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1. In the Style of Vivaldi

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Allegro

The musical score is written on a single staff in treble clef with a 2/4 time signature. It consists of ten numbered measures, each with specific dynamics and technical markings:

- Measure 1:** Starts with a first ending bracket. Dynamics: *p*, *mp*, *mf*. Fingerings: 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 2, 1.
- Measure 2:** Dynamics: *f*, *mf*. Fingerings: 4, 4, 1, 0, 2, 1, 3, 1, 1.
- Measure 3:** Dynamics: *p*, *cresc.*. Fingerings: 0, 3, 4, 4.
- Measure 4:** Dynamics: *f*, *cresc.*. Fingerings: 0, 2, 4, 2.
- Measure 5:** Dynamics: *f*. Fingerings: 0, 1, 3, 0, 4.
- Measure 6:** Dynamics: *mf*, *f*. Fingerings: 4, 3, 4.
- Measure 7:** Dynamics: *mp*. Fingerings: 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 6, 6, 6, 6.
- Measure 8:** Dynamics: *mf*. Fingerings: 6, 6, 6, 6.
- Measure 9:** Dynamics: *p*, *cresc.*. Fingerings: 4, 4, 0, 0.
- Measure 10:** Dynamics: *f*, *p*, *p*. Fingerings: 0, 1, 1, 4, 3, 0, 3.



IN THE STYLE OF *Vivaldi*



TECHNICAL ELEMENTS

- Detaché
- Martelé
- Rapid string crossings
- Wrist flexibility
- Intonation



MUSICAL ELEMENTS

- Phrase direction
- Dynamics
- Vibrato
- Baroque style

PRACTICE GUIDE

Section 1

A *mm. 1, 2, 3, 4* – This etude-caprice can be used as a resource for establishing the frame for a relaxed left hand posture. Extract the four octaves from the first four measures. Practice them individually. The elbow should be pulled slightly to the right, allowing the wrist to remain straight and encouraging the arch of the 4th finger. There should be no reach upwards to find the top note of the octave. Then open the hand, slightly pulling back the first finger before placing it an octave below. The perfect octave should sound like one note. (See Appendix II for techniques to improve intonation.) When the intonation is secure, play the C octave with one long, slow bow. Stop at the point. Lifting the fingers just slightly, but treating them as a unit, swing the elbow slightly to the left, and shift down to the E octave. Play this octave on a long, slow up bow and stop. Lighten the fingers, and once again treating them as a unit, come around the violin by pulling the arm slightly to the right, making the shift to the G octaves. When dependably in tune, pull a long, slow down bow, and stop. Finally, swing the elbow a tiny bit to the left, and shift down to the 2nd position C octave. Pull a long, slow up bow, and stop. A couple of things to remember: Never squeeze the neck of the violin. Maintain the left hand posture by shifting with the whole arm and treating the octaves as units rather than individual fingers.

B *mm. 1, 2, 3, 4* – When the frame of the hand is set for this etude-caprice, break the octaves as written. Put a slight space between the notes of each octave to articulate them. Use more bow on the first note of each octave and less on the second to give more importance to the first. (The analogy of dropping a ball, where the second bounce does not reach the level of the first, helps to explain this concept.) Next, begin to add the scale passages one at a time within the context of each frame. The posture of the left hand should not be altered. Learn each pattern. (See Appendix IV.) If helpful, reverse the scales to secure the intervals.

C This is primarily an upper half bow piece. Establish the vital, energetic character right away, and keep it throughout this etude-caprice!



D Dynamics were seldom written into baroque music. It was expected that the well trained musicians of this period would abide by the conventions of the day, so markings of this nature were not necessary. To assist those with less experience, however, dynamics are indicated in this etude-caprice. Keep in mind that markings of any kind are most useful when they ignite the imagination.

F Terrace the dynamics. Follow the line while terracing by the sequence. Crescendo by the measure, but allow the sixteenth note patterns to diminuendo slightly within this framework. (To diminuendo on the detaché, gradually reduce the bow towards the middle.)

F **mm. 5, 6** – Practice the string crossings on the open D and A strings in the middle of the bow first with little “stop bows.” Exaggerating the motions, drop the wrist from the hand, making it “low” for the low string; then raise the wrist, making it “high” for the high string. (This can be practiced without a violin before starting.) When this is easy, try smooth small detaché strokes. Use only the amount of bow it takes to make the crossing. Next, practice the notes that comprise the string crossings in this etude-caprice as double stops in order to polish the intonation. (See Appendix V for tips on practicing double stops.) When the intonation is solid, apply the flexible wrist to the passage as written. Start very slowly. Be sure the flexibility remains as the tempo is built. As the speed increases and the exaggeration diminishes proportionally, a fluid flexibility will develop. Remember: smaller motions require smaller muscle groups. There is no need to use the whole arm to make a little string crossing. Always seek efficiency, ease and natural elegance.

G **m. 6** – For articulation appropriate to this style, slightly separate the eighth notes in beats 3 and 4. Keep the vibrato going in order to keep it from sounding dry.



Caricature of Vivaldi by P.L. Ghezzi, Rome (1723)

Section 2

A **m. 7, 8, 9** – Start with less bow in the middle. To crescendo, open up the bow, using more (in the upper half) for every sequence.

B **m. 7** – When crossing the string for only one note, be sure to use a flexible wrist (not the arm) for efficiency. *Reminder: small motions require smaller muscle groups to look and sound easy and natural.*

C **mm. 7 through 10** – Make ½ steps wide when using the same finger chromatically. Alter the positions of the fingers from squared to slightly extended on chromatic half steps (for example, when moving from the F-natural to the F-sharp and the G-natural to the G-sharp).

D Phrase by the sequence and with the shape of the line. Test phrasing by placing an enormous hole between phrases. If the phrases still make sense, they work. As an example, in m. 7, try phrasing after the C of the 2nd beat. Treating the E as a pick up to the next pattern, could give more interest to the phrase than starting each phrase predictably at the beginning of every measure. Build sextuplets using the aforementioned steps.



Modern day look at a canal in Venice, Italy, where Vivaldi was born. (Photograph, Nino Barbieri)

Section 3

A **m. 10 through the first 2 beats of m. 11** – With each sequence, reduce the bow more and more to the middle. This will enable each descending pattern to diminuendo in accordance with the line.

B Phrase by the sequence and follow the shape of the line to define the pattern.

C **m. 11 (middle) through m. 13 (middle)** – Bring out the melody on top as though there were two voices. A touch of vibrato will help. Repeated notes are accompaniment, so play them with less bow and consequently, less sound.