin playing. Violinists often are not exposed to orchestral excerpts as part of their regular education until their studies in college. Since standard orchestral excerpts play such a significant role, they should be incorporated into violin lessons alongside scales and etudes.

In this research I will show that there are currently only two books available that exclusively utilize violin orchestral excerpts as a pedagogical tool. In the first work, James E. Smith offers a large number of standard orchestral excerpts with only brief technical description.¹ In the second, Susan Brown provides exercises by transforming each excerpt into a scale as an innovative approach to learning.² However, neither of these authors provides sufficient analytical descriptions or practical exercises for developing specific violin techniques. In this research I will provide short exercises and etudes based on ten selected excerpts to improve advanced violin techniques. In this project, orchestral excerpts will be used as a supplement to existing standard etudes. Students will benefit from these exercises, while learning ten excerpts selected for this document.

¹ James E. Smith, *Using Orchestral Excerpts As Study Material for Violin; A Progressively Graded Survey*, (Urbana, Ill: American String Teachers Association, 1966).

² Susan C. Brown, *String Players' Guide to the Orchestra: Orchestral Repertoire Excerpts, Scales, and Studies for String Orchestra and Individual Study (for Violin)*, (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Pub. Co, 2008).

Significance and State of Research

Building a violinist's technical foundation requires a large number of scales, arpeggios, and etudes. Technique is an essential element to master compositional works that are written for or include the violin such as concertos, symphonies, and chamber music repertoire by Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Brahms, and Sibelius, just to name a few. Scales, arpeggios, double stops, combined with bow strokes such as *detaché*, *martelé*, and *spiccato*, are some of the major technical challenges in such works. Violinists develop these techniques by studying etudes and exercises composed by violinist-pedagogues from the end of eighteenth century to the twentieth century, such as Rodolphe Kreutzer (1766-1831), Pierre Rode (1774-1830), Pierre Gaviniès (1728-1800), Niccoló Paganini (1782-1840), Henryk Wieniawski (1831-1880), Otakar Ševčík (1852-1934), Henry Schradieck (1846-1918), and modern ones, such as Leopold Auer (1845-1930), Carl Flesch (1873-1944), Ivan Galamian (1903-1981), and others.³

Essentially, an etude is “a short complete composition designed to exercise the students in certain technical procedure, sometimes specified by the composers.”⁴ Some etudes isolate a single technique and have more of a generic nature for training purposes, such as works by Ševčík, Schradieck, Kayser, Wohlfahrt, and Kreutzer. Techniques in their compositions such as *detaché*, *martelé*, trills, string crossing, scales, or arpeggios are often written in repetitive patterns to help the student drill a particular technique.

Other etudes present technical and interpretative challenges, which can be more suitable to perform on stage. These diverse and musically satisfying etudes often carry the title *Caprice*,

³ Robin Stowell, “The Pedagogical Literature,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Violin*, ed. Robin Stowell, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 229

⁴ *Ibid*, 230.

which is in fact a “technical or virtuosic study.”⁵ Hence, they are used as both a pedagogical tool and standalone performance piece for intermediate and advanced players. Violinist Axel Strauss, who recorded the entire *Twenty-Four Caprices for Violin* (1815) by Pierre Rode, states “the Caprices provide not only great material for working on basic elements of violin technique, such as intonation, coordination of the hands, various bow strokes and bow distribution, they also can help you develop a well-balanced, singing tone.”⁶ Well known caprices include Paganini’s *Twenty-Four Caprices for solo violin* (1818), Gaviniès’ *Twenty-Four Etudes of Violin* (1794), Fiorillo’s *Thirty-Six Etudes or Caprices for Violin Solo*, Wieniawski’s *Ecole Moderne 10 Etudes-Caprices, Op. 10* (1854), and Alard’s *Twenty-Four Etudes-Caprices Op. 41* (1921), and others.

In addition to the abovementioned etudes, violin pedagogues have written books demonstrating techniques through excerpts from the violin repertoire with instructions or exercises. Such instances can be found in Franco-Belgian violinist-pedagogue Charles Auguste de Bériot’s *Schule Des Höheren Violinspiels (Violin School for Artistic Playing Supplement to the Method) Op. 123* (1890).⁷ There are other pedagogical works published in the twentieth century which use violin repertoire, such as Ševčík’s *Analytical Studies for Tchaikovsky’s Violin Concerto, Op. 19*.⁸ Within this work, Ševčík creates interval and analytic exercises by dissecting difficult passages into small fragments to master this concerto. Example 1 shows the opening melody of Tchaikovsky’s Violin Concerto. Interval exercises (example 2) are made for every

⁵ Schwandt Erich, “*Capriccio (i)*,” *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed October 8, 2013, <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/04867>>

⁶ Axel Strauss, “How to Play the Rode Caprices,” *Strings Magazine* (August 2010) under “Violin Music: The Musicality of Rode’s Caprices,” http://www.naxos.com/sharedfiles/PDF/How_to_Play_Rode_Caprices.pdf. [accessed June 2013].

⁷ Waldemar Meyer, ed. Bériot, Charles de. *Schule des höheren Violinspiels, Op. 123*, (Leipzig: Steingrüber-Verlag, 1890z).

⁸ Otakar Ševčík, *Elaborate Studies and Analysis bar to bar to P.I. Tchaikovsky, Op. 35 Concerto in D Major with revised solo voice and complete piano score, Op. 19*, (Brno: Ol. Pazdírek, 1930).

interval from measure 23 to 28 of this concerto. Repetitions and variations are applied to build up better intonation. Analytic exercises are written to improve bowing, phrasing, dynamics, and articulation. By creating numerous ways to practice from simplified to original versions, Ševčík represents his insight of how to gradually accomplish each segment.

Example 1. Mm19-27 from Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto, Op. 35.⁹

Example 2. Interval and Analytical Studies for Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto, Op. 19 by Ševčík.¹⁰

⁹ Ševčík, *Solo Violin Part*.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p5.

Similar to Ševčík's work, Maxim Jacobsen's *Mendelssohn Violin Concerto Op. 64, Twenty-Four Preparatory Exercises* (1961) (Example 3) comprises of multiple exercises from the concerto broken down into various technical angles to help master every difficult passage.¹¹ George Szigeti, in his *A Violinist's Notebook*, gives brief commentary on technique and interpretation and occasionally short exercises on how to practice passages from a vast collection of violin repertoire. *The Art of Violin Playing Book 2* by Carl Flesch uses a number of short musical examples to demonstrate different techniques.¹² Moreover, the series of *Graded Course of Violin Playing* by Leopold Auer (1845-1930), a renowned Hungarian violinist, pedagogue, and composer, provides a comprehensive and practical outline of violin study.¹³ In book eight of this series, Auer extracts passages from a number of existing materials, including concertos, sonatas, and caprices by other composers to demonstrate advanced techniques, such as octave playing, trills, spiccato, and harmonics. However, none of these pedagogical resources include orchestral excerpts as a tool for technical training. The introduction of orchestral excerpts into pedagogical literature has appeared only within the last fifty years.

¹¹ Maxim Jacobsen, *Mendelssohn Violin Concerto Op. 64, Twenty-Four Preparatory Exercises*, (C. F. Peters, 1961).

¹² Carl Flesch, *The Art of Violin Playing, Book 2*, (New York, NY: C. Fischer, 1930).

¹³ Leopold Auer, preface to *Graded Course of Violin Playing, Book 1*, (S.l.: S.n., 1926).

Example 3. Exercises No. 3 from Mendelssohn *Violin Concerto Op. 64, Twenty-Four Preparatory Exercises* by Maxim Jacobsen.¹⁴

Robert Baldwin, Director of Orchestral Activities at the University of Utah, and Director of the Salt Lake Symphony, published an article titled “*Orchestral Excerpts as Etudes*” for viola in 1995.¹⁵ He suggests that teachers replace part of the technical studies with orchestral excerpts in weekly lessons. This way, the student has learned the excerpts alongside scales and etudes without adding extra work and preparation. In addition, teachers assign scales and studies to their students not only to cultivate certain techniques, but also to build up the ability to play actual repertoire. By practicing orchestral excerpts, advanced students will progress their technical development while learning the symphonic repertoire.

¹⁴ Maxim Jacobsen, *Mendelssohn Violin Concerto Op. 64, Twenty-Four Preparatory Exercises*, (C. F. Peters, 1961), p2.

¹⁵ Robert Baldwin, "Orchestral Excerpts as Etudes," *American String Teacher* 45.3 (1995): 51-53.

James E. Smith in *Using Orchestral Excerpts as Study Material for Violin* displays the idea of adopting orchestral excerpts as a pedagogical tool. Smith provides a survey of commonly requested orchestral excerpts supplied with technical identification.¹⁶ He divides orchestral excerpts into different levels of difficulty, and identifies the techniques in them. However, there is yet to be any practical exercise to master those techniques mentioned in his study.

William Starr's *Twenty-Six Composers Teach the Violinist* (1980) encompasses a variety of musical examples.¹⁷ Examples include solo pieces, chamber music, and symphonic works which are also intended to be used as a supplement to scales and studies. Only six of the frequently asked orchestral excerpts are included into his book.

Another collection that is devoted to orchestral excerpts is *String Players' Guide to the Orchestra* by Susan C. Brown.¹⁸ Brown believes that students acquire fundamental performance techniques by adapting scales and arpeggios into the pieces.¹⁹ She creates exercises by utilizing the rhythmic and bowing materials directly from the excerpts, and transforms them into scales (see Example 5). These exercises focus on how to practice particular bowings and articulations, but do not represent the original melodic lines and other musical elements in the excerpts. For example, the preparatory exercise for the excerpt from Mozart's *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* in Example 5 uses the same bowings as the opening motive of the excerpt. The author builds the exercise on a C major scale, shown as *Scale 6*. This scale helps students practice the strokes in the first two measures of the excerpt; however, there is no indication of tempo, bow placement,

¹⁶ James E. Smith, *Using Orchestral Excerpts As Study Material for Violin; A Progressively Graded Survey*, (Urbana, Ill: American String Teachers Association, 1966).

¹⁷ William J. Starr, *Twenty-six Composers Teach the Violinist: Creative Etudes from Well-known Literature*, (Knoxville, TN: Kingston Ellis, 1980).

¹⁸ Susan C. Brown, *String Players' Guide to the Orchestra: Orchestral Repertoire Excerpts, Scales, and Studies for String Orchestra and Individual Study (for Violin)*, (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Pub. Co, 2008).

¹⁹ Brown, foreword to *String Players' Guide*, p4.

style, vibrato, and fingerings both in the description and in the musical score. There is only discussion from a technical perspective without the relationship to the musical content.

Example 5. *String Player's Guide to the Orchestras for Violin 1*, p.15.²⁰

The image displays two musical excerpts for violin. The first is labeled "Mozart" and "Scale 6", showing a sequence of notes with fingerings and vibrato markings, starting with a *p* dynamic. The second is labeled "Mozart—Eine kleine Nachtmusic, 2nd mvt." and "Romanze Excerpt 7", with a tempo of "Andante" and a metronome marking of "♩ = 72". It features a *p* dynamic at the start and a *f* dynamic later, with triplets and vibrato markings.

Orchestral excerpts can serve as a pedagogical tool by presenting specific techniques and carrying rich musical ideas from a symphonic work. For example, legato and string crossing techniques are recognized in *Lo stesso tempo* of the third movement from *Beethoven Symphony No. 9* (Example 6). Smooth string crossings require the minimum movement while traveling the bow between strings. Galamian, in his *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching*, explains the rule of legato “a subtle, close approach to the new string...should stay as close as possible to both strings without sacrificing the clear articulation of each note.”²¹

²⁰Susan C. Brown, *String Players' Guide*, p15.

²¹ Ivan Galamian, “Bowing Patterns” from *Principles of Violin Playing & Teaching*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1985), p. 65.

Example 6. mm 99-104 of *Beethoven Symphony No. 9: Lo stesso tempo*.²²

The image shows a musical score for the first violin part of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, measures 99-104. The tempo is marked 'Lo stesso tempo'. The score is in 4/8 time and features a 'p dolce' dynamic marking at the beginning. The first measure (99) is marked 'arco'. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like 'cresc.', 'dim.', and 'p'. The measures are numbered 99, 101, and 103.

Aside from smooth string crossings, there are more elements in this excerpt, such as bow distribution, rhythmic precision, clean shifts, and continuous vibrato. Violinists must consider all these elements in order to nicely shape each phrase. With adequate fundamental technique, musical intentions in this excerpt can be successfully achieved. Therefore, incorporating orchestral excerpts into daily practice will help students cultivate advanced musical ideas, and is a comprehensive method to strengthening violin technique.

This research will incorporate all essential elements of violin playing, such as left and right hand techniques which will contribute to the musical aspect of the excerpts. In distinction to the literature mentioned above, this study will encompass ten selections from the most frequently requested orchestral repertoire. Each excerpt will be accompanied with analytical exercises inspired by the style of Ševčík and Jacobsen, and will be expanded into an etude. In addition, a list of existing etudes that address the same technical content will be provided as a supplement. The composed and existing etudes complete the idea of utilizing the excerpts as a pedagogical tool.

²² L. v. Beethoven, *Symphony No. 9*, (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, n.d.1865, New York: Edwin F. Kalmus, n.d. (after 1933)., first violin part.

Method

This research will garner information from a list of orchestral excerpts most commonly used in orchestral auditions over the past five to ten years. These will be compiled from consulting the librarians of major orchestras, such as Chicago Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Detroit Symphony, and getting the most current information from their websites. Appendix A in this document provides correspondence with librarians. Example 7 is a partial list showing the orchestra, the specific passage, and number of times requested. All the excerpts are listed in the order of composers' years in this chart.

Example 7. Partial list of Frequently Request Excerpts: Survey on Violin Excerpts

Composer	Work	Section/Movement	Times	Orchestras
Mozart	Symphony No. 39	Complete	4	Detroit, Boston, Cleveland, LA Philharmonic,
		Mvt. 2 complete	5	Chicago(2), LA Philharmonic, NY Philharmonic, San Diego
		M1-60		
		M1-19	1	Detroit
		m1-27	4	Detroit(2), Milwaukee, Richmond
		m1-52(53)	3	Phoenix, Pacific, San Diego
		m 96-(109)125	7	Detroit(4), Phoenix, Milwaukee, Pacific
		m1-#18 and C-D		
		Mvt. 4 m1-41 or 42	5	Detroit(4), Richmond
		m1-78	1	NY Philharmonic
		m1-104	6	LA Philharmonic, Phoenix, Milwaukee, San Diego (2), Pacific
Beethoven	Symphony No. 3, "Eroica"	Scherzo (without Trio), beginning to m.69 (or to m170) (Scherzo, beginning to 1 st ending)	6	Detroit(2), Chicago(2), NY Philharmonic, Richmond
	Symphony No. 9	Mvt.III: m. 99-114 (Adagio lo stesso tempo) Adagio, m42-114	13	Detroit(6), Chicago(2), Philadelphia, LA Philharmonic (2), Phoenix, Richmond
Mendelssohn	A midsummer night's dream	Scherzo: Complete;	9	Detroit(4), Boston, Cleveland, LA Philharmonic, Milwaukee, Columbus
		m1-99(m1-7 after D=m1-16 before E)	4	NY Philharmonic, San Diego (2), Richmond
		m17-99	3	Philadelphia (2), Pacific
R. Schumann	Symphony No.2	Scherzo: Complete	9	Detroit(3), Boston, Cleveland, LA Philharmonic, San Diego (2), Pacific

Note: This table includes commonly abbreviated names for orchestras.

In this research I will analyze the technical and musical elements of ten out of the above commonly requested excerpts. For bowing, fingering, style, interpretation, and other important musical elements, this study will consider sources on orchestral excerpts such as Josef Gingold's

Orchestral Excerpts from the Symphonic Repertoire (1953), William Nowinski's *Violinist's Guide to Orchestral Playing, Excerpts From Standard Orchestral Literature* (1961), Erich Leinsdorf's *The Composer's Advocate: A Radical Orthodoxy for Musicians* (1981), Rodney Friend's *The Orchestral Violinist* (2006), and William Preucil's *Orchestral excerpts, violin* (1998). The author will examine technical challenges in bow strokes, shifts, finger extensions/contractions, fast finger patterns, and rhythm will be examined with solutions and pedagogical recommendations. While examining each excerpt and providing solutions for technical challenges, I will also use other resources viz. Carl Flesch's *The Art of Violin Playing* (1930), Ivan Galamian's *Principles of Violin Playing & Teaching* (1985), Maxim Jacobsen's *The Mastery of Violin Playing* (1957), and Frederick Neumann's *Violin Left Hand Techniques* (1969).

This research will provide brief exercises in score format with analytical descriptions. The exercises I created break down difficult passages to the most basic elements, which are inspired by Ševčík and Maxim Jacobsen, so that violinists can hone one technical facet of violin playing at a time. Example 8 shows the first two lines of the excerpt from Brahms Symphony No. 2. As it is impractical for violinists to execute the marked slurs over many measures, they are treated as phrasing indications. Thus, the long slurs indicate the phrasing rather than the actual bowing. Example 9 shows three short exercises written for the excerpt from Brahms Symphony No. 2. In this example, the first exercise uses double-stops altered from the original melody to practice the intervals between each note. The second exercise breaks down the steps of shifting happening in measure 23-24 from the original passage (see Example 8). Both exercises intend to help violinists achieve perfect intonation. The third exercise, as a string crossing exercise, shows how the violin bow travels between open strings in the excerpt. The mastery of smooth string

crossings on open strings will facilitate the long legato lines that Brahms indicated. Each exercise has a different focus to overcome multiple challenges in this particular passage.

Example 8. Mm1-31 from *Brahms Symphony No. 2*, first movement.²³

Example 9. Three Analytical Exercises created for *Brahms Symphony No. 2*

Exercises: Brahms Symphony No.2

Exercise 1: Play this exercise without vibrato, and listen to the pure intonation. Connect every two notes within one slur smoothly.

Exercise 2: Shift between 4th and 2nd positions. Stop the bow and shift during the rest.

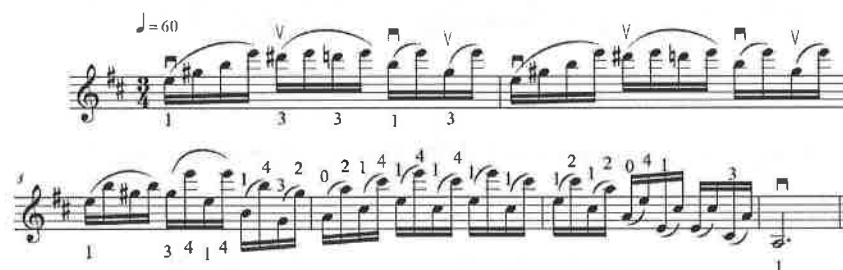
Exercise 3: Anticipate the coming string to make smooth string crossings. Avoid sudden and big motions from the right hand wrist and arm.

²³ Johannes Brahms, Gál Hans, ed. *Symphony No. 2*, Op. 73. (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, ca.1927, New York: Edwin F. Kalmus, after 1933), first violin part.

Exercises for each excerpt will be transformed into a self-contained etude to demonstrate various aspects of technique. The etude will infuse original melodic and rhythmic elements from the excerpt. Example 10 shows technical elements from Example 9 which includes intonation, shifting, and string-crossings in a repetitive pattern.

Example 10. Sample of Etude for Brahms Symphony No. 2

Etude (sample)



The author will provide existing etudes that share the same techniques in a chart for further reference. Musical examples and a list of excerpts in technical categories will also be attributed in the appendix section, such as Example 11.

Example 11. Partial chart: Orchestral excerpts in different categories

Spiccato+string crossing	Legato+String crossing
Beethoven: Symphony No. 3- Scherzo	Beethoven: Symphony No. 9- Mvt.3
Mendelssohn: Midsummer Night's Dream- Scherzo	Brahms: Symphony No. 2- Mvt. 1
Mozart: Symphony No. 39- Mvt. 4	Brahms: Symphony No. 4- Mvt. 4
Schubert: Symphony No.2- Mvt. 1	Mozart: Symphony No. 39- Mvt. 1, Mvt. 4
Schumann: Symphony No.2- Scherzo	Prokofiev: Classical Symphony- Mvt. 4
Strauss: Don Juan	
Prokofiev: Classical Symphony- Mvt. 1	
Shiftings	Rhythm
Brahms: Symphony No. 1- Mvt. 1	Brahms: Symphony No. 1
Brahms: symphony No. 2- Mvt. 1, Mvt. 2	Brahms: Symphony No. 2- Mvt. 1
Prokofiev: Classical Symphony- Mvt. 1, Mvt. 4	Mozart: Symphony No. 39- Mvt. 2
Strauss: Don Juan	Prokofiev: Classical Symphony- Mvt. 1
	Strauss: Don Juan
	Debussy: La Mer- #33-39
	Smetana: The Bartered Bride Overture

Conclusion

This research presents the idea of using standard violin excerpts as technical studies. Each of the selected excerpts not only demands various and mixed techniques, but are also a part of exquisitely composed large symphonic works. By providing analytical and practical exercises for each excerpt, this research gives violinists a better understanding on how to establish violin techniques, and demonstrates how orchestral excerpts complement scales and etudes as an educational tool.

Tentative Chapter Headings

Chapter 1. Introduction: This chapter will introduce the subject and purpose of this study. It will provide the current literature on orchestral excerpts, and explain why this study is necessary and different from others.

1.1 Purpose of this Topic and State of Research

1.2 Studies that Support the Idea of this Research

1.3 Existing Studies that Use Violin Excerpts as a Pedagogical Tool

Chapter 2. Traditional and Non-Traditional Violin Pedagogical Materials: This chapter will offer an overview on different types of teaching materials. Chapter 2.3 will discuss exercises for technical development found in books by Ševčík and Jacobsen, which will be used as the model of functional exercises in this research.

2.1 Standard Violin Etudes

2.2 Literature that Uses Examples from the Violin Repertoire

2.3 Practical Exercises for Violin Repertoire by Ševčík and Jacobsen

Chapter 3. Ten Selected Orchestral Excerpts and Functional Exercises: Chapter 3 will offer a list of standard orchestral excerpts taken from professional orchestra auditions in the past five to ten years. Attention will be given to the ten most frequently asked excerpts supplied with analytical descriptions, exercises, and etudes. Finally, recommended etudes are provided as a reference to the excerpts.

3.1 Standard Violin Orchestral Excerpts from Professional Orchestral Auditions Lists in the Past Five to Ten Years

3.2 Practical Exercises and Studies for Ten Selected Excerpts

Chapter 4. Conclusion: This section will summarize and restate the significance of the entire research.

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