CORRECTING THE RIGHT HAND BOW POSITION FOR THE
STUDENT VIOLINIST AND VIOLIST

By

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A Treatise submitted to the
School of Music
In partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Music

Degree Awarded:
Fall Semester, 2002

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To
The Memory of
My Teacher
Tadeusz Wroński
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It was Tadeusz desire of writing about the bow and its significance in successful violin playing followed. Today, I wish to thank professor of correct violin playing. I was privileged to see him at his home in Poland (1999) and discuss my subject. We both celebrated the “pupil returning to the master,” which occurred a few months before Professor Wroński passed away.

Grateful acknowledgement is extended to Eliot Chapo, my advisor and violin professor during the doctoral work at the Florida State University; colleague, concert artist, and friend, for both his musical critiques and expertise provided during our interview sessions which have found a substantial content in this subject.

My indebtedness is extended to Professor Phillip Spurgeon for his courtesy and support. His detailed reading of my final draft, kindly comments, and final corrections have led to the completion of my method for correcting the bow hold. I will always gratefully remember his persistence and steadfast concern on all practical matters.

Thanks to my committee member, Professor Lubomir Georgiev, for his interest and his artistic input to the subject. A special gratitude I bestow to Professor Ladislav Kubik for his kindness and support in serving as my external committee member and evaluating my work with generous encouragement.

I gratefully acknowledge Ms. Jennifer Betts for her editorial expertise as well as rendering the final draft of my text into a coherent document. Thanks to my talented
student Davina Loskot for her assistance with the music examples. To those who have supported knowingly or otherwise, and to the friendly people and my colleagues at Valdosta State University, I wish to express my grateful appreciation.

Finally I could not have succeeded today without my parents, Dr. Robert C. Topper and Marguerite Topper. Their love and generosity motivated me in long lasting schooling and provided a consoling serenity. My deepest gratitude to Dr. Alicja Irena Usarek, my dear wife and my colleague; I thank you for her faith and invaluable counsel manifested purely as a labor of both professional interest and love. I was fortunate to benefit from her knowledge and scholarly enthusiasm, and above all her dedication to our lives together.

Thanks to all friends and family without whom this project would have been certainly a less joyful venture.

Valdosta, 30 October 2002
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ABSTRACT

A correct bow hold is of vital importance in achieving successful and advanced bow technique. A method for implementing and solidifying the correct right hand bow position is the purpose of this treatise. The result of the proper bowing technique, more explicitly a correct bow hold, leads to a beautiful tone production. Comfort and effortless playing are enhanced when the proper right hand technique is utilized. This treatise identifies the basic elements required for a correct bow hold as well as outlines a method for constructing, maintaining, and solidifying the correct hold. In addition, the treatise will identify specific elements of bowing that every student should achieve.

A student who acquires the correct bow hold and learns bowing fundamentals will have the facility for a fine sound and volume of tone. To reach these goals, a student must develop control of the bow. Once a greater degree of proficiency is mastered, the student will be able to concentrate less on technique and more on the music.

The content of five subsequent chapters will examine the development of the right hand based on the evolution of the bow, as well as pedagogues’ descriptions of methods of the times and the mechanical application to the instrument. A consensus will be determined on what is the correct right hand position based on the writings of the most recognized teachers of our time. The author presents his version of the most practical right hand hold based on these writings, his own study, observations and discussions with fellow violinists and teachers. Selected Etudes used in the method
will be identified and described as a course of practice for students/Subjects. This method will guide the student through a series of increasingly difficult Etudes, both left and right hand, to make the hold comfortable and feel like “second nature.”

A correct bow hold that allows proper basic bowing technique is vital in every student’s development towards being a skilled violinist or violist. A method, pertaining to the right hand, must not only tell a student how to hold the bow correctly but also how to maintain and solidify this correction.
1. INTRODUCTION: STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

A student preparing for a career in music as an instrumentalist or as a teacher should be instilled with the correct fundamentals of his/her chosen profession. For a string player, the proper left and right hand positions are the basis for effective learning. With the correct hand positions, a student will achieve advanced technical skills on the instrument and improve expeditiously. In addition, the student’s recognition of both correct fundamentals and achievement attained will result in consistently correct playing.

Correcting a left hand position for an intermediate or less skilled player is a good start in the process of establishing solid left hand technique. Left hand technique is “more concrete and mechanical.”1 Years of repetitive practice with a variety of studies are required to gain both skill and higher levels of facility of the left hand.

In a relatively short time, the correct right hand position can be implemented and established by a student.2 The solidification of the new position is the key to proper bowing and will expedite a quicker advancement. A correct bow hold is of vital importance in achieving successful and advanced bow technique.3 A method for implementing and solidifying the correct right hand bow position is the purpose of this treatise.

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2 Harold Berkley states that the correct placement and movement of the wrist, hand, and fingers can be taught to a beginning violin student during the second or third lesson. Samuel and Sada Applebaum, *With the Artists* (New York: John Markert and Company, 1955), 256.
One of the many difficulties in playing the violin or viola is balancing the differences between the physical challenges of the instrument and the artistic essence demanded by the music. Likewise, the contradictory activities, found between the bow arm and the left hand, are of further complication and must be managed by a student. “No single movement of either hand moves parallel with any movement of the other.”

The result of the proper bowing technique, more explicitly a correct bow hold, leads to a beautiful tone production. A student who acquires the correct bow hold and learns bowing fundamentals will have the facility for an excellent sound. A student who studies and learns the fundamentals will obtain “a fine, sympathetic tone and an elegant pliant bowing capable of shadings” as well as attain “beauty and volume of

To reach these goals, a student must develop control of the bow. Once a greater degree of proficiency is mastered, the student will be able to concentrate less on technique and more on the music. “An intelligent violinist… will ground his bowing on fundamental principles…” Aaron Rosand states “bowing is the thing that separates the masters from the rest of the players.” It provides the basis for instilling the best fundamentals into a student.

Statement of Problem

A correct bow arm is a fundamental skill, desirable and necessary for the serious violin or viola student. A correct bow arm and bow hold lead to a quicker and more successful advanced bow technique. Beautiful and expressive tone depends on the correct right hand position. Comfort and ease of playing are enhanced when the proper

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bow hand technique is utilized. However, development of the right hand is often subordinate to the concentration directed to the left hand.

“The bow is the great magician in violin playing - not the left hand - and what the brush is to the painter the bow is to the violinist.” Generally, not enough time and attention are directed to the right hand in the violin studio and in the practice room of the students and their teachers. Concentration usually is on the left hand. The bow arm frequently has been underdeveloped by both teachers and students. The result is that “we are producing one-armed violinists, with the right arm going along for the ride.”

The prospect of a good hold is “left to chance” with students forced to cope with bowing problems or poor tone production at a later stage of development. Modern pedagogues, among them Shinichi Suzuki, also perpetuate this unbalance. In his book, *The Suzuki Concept*, the author writes a full chapter on the left hand but permits ten sentences on the bow hold. On incorrect bowing, Alberto Bachmann writes:

“A defective bow technique is the point of departure for a poor application of various strokes and this in turn, is due to the fact that a teacher capable of teaching the correct handling of the bow is very rarely to be found, for the very good reason that only too often the teacher does not know how to use the bow himself.”

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10 Peter Marsh, “Some Thoughts on the teaching of Violin” in *American String Teacher*, vol. 28, no. 3 (Summer, 1988), 68.
Although both the Russian and Franco-Belgian Schools of bow technique were in use throughout the twentieth century, what is referred to as the German School, with its looseness and reduced contact of the bow stick, became less popular as violin pedagogy progressed. While theoretical principles underlying the art of violin playing were established in conservatories by the second half of the nineteenth century, teachers, a majority of the time, gave instruction to the best of their ability without philosophical influences.\(^\text{14}\)

Most pedagogical writings on the right hand explain the fundamental approach to basic bowing as well as the importance of a correct bow hold, whether the method is the Russian, Franco-Belgian, or a combination of both. Furthermore, these writings also explain how to procure a correct bow hold. Some methods introduce short exercises during the process of implementing a correct hold. The occasional method book may include directions on how to correct a few specific bad habits with the bow hold, but promptly move from the establishment of a correct hold to more advanced bowing technique. It is not sufficient enough to build correct and sustainable right hand fundamentals for the student by merely disclosing where the fingers should go, telling the student to play in a “natural” way, and emphasizing that the fingers and hand should be flexible.

My belief and dedication is to help the student with an incorrect bow hold establish a correct bow hold, maintain it, and solidify the hold, before proceeding to the task of developing the advanced bow technique. This treatise identifies the basic elements required for a correct bow hold as well as outlines a method for formulating, maintaining, and solidifying the correct hold. In addition, the treatise will identify specific elements of bowing that every student should achieve.

\(^{14}\)Tadeusz Wroński, Interview (Warszawa: 22 June 1999).
Concentration will be on the correct bow hand position and basic bowing technique. What comes out of the violin or viola will not be scrutinized as far as tone quality (at least not in the early stages of the correction). Initially, the student is instructed to concentrate on the bow technique and not to focus on efforts to create a beautiful tone quality or a powerful sound. Specific articulations emphasized may in fact not be advantageous to beautiful playing. The use of proper arm weight, rather than pressure, will produce a fuller and freer sound. However, the student should become aware of positive changes in the sound during the correction procedure. The art of playing the violin with a correct bow hold will enable the student, when the time is right, to recognize a beautiful sound and develop tone production.

The content of three subsequent chapters is the core of this paper. *Chapter Two* will examine the development of the right hand based on the evolution of the bow, as well as pedagogues’ descriptions of methods of the times and the mechanical application of the instrument. A consensus will be determined on what is the correct right hand position based on the writings of the most recognized teachers of our time. The author will present his version of the most practical right hand hold based on these writings, his own study, and observations and discussions with fellow violinists and teachers. The author will also draw from twenty-five years of experience as both a teacher and performer. *Chapter Three* will reveal the method of study ranging from open string

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exercises to Rudolphe Kreutzer’s *42 Etudes ou Caprices pour le Violon*. Selected *Etudes* used in the method will be identified and described as a course of practice. *Chapter Four* will examine student/Subjects who have completed the method. “Before” and “after” pictures will be displayed, detailed problems of the students will be stated, and an analysis of the progression of these students will be presented.

**Basic Elements and Specific Elements of a Correct Bow Hold**

Several elements constitute the components of a correct bow hold and bowing. These elements determine not only the specific ways of bowing but also the thought process that allows a student to understand how and why a particular bowing is executed. While each element separately constitutes a better way of bowing, together, a student can master basic techniques of bowing and advance to higher levels of the diverse bowing technique required by skilled violinists and violists. The basic bowing technique is divided into two categories - basic elements and specific elements. Listed below are the basic elements:

- **Naturalness** - every violinist should approach playing the violin in a “natural way.”
- **Proper finger placement on the bow stick** - the proper placement of the fingers allows the hand to control the bow.
- **Correct movement of the wrist, arm, elbow and shoulder** - these motions allow for the basic bowing technique to be mastered.
- **Flexibility** - in conjunction with playing in a “natural way,” the hand should be relaxed yet not loose, firm, secure, and in control without being stiff.
- **Arm weight** - in contrast to pressure, arm weight can give a violinist or violist the ability to maximize sound.
- **Flat bow hair** - an element that minimizes mistakes in the basic bow hold.
• Holding the violin up and setting it correctly on the shoulder to fit the individual - it will allow the proper and best movement of the arm, hand, and fingers.

In the author’s correction method, the specific elements of the fundamental bowing technique will be either introduced or improved by the student. Specific elements include:

• Bow distribution - using different amounts and different parts of the bow, especially the lower half.
• Bow speed - speed of bow in conjunction with arm weight and contact point.
• Crossing strings in the correct way.
• Bow changes - smooth and flexible, especially at the frog.
• Articulation - referred to as the “impulse” stroke, a specific technique of initiating the stroke in the process of establishing the new bow hold.\footnote{Tadeusz Wroński, \textit{Interview} (Warszawa: 22 June 1999). Wroński describes it as a fast stroke with a “pulse” at the beginning. Furthermore, he states that this stroke is not guided but “short, fast and easy - no time to make mistakes.”}
• “Preparation” - a preparatory action at the end of a note played toward the note that will come next with both the left hand and the right hand.\footnote{The concept of “preparation” is to have the new note be prepared at the end of the note played. The left hand has to change to the new note and the bow must be on the string ready for the new note. This must be part of the same initial motion from the note that has been played already (a reflex) and not a separate movement after the note has been completed.}

Problems

As string teachers, we must acknowledge that many of the students we teach demonstrate the basic problems in bowing, which need to be corrected. Suzuki emphasizes upper half playing, hence, the familiarity with lower half bowing will not be cultivated unless the teacher stresses it.\footnote{Robert Oppelt, “Important Elements of Correct Bowing” in \textit{American String Teacher}, vol. 33, no. 3 (Summer, 1982), 16.} The physical limitations of a young
student, such as the lack of strength to keep the fingers curved and flexible, especially the fourth finger, will likely lead to overcompensation or stiffness. A bow that is too heavy, or a young student using a full-size bow too soon, may also contribute to overcompensation. It could result in the student doing “whatever works” in order to produce a sound. If these deficiencies are not addressed as the student matures, then he/she may become incapable of achieving advanced bowing technique.

Numerous problems with a student’s bowing can be both learned and developed. On the up-bow at the frog, the arm and wrist are raised high in an attempt to control the bow, sound quality, and the bow change. Raising the wrist and straightening the fingers, so called “leading of the wrist,” increases stiffness and inflexibility. Excessive pressure exerted from a high arm, in lieu of arm weight, is applied in an attempt to produce a bigger sound. The result is a “pressed” sound in contrast to a bigger and fuller sound. Consequently, an excessively raised arm and wrist inhibit the ability for arm weight to achieve proper tone production and volume. Playing on the side of the bow hair, caused by raising the wrist or “turning over” the hand, disrupts natural arm weight desired for optimal sound. Other faults include an incorrect placement of the fingers on the bow, straight or stiff fingers in the bow hand position, and lack of flexibility, stiffness, and/or tension in the hand, wrist, arm, elbow, or shoulder. Additional problems and faults may include abrupt string crossings and the inability to change bow directions smoothly, especially at the frog.

A correct bow hold that allows proper basic bowing technique is vital in every student’s development towards being a skilled violinist or violist. A method, pertaining to the right hand, must not only tell a student how to hold the bow correctly but also how to maintain and solidify this correction. This method will guide the
student through a series of increasingly difficult *etudes*, both left and right hand, to make the hold comfortable and feel like "second nature."

**Description of Method**

A series of etudes from Rudolphe Kreutzer’s *42 Studies/Etude (Caprices) for Violin Solo* form the core to this method. A student can establish a correct right hand position within six to eight weeks by using several of these *Etudes* focusing on bowing. *Kreutzer Etudes* are a universally recognized course of study for the student ranging from intermediate to an advanced level of violin playing.19 Hence, the overall left hand technique of the student must be at the necessary skill level required for the *Studies/Etudes*. While less advanced students may not be experienced with many of the *Etudes* (some may never have practiced Kreutzer before), most of the *Etudes* are at an intermediate level and certainly possible for the less skilled violin or viola student to play. A student in college and majoring in music or music education will most likely be at this skill level. A student with serious flaws in the left hand, even with severe right hand discrepancies, should undertake corrective left hand technical work before attempting right hand correction.

While a student does not have to possess a high level of left hand technique, the student must have the following basic left hand skills:

1. Correct positioning of the left-hand including proper thumb placement on the neck, straight wrist, curved fingers, and playing on the tips of the fingers.

2. Capability of playing 3-octave scales.

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3. Sufficient control of intonation for successful playing of Kreutzer’s less advanced *Etudes*.

4. Secure technique while shifting and playing double stops.

In discussing the right-hand it is necessary both to diagram the right hand and to label parts of the hand. [Ex. 1]

*Example 1*
What is to be expected from a student and what is the subsequent course of action for the student will be discussed in the Conclusion. After completing an intense and highly structured method, what needs to be discussed about the quality of sound? Specific requisites for the violists will be identified.

Students with serious deficiencies in one or both hand positions no matter how hard they try will likely be unsuccessful in playing the violin or viola well. They may struggle just to be able to play the notes. Many students at this level will be incapable of listening in a critical way in order to improve their playing. Watching and attempting to imitate skilled violinists may also be beyond their comprehension. These students must be given the basic tools to master and control hand positions and have the opportunity to develop techniques necessary for becoming fine instrumentalists.
2. RIGHT HAND BOW POSITION

It is necessary to examine what has been written on bowing by expert violin pedagogues to determine what is the correct right hand technique. Treatises from the mid-eighteenth-century by Francisco Geminiani, Leopold Mozart, and L’Abbé le fils are the culmination of over two centuries of developing violin technique. Both the violin and bow have evolved and changed over the centuries. Although the violin’s evolution has not been extreme the bow underwent considerable development since the seventeenth century. Violin technique has also adjusted and developed with these changes. Because of the bow’s more extensive evolution, to understand basic bow technique and what is a correct bow hold for today’s application, detailed instruction of these eighteenth-century violin pedagogues may only be partially relevant, nevertheless worthy of examination.

The Bow

Violin bows changed in size, shape, weight, length, and balance from the seventeenth century to the late eighteenth century. Bows were not uniform throughout the countries of Europe and they evolved to fit the musical style of the time. From the mid-1600’s, bows made in Italy were straight and long with a slightly convex camber.

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for playing concertos and sonatas. However, bows made in France were shorter, though still convex, and designed for dance music. German bows were shorter than the Italian bows but were stronger because they were designed to play Germanic polyphonic music.\textsuperscript{21}

In 1856, François-Joseph Fétis illustrated and categorized eight bows exhibiting a continuum of its evolution process from 1620 until 1790.\textsuperscript{22} Since bow makers did not brand their bows with their names until approximately 1750, the bows remained mostly anonymous, and were ascribed to famous violinists or composers instead of bow makers.\textsuperscript{23} In the illustration the last two bows do not fall into the Baroque category, but instead resemble a modern bow design. [Ex. 2]

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item First published by François-Joseph Fétis \textit{Antonio Stradivari} (Paris, 1856), it shows an apparent systematic evolution of the bow. In \textit{The History of Violin Playing From Its Origins to 1761}, 324-325, Boyden states that the source is undocumented with no basis for authenticity; he questions the systematic order, the validity of Corelli bow, and the variances in bow making during this time.
\item ibid., 328.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Peter Oxley establishes the development of the violin bow from the seventeenth century into four categories:

1. Baroque - bows dating from 1600 until 1750.
2. Cramer - bows of the classical period.
3. Transitional - bows that make a transition between the Cramer and the modern bow.
4. Modern - standardized bows beginning about 1800.\(^{24}\)

\(^{24}\)Peter Oxley, “Getting a Grip on Bows” in *The Strad*, vol. 109, no. 1296 (April 1998), 394-399.
The Baroque bows are distinct by the fact that they are not standardized. Bow makers experimented with their length, weight, and the materials used to build them. They were analogous in that either both their stick was straight or slightly convex and their ends had a fluted and sloping “pikehead”. Their frogs were simple, fastened in place and held by tension from the horsehair. The ribbon of bow hair was narrow. The illustrations in Leopold Mozart’s 1756 treatise clearly show a convex bow with a sloping “pikehead”. [Ex. 3]

Example 3

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25Peter Oxley, “Getting a Grip on Bows” in The Strad, vol. 109, no. 1296 (April 1998), 394. After 1700, the frog was mounted on the stick with a screw mechanism.  
The Cramer bow, named after the violinist Wilhelm Cramer from Mannheim, is dated 1770 by Fétis. However, bows of this design were used in England and France as much as twenty years earlier. The differences between the Cramer bow and the Baroque bow were in the concave cambered stick (though much less than modern bows) and a higher and heavier, “battleaxe,” tip. [Ex. 2] The distance between the hair and the stick, due to the camber and heavier tip, allowed for a more precise articulation, greater cantabile, and sustained playing. Nicholas Léonard Tourte (père) produced Cramer bows, made modifications, and was one of the first makers to stamp his name Tourte L on his bows.

The development of the transitional bow, much like that of the Baroque bow, was during a period of continuous changes and variations in both its design and material. A consensus was reached and the bow became cambered more then the Cramer bow but less then the modern one. Tips were similar to the modern design and frogs became wider and longer. Significant changes to the stick, tip and frog were developed by François Tourte (son of Léonard) around 1790 and led to a distinct modern bow. By 1810 Tourte finalized the stick camber, refined the tip in dimension, and standardized the length of the bow. Adding the metal ferrule and the pearl slide covering the mortise, thus contributing to the frog’s weight, developed the frog. By 1815, examples of François Tourte’s bows were in existence and became modern in almost every sense. However, famous makers, including Dominique Peccatte, were still constructing transitional bows in variant forms well into the middle of the nineteenth century.

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28Peter Oxley, “Getting a Grip on Bows,” 394.
30David Boyden, “Bows,” 129.
31Peter Oxley, “Getting a Grip on Bows,” 399.
However, a few changes were made in the Tourte bow design in the middle of the nineteenth century. French bow makers such as François Nicolas Voirin modified the bow by adding a characteristic angular head and frog. The tip was made slimmer and the progression of the camber moved closer to the tip, which enabled playing qualities different from the Tourte design. The thinner shaft and change in camber created a stronger bow but with the continued characteristics of lightness. By the twentieth century, heavier bows were in favor and the increased weight of the Voirin model took the lead, creating an art of playing that was different from both the Tourte and early Voirin bows.

The violin changed and evolved with an increased dynamic range and stronger tonal power. This was achieved through the use of longer necks, higher bridges, thicker strings, and larger bass bars. The enlarged musical forms and a development of different styles, repertoire, exposure of the virtuoso, and the proliferation of large concert halls precipitated these adaptations. The expanded length of the bow appeared to be related to an increased awareness of tone quality. Thus, the bow evolved for the purposes of drawing a fuller sound from the violin. Several of these changes include a wider and heavier frog, increased camber on the stick, and the use of pernambuco, a dense wood. The frog and bow stick converges made the bow stronger yet flexible and assisted in the production of a fuller sound.

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35 Yung Chin, “A Bows Primer” in *Strings*, vol. 8, no. 6 (May/June 1994), 36.
Right Hand Development

Before the mid 1700’s, the bow was held lightly with the fingers on top of the stick and the thumb opposite the nail or middle joint of the index finger. The quality of the sound came from the pressure of the index finger. The French grip was defined by the hand being closer to the frog than previously accustomed, thumb under the bow hair, and the first three fingers on top of the stick. The little finger was used as a support on the back of the stick. This grip contributed to articulation and vigorous individual strokes designed for dance music. The Italian grip, used on longer bows by sonata players, resembled a quasi-modern grip with all four fingers on top of the stick and the thumb under the stick.36 Longer bows, in particular, were held several inches above the frog in order to achieve better leverage. By 1720, the assimilation of the Italian sonata form by the French School made the French hold obsolete.37

While Leopold Mozart, Geminiani, and L’Abbé le fils most likely played music of their time with convex bows, many elements and ideas of right hand technique found in their writings are generally ascribed to our modern times. L’Abbé le fils stated that the bow was the “soul of the instrument it touches.”38 Geminiani suggested the bow “to be held free and easy, and not stiff.”39 These authors suggested the bow be held in a natural way with fingers on the bow stick; not too far apart, and for the hand, arm, and elbow to be at the same level. L’Abbé le fils advocated the index finger be placed on the bow at the middle joint, prognosticating Leopold Auer’s Russian grip. At the time of L’Abbé le fils' treatise in 1761, and at the age of 34, it is possible that his statements on bow technique derived from using a Cramer style bow or even a bow

38L’Abbé le fils, Principes de Violin 1761, 1.
with a concave design.\footnote{David Boyden (while discounting Fétis’ categorization of bows) states that concave arched bows appeared before 1750. Boyden, \textit{The History of Violin Playing From Its Origins to 1761}, 325.} Leopold Mozart, through text and illustrations, [Ex. 3] defended that the bow (convex design) should be held at the frog and not above it.\footnote{Leopold Mozart, \textit{A Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing 1756}, 58.}

Due to the standardization of bow manufacturing and the gradual merging of national styles, the bow hold became more standardized by the end of the eighteenth and the first part of the nineteenth century. The consensus was that all fingers held the bow with the thumb placed at the frog. It had been recognized that the thumb supported the weight of the bow while providing a balance with the index finger, not particularly bent but instead kept rather straight.\footnote{Robin Stowell, \textit{Violin Technique and Performance Practice in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 58-62.} Pedagogues stressed the significance of the index finger for tone quality and dynamics and recommended that the index finger be closer to the middle finger. Differences remained on many issues of finger placement. Several views were recommended concerning the contact point between the index finger and the bow. Bornaet, Giovanni Cambini, and Bartolomeo Campagnoli suggested that the index finger be placed between the nail and middle joint, Pierre Rode, Jacques Mazas and Pierre Baillot near the middle joint, and Leopold Mozart and Signoretti established the contact point between the middle and base joints. Louis Spohr maintains the contact point on the nail joint of the index finger. At the time of his treatise, \textit{Violinschule} (1831), he was one of the few pedagogues who upheld a bent thumb, coming close to modern day thinking on holding the bow.\footnote{As cited by Robin Stowell, ibid., 64.}

Bowing was affected by the holding position of the violin. In the early eighteenth century violins were held in front of the player on the upper chest, below the
collarbone, and tilted slightly down. The established position in the nineteenth
century was to hold the violin under the chin. Leopold Mozart noted that his
preference for holding the violin should be “against the neck so that it lies somewhat
in front of the shoulder and the side on which the E string lies comes under the
chin.” Holding the violin in such a way, allowed Mozart to use the bow with a lower
right hand position at the frog. The violin held low allowed the arm to be relatively
free from the body. Gradually, the violin moved up the shoulder and toward the left
side.

Different characteristics in the bow hold were found in two major pedagogues in
nineteenth-century Europe: 1) Louis Spohr (Violschule, 1832) founder of the
German School, who was affirmed by Ferdinand David and 2) Pierre Marie-François
de Sales Baillot (L’Art du Violon, 1834) founder of the French School, who was
influenced by Giovanni Battista Viotti and advocated by Pierre Rode and Rudolphe
Kreutzer. Besides the differences in placement of the index finger, Baillot favored
“rounded” fingers and a straight thumb. He insisted that the index finger be straight on
the up-bow at the frog. Spohr positioned the tip of the thumb at the frog while Baillot
used the fleshy part of the thumb. Furthermore, Spohr had the thumb opposite to the
second finger where as Baillot positioned the thumb between the middle and ring
fingers, indicating the hand is held higher up on the stick. They both agreed that all
fingers should be close together and that the little finger be placed on top of the stick.

At the frog, Louis Spohr demanded on a high wrist with the elbow close to the side.

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44 Sol Babitz, “Differences Between 18th Century and Modern Violin Bowing” in The Score, vol. 19
(March, 1957), 3.
47 Pierre M. F. de Sales Baillot, The Art of the Violin, ed. and trans. by Louise Goldberg (Evanston:
1843), 13.
He also preferred to change the bow hold according to the requirements of a stroke. Baillot stated that the wrist is “…rounded; when playing down bow, have the wrist joint a little higher than the stick.” Spohr focused less on technique and more on “grandeur of style” - a cantabile sound with full expression. In contrast, the French tradition, with established practices and influences from Niccolò Paganini, emphasized the stroke off the string and flying staccato. The examples below illustrate the different arm levels of the French and German Schools. [Examples 4 and 5]

Example 4 (Baillot’s right hand bow position)

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Placement of the right hand in relation to the frog was not consistent. While L. Mozart suggested the bow hold be moved toward the frog on convex bows in his 1756 Treatise, it was not until the nineteenth century that most pedagogues instructed to hold the bow at the frog. However, Giovanni Battista Viotti (1755-1824) was known to have used a Tourte bow with wrappings that covered half the stick. Flesch

Rubin Stowell, Violin Technique and Performance Practices in the Late 18th and Early 19th Centuries, 60.
declared that in 1890 Charles Dancla (1817-1907) held his bow three inches above the frog.\textsuperscript{56}

Charles-August de Beriot was one of the foremost violinists among the French tradition. Instead of succeeding Baillot at the Paris Conservatory, he chose to teach at the Brussels Conservatory and founded the \textit{Franco-Belgian School} of Violin playing. His new approach was essentially a romantic one with characteristics of sweetness, elegance, and virtuoso influences from Paganini.\textsuperscript{57} Significant right-hand specifics included a higher elbow, less inward turning of the right hand (or \textit{pronation} of the hand), and the holding of the violin to the left side slightly.\textsuperscript{58}

The \textit{Franco-Belgian School} counted as its supporters Henri Vieuxtemps, Eugène Ysaÿe, Lucien Capet, and Ivan Galamian. Capet states that the possibilities of the bow “should become for all purposes unlimited.” He designated placement for each finger and identified the relationship each has to the other in regards to the bow stroke, contact point, and penetration into the string. For the bow hold, Capet stated that the index finger contacts the stick near the middle joint, the thumb and middle fingers are opposite forming a ring, and the fourth finger makes contact with the stick on its tip. He suggested alternating the bow tilt away from the bridge and toward the bridge by curving and straightening the fingers. This allowed for deeper penetration into the string and for establishing control of the fingers over the stick.\textsuperscript{59}

Galamian studied in Moscow and became an accomplished violinist before associating himself with Capet. He believed in using an individualized approach in his

\textsuperscript{58}Charles de Beriot, \textit{Method for Violin}, Part 1, ed. and trans. by George Lehmann (New York: G. Schermer, 1899), VIII and X.
\textsuperscript{59}Stephen B. Shipps, “The Influences of Lucien Capet on Violin Teaching” in \textit{American String Teacher}, vol. 43, no. 1 (Winter 1993), 67.
teaching and stated that his method was not the only right or possible approach but that his system was the “most practical.”\textsuperscript{60} In spite of his individual approach, Galamian students are well recognized by their systemized bow grip.\textsuperscript{61}

In his book, \textit{Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching}, Ivan Galamian describes his bow hold by placing the tip of the thumb both on the stick and the frog opposite to the middle finger forming a circle. The index finger is positioned at a minimal distance from the middle finger and touches the bow at a point between the nail and middle joint (closer to the middle joint). The middle finger contacts the stick at the nail joint and the ring finger is positioned over the frog. The tip of the little finger rests on the inner side of the octagon of the stick touching the flat surface next to the top of the stick. Galamian states that the bow hold should be “basic or neutral” and he emphasizes a “natural” and “flexible position” while holding the bow.\textsuperscript{62} The bow hold should be correct yet comfortable: “the \textit{correct} bow grip must be a comfortable one; all fingers are curved in a natural, relaxed way, no single joint (knuckle) is stiffened and the resulting correct flexibility must allow all the natural springs in the fingers and the hand to function easily and well.”\textsuperscript{63}

\textsuperscript{61}Boris Schwartz, \textit{Great Masters of the Violin}, 549.
\textsuperscript{63}ibid., 47.\end{flushleft}
Galamian further advises that “the bow hand is not a fixed or invariable thing, but...subject to constant modification as the bow moves from one end to the other and as a player changes his dynamics, bowing styles, and tonal qualities.” He identifies and illustrates in descriptive detail various adjustments the fingers must necessitate during the movement of the bow. Of an equally recitative contrivance are the motions of the hand and the arm.  

By the twentieth century, in addition to the German and Franco-Belgian Schools of bowing, the Russian School was a major influence for the violinists of that time. The Russian style of bowing popular in Europe after World War I began to displace the established Franco-Belgian method.

The Russian Violin School, derived from the Polish violinist and composer Henryk Wieniawski, was advocated by the Hungarian violinist Leopold Auer and supported by Karl Flesch and violinists Mischa Elman, Jascha Heifetz, Efrem Zimbalist, and Raphael Bronstein. The bow hold is characterized by the index finger, which contacts

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64 Ivan Galamian, *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching*, 47.  
the bow at the middle joint. Karl Flesch states, “The index finger touches the stick at the line separating the second form the third joint (he uses the term “joint” for phalanx).”\(^6^6\) Leopold Auer stated that there is “no exact and unalterable rule laid down” on how to hold the bow.\(^6^7\) Dorothy Delay, however, believes that Auer developed his bow hold in a way that it enabled him to reach the tip of the bow because he was a small man with short arms.\(^6^8\) In his method book, *Graded Course of Violin Playing*, Auer writes, “there is little space between the index and middle fingers, with the index finger assuming guidance to the bow, and the little finger touching at its lower half.”\(^6^9\)

Flesch also states that the thumb supports the bow and acts as a counter to downward pressure coming from the other fingers. It should be bent and placed opposite of the middle finger.\(^7^0\) The bow should be held firmly.\(^7^1\) Flesch, in describing the different functions of the index and little fingers, labels the index finger as the one of “tone producing” and the little finger as the “tone preventing.” The first finger applies pressure on the bow to set the strings into vibration while the little finger offsets the weight of the bow at the frog to prevent a harsh sound. Both Flesch and Auer are definitive in describing the function of the little finger by stating “the little finger only touches it [bow stick] at its lower half while playing.”\(^7^2\)

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\(^{6^6}\) Karl Flesch, *The Art of Violin Playing*, vol. 1, 51.

\(^{6^7}\) Leopold Auer, *Violin Playing as I teach It* (Gerald Duckworth and Company Ltd., 1921), 36. William Primrose, however, in describing Auer’s students, particularly Heifetz, observed the contact point of the index finger between the middle joint and base joint (David Dalton in “The Art of Bowing: *Strings*, vol. 3, Summer 1988, 28). Furthermore, he notices that in his observances of players with Russian holds the contact point of the index finger is below the middle joint.


\(^{7^0}\) Flesch states that the thumb will be opposite between the first and middle fingers. Karl Flesch, *The Art of Violin Playing*, vol. 1, 53.

\(^{7^1}\) Leopold Auer, *Graded Course of Violin Playing*, Book 1, 12.

\(^{7^2}\) Karl Flesch, *The Art of Violin Playing*, vol. 1, 51 and 53.
Bronstein states: “the bow grip must be firm but yet comfortable and elastic in the palm of the hand.” He suggests that the thumb should be slightly bent, opposite the second finger or placed between the second and third fingers. He also notes that according to the comfort level of the player, the thumb may be placed one half inch from the frog, allowing the player to better control the tip. The index finger is curved over the stick yielding a “secure, deep feeling” and the tip of the little finger is placed on the stick slightly curved and with no pressure except in the spiccato stroke or string crossings. Bronstein instructs that the weight of the arm should be channeled to the wrist and the index finger. For stronger playing however, he states that a violinist should “let the wrist sink more and feel the weight of the first and third fingers over the bow.” The motion comes from the whole arm while playing in the lower half of bow whereas in the upper half only the forearm is used. He cautions not to raise the shoulder on an up-bow and to compensate the “gravitational pull” by moving the bow with a faster speed.73

Example 7 (Russian School bow hold)

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Shinichi Suzuki, Kató Havas, and Paul Rolland are three prominent violin pedagogues in the second half of the twentieth century. Rolland and Havas vindicate naturalness in violin playing while Suzuki focuses on tone production; each having his own style in holding the bow. Suzuki's bow hold is similar to the old German School. Rolland's grip is modeled after the Franco-Belgian School while Havas' bow hold resembles that of the Russian School.

Paul Rolland states: “the fingers of the right hand are practically in a perfect position for holding the bow when the arm is hanging down at the side.” The thumb and middle fingers are opposite each other and the little finger sits on top of the stick. The fingers should not be too close or too far apart from each other and “resemble the natural resting position of the hand.” Rolland separates the bow hold into two segments. The front part consists of the thumb, index and middle fingers while the back part consists of the thumb, middle, ring and little fingers. The front part applies pressure on the bow when moving toward the tip or using accents, forte, or crescendo, whereas the back part supports the bow when near the frog or for playing lifted strokes, piano, or diminuendo.

These two segments function in a similar role to the "tone-producing" and "tone-preventing" as mentioned by Flesch and also discussed by Capet, Galamian, and Tadeusz Wroñski. Kató Havas, as virtually all pedagogues of the second half of the twentieth century, defends a hold that is natural and one that will vary with each student. Supporting


ibid., 8-9.

ibid.

Auer’s statement that there is “no exact and unalterable rule laid down” on where to put the fingers, she emphasizes a bent thumb, curved fingers, and an “airborne

79 She suggests, without the bow, to let the arm hang to the side, then lift up the hand with the forearm and see to what direction the thumb will point. This method shows that the thumb will curve more towards the middle finger in some cases and more towards the index finger in others. To whatever direction the thumb points is most likely which finger the thumb should be opposite to while holding the bow.80

Suzuki has the index finger placed on the stick between the first and second joints and places the little finger on top of the bow.81 In teaching young children to hold the bow, he understands the lack of strength and facility in a child’s hand. Furthermore, he compensates by having younger students place the thumb outside the frog on the metal ferrule. When the teacher believes that the student has gained proper facility, only then is the student taught to place the thumb at the frog and stick.82

Tadeusz violin playing details specific inaccuracies of technique and courses of action to implement corrections. His careful examination of specific problems, ability to explain what is wrong, how the incorrect way is impeding progress, how to achieve correct playing, and why the correct way will lead to successful playing, are the characteristics of his teaching. The author of this treatise had the privilege of studying with Wroński and learning proper basic technique for the right and left hands. Gaining knowledge as well as understanding the reasons for the execution of such a technique was the most valuable aspect of learning. The correction method outlined in this

81 Shinichi Suzuki, The Suzuki Concept, 102 and 128.
82 ibid., 103.
dissertation reflects many of explanations and understanding.

While many pedagogues and great artists today write about the right hand in regards to the bow hold, most players are taught to use the Russian bow hold, the Franco-Belgian, or combinations/variations of both. Both follow the same general philosophy in regards to basic principles. A bow hold should be natural, without stiffness, and firm yet flexible. All fingers are placed on the stick not too far apart from each other. The thumb should be bent and the fingers curved. Differences in the bow hold include the index finger contacting the stick between the nail and middle joint in the Franco-Belgian School while in the Russian School the index finger contacts the stick on the middle joint (or between the middle and base joint). The thumb is opposite the middle finger or between the middle and index fingers in the Franco-Belgian School. In contrast, the thumb is placed opposite the middle finger or it is between the middle and ring fingers in the Russian hold.\textsuperscript{83} The little finger rests on the inner side of the bow by following the Franco-Belgian School and is placed directly on top of the stick by those who use the Russian School.

Additionally, differences occur in the two schools beyond the placement of the fingers. In regards to manipulating the stick when making various strokes, Galamian addresses the active role of the fingers in the Franco-Belgian method.\textsuperscript{84} The fingers pivot and change in curvature both horizontally and vertically for the purpose of making small motions. While in the Russian, these motions derive from actions undertaken by the arm and the shoulder. The forearm, wrist, and hand most often act as a unit in the Russian method but act independently in the Franco-Belgian.

\textsuperscript{83}Raphael Bronstein, \textit{The Science of Violin Playing}, 25.  
Pronation is more pronounced in the Russian method than in the Franco-Belgian School. This slanted position is achieved (or should be achieved) by rotating the forearm and wrist and by not lifting the forearm or elbow. In the Russian School, the elbow should be level with the arm and wrist while the Franco-Belgian method allows for a slightly higher elbow. The bow is inclined toward the fingerboard in the Franco-Belgian School with the edge of the hair being in contact with the string (in the lower half) while the Russian manner suggests the stick be straight with full flat hair on the string. The bow hair is “tensely strung” in the Franco-Belgian method and “weakly

Position of the Right Hand

In establishing my concept of the proper art of holding the bow, I use the principles of both the Russian and the Franco-Belgian bow holds as well as my extensive study with Tadeusz the other.” Finger placement should be comfortable, simple, and flexible, and allow for total movement of the hand. In determining the correct bow hold, it is sensible to locate the most comfortable point on the bow in which to commence.

A significant difference between the Russian and Franco-Belgian Schools is the contact point between the index finger and the bow. The Russian (“textbook” version) contact point (on the middle joint) allows for maximum power with flexibility. Contrary to this, my finger placement is on the edge of the middle joint (in the direction of the nail joint) will provide power but with a greater degree of flexibility.

87Ibid., vol. 4, 19-20.
88More thoroughly discussed in the next chapter (chapter 3). Galamian suggests a correct bow hold will be most comfortable near the middle or at the “square” while Wroński prefers above the middle.
Such placement permits slight adjustments while using the various bow strokes. “Rounded” fingers or fingers with a curvature are more natural and flexible than straight fingers. Flexibility is crucial in executing smooth bow changes at the frog. The thumb is the “stabilizer” and should be opposite the middle finger, forming a circle. The ring finger assists in the comfort of the hold. The fourth finger, placed on top of the stick, allows the bow hair to remain flat. Thus, in explaining how combination of fingers contribute to the hold and function of the bow; the index finger and thumb keep the bow on the string and apply weight, the thumb and little finger release the weight, and the thumb together with middle and ring fingers add security and stability to the hold.  

While advocating Rolland’s placement of the fingers based on the natural position of the hand without the bow, there should be a relatively equal separation of the fingers on the stick in a manner that is comfortable. However, the more distance that the hand covers on the stick, the greater the control that is attained over the bow. The wrist, arm, and elbow should remain equally level, avoiding rising parts that disrupt the gravity or arm weight. There should be a consistently flat “line” beginning with the knuckles of the hand throughout the wrist and arm up to the shoulder and little if any deviation of these parts. There are no significant adjustments to the curve of the fingers during any part of the bow stroke.

Differences based on the size of the hand are taken into consideration in determining the correct bow hold. Larger hands may have a greater distance between the fingers than smaller hands. While the wrist should remain flat at the frog on the

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up-bow, acceptable.91

As the bow moves from the frog to the tip, there may be a perception of a slight tilt of the fingers on the bow stick; however, they should remain curved. The different lengths of individual’s hands, arms, and finger size determine this tilt. A student with a longer arm and hand may experience more bending of the wrist (at the frog), with little change in finger movement, where as an individual with shorter fingers and smaller hands will see increased finger adjustments. All muscles of the hand should be involved during the motion.92 Adjustments to keep the bow straight at the frog are a combination of the fingers and wrist. Further adjustments by the wrist and arm are made to keep the bow straight during bow strokes. Incorrect bending of the wrist on the whole bow causes problems such as a crooked stroke.93 For the up and down strokes, the wrist bends back and forth horizontally and not vertically. Power comes from pronation of the wrist and forearm directing the weight through the index finger.94 The bow hair should not be tightly wound.

achieve a “sublime and delicate” tone from the bow and still produce a sound with energy and brilliance with a slightly looser bow.95 Lastly, flexibility comes from simplicity and naturalness of the bow hold. Hence, the hold should be simple and uncomplicated – “natural, obvious and easy.”96

91Wroński additionally describes the movement of the wrist as “a little concaved, never convexed, and very seldom very concaved.” ibid., 19-20 and 32.
92ibid., 25-26 and 32.
93Wroński’s definition of pronation is the tilting downward or sinking (concave action) of the wrist and forearm allowing full gravity to produce the power. ibid., 22.
94ibid., 24.
95ibid., 17.
Placement of the Fingers

- The inside end of the thumb, bent outward, is placed under the stick partially on the edge (or “end-bump”) of the frog and the stick itself.
- The index finger should have the contact point on the stick at the middle or upper edge of the joint (towards the nail joint).
- The middle finger is opposite the thumb with the contact on the stick near the nail joint at the phalanx between the middle and nail joints.
- The ring finger contacts the stick with the ball of the finger resting on the side of the frog on or near the pearl insert.
- The fourth finger sits on top of the stick at a position approximately in line with the back edge of the frog.

Example 8 (The correct right hand hold with and without the bow stick)
Example 9 (The correct bow hold within the three main parts of the bow: frog, tip, and middle)
Before commencing with the Method (chapter 3), I wish to discuss two elements of bowing previously mentioned, which are essential in the correction method. These are the arm weight and the tilt of the bow.

**Arm Weight**

In this method, the natural weight of the arm that provides the power needed to produce the sound is of primary importance. Arm weight versus pressure is the primary focus at the beginning of the correction. Some pedagogues refer to both arm weight and pressure as synonymous statements.\(^{97}\) Pressure may convey the misconception of pressing the bow into the string in order to produce a sound. The student must not believe that pressing or forcing the bow into the string can produce a big sound. Weight itself is inactive; therefore, it requires movement to administer energy from the string. The alliance of proper weight and increased movement allows for maximum tone production.\(^{98}\) While arm weight is a better characterization in describing the process of making a sound,

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arm weight. He describes the idea that gravity allows the arm to sink into the string.\textsuperscript{99} A level arm, elbow, wrist, and hand allow for the arm weight or “gravity” to function at its optimal potency. If one part of the arm is raised, gravity is disrupted, and the effectiveness of the proper weight is jeopardized.

\textbf{Bow Tilt}

The amount of bow tilt should be taken into consideration and discussed, for it is a controversial subject among pedagogues have differing opinions on this matter. Most pedagogues believe full bow hair is required beyond the middle part of the bow. From the middle part of the bow to the tip, the bow is the lightest and using all the hair enables the player to maximize sound and dynamics. There are different suggestions for the amount of hair to be used beginning at the middle part of the bow and leading down to the frog. Isaac Stern promoted using flat bow hair all the time. He recommended no change be made to the amount of bow hair for the purpose of controlling dynamics and tone color. Instead, both should be obtained by using less arm weight or with manipulations by the left hand.\textsuperscript{100} Misha Elman played with relatively loose hair on the bow and kept the bow stick flat at all times.\textsuperscript{101} Oscar Shumsky, according to Eliot Chapo, suggested that by using flat bow hair, a violinist would achieve a bigger sound. Chapo, while agreeing with Shumsky, cautions to be careful at the frog with using a flat wrist and flat hair so that the bow does not incline inward towards the violin.\textsuperscript{102} For violists, Henry Barrett states that one should not tilt


\textsuperscript{101}According to violinist Henri Temianka, Samuel Applebaum, \textit{With the Artists}, 188.

\textsuperscript{102}Eliot Chapo \textit{Interview} (Valdosta, 9 March 2001)
Pedagogues who corroborate using less bow hair argue that soft playing can be achieved easily. However, soft levels of playing can be attained with placing the bow closer to the fingerboard and by decreasing arm weight and speed. Some pedagogues who support playing on the side of the hair suggest that it be used in moderation. Galamian recommends using at least three-quarters of the bow hair at the frog and asserts that the hair must be flat before reaching the middle. Furthermore, he states that the hair should be flat during fortissimo playing. In his book, *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching*, Galamian states there should be a slight tilt of the bow at the frog. “One should take care not to exaggerate the tilting motion since it can cause too high a wrist at the frog.” Norman Lamb recommends to his music education students, a 15%-25% curve in the lower half of the bow. Even Wroński, who promotes flat bow hair, suggests a slight tilt may be utilized but only so much so that the bow stick can make contact with the hair during forte playing or when playing powerfully. He states that the bow tilt should be only slight; otherwise the thumb will be unable to support and stabilize the bow.

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Leopold Auer suggests beginning a down-bow on the “edge of the hair and for which the wrist must be dropped.” Unfortunately, most students do the opposite and raise the wrist for purposes such as playing on the edge of the hair. For the purpose of bow correction, I require students to use flat bow hair exclusively. With flat bow hair, the student will be taught to have correct levels of the hand, wrist, and lower arm. Using flat bow hair will make it easier for the student to maintain these levels. The danger of a tilted bow, especially at the frog, is the manner of how the student positions the hand to achieve a bow tilt. If a student raises or “rolls over” the hand and the wrist in order to tilt the bow, the hand displays an incorrect position. Both wrist and arm will be too high, therefore, not level with the fingers, elbow, and arm, and arm weight will be disrupted. If nuances of tone are desired and are to be derived from different amounts of bow hair, a violinist must be taught how to hold a tilted bow (at the frog) and still keep the hand, wrist, and arm levels correct. In the early stages of learning to hold the bow in a correct manner, the student should not be concerned with using different amounts of bow hair for the purpose of tone color and executions of finesse in playing.

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On bow tilt, Paul Rolland states: “the hair is set upon the string with the stick inclining toward the fingerboard.”\textsuperscript{113} However, in his book, *The Teaching of Action in*

\textsuperscript{113}Paul Rolland, *Basic Principles of Violin Playing*, 15.
String Playing, all pictures of students in the chapter on “Learning to Hold the Bow” show flat bow hair on the string. As I reiterate, in this method, it is easier for the student to learn and not deviate from a correct bow hold by keeping the bow hair flat. After the bow correction is established and maintained, the student can proceed with adjustments and initiate the incorporation of a bow tilt for the purpose of beautiful playing.
3. METHOD

When correcting the right hand, a teacher should put a method in place that is used in a systematic, knowledgeable, and step-by-step manner. A student must understand the process of the correction. Many students study with teachers who provide no guidance on what is the correct method to hold the bow, while other students study with teachers who incorporate various ideas, styles, and methods for the right hand position. Students who have studied with different teachers may have been introduced to several different ways of holding the bow. Changing right hand positions with every new teacher, at the very least, can be a difficult, time consuming, and confusing process, and in worse case scenarios, it can be unsuccessful and discouraging. To implement a new and correct hold explanations must take place during the teaching for the student to understand the reason for these changes. Furthermore, adequate explanations must be delivered to the students at their appropriate skill level.\textsuperscript{114}

Technical exercises and \textit{Etudes} are selected to help the student evolve from his/her current way of playing to a proper and correct way of playing. The order in which a student proceeds with these exercises is crucial to his/her advancing throughout the process. After several basic open string exercises, a series of Rudolphe Kreutzer’s 42 \textit{Etudes ou Caprices pour le Violon}\textsuperscript{115} are recommended to assist the student to

\textsuperscript{114}Tadeusz Wroński suggests that the more talented the student, the more explanations he/she can receive and usually desire to receive. The less talented student should have lesser amounts of explanations. Tadeusz Wroński, \textit{Zagadnienia Gry Skrzypcowej}, vol. 4 (Warszawa, Poland: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1967), 31-32.

\textsuperscript{115}It is recommended that the reader obtain an edition of Kreutzer’s 42 \textit{Etudes/Studies}.  

maintain the new correct right hand position. Only simple basic exercises and Kreutzer's Etudes are used in this correction procedure.

Obtaining the proper bow hold should be attempted first without the violin. Practicing with a pencil can be of assistance. In fact, numerous pedagogues advise using a pencil for teaching and establishing a correct right hand position. A pencil is light and the student can hold it without tension while attempting to move fingers for flexibility. When placing the fingers on the bow, it is advisable to hold the bow with the left hand in the middle of the stick to facilitate the weight of the bow and allow for flexibility of the right hand fingers. Examining the bow hold from all angles leads to better understanding of the hold and the finger placement and can promote a sense of control. With the bow upside down (hair facing upward), the bow rests on the hand instead of the hand controlling the weight of the stick. Thus, the hand maintains its flexibility, lightness of touch is sensed, and a balance may be felt between the fingers and thumb. Awkwardness at this stage is to be expected and encouragement should be given to the student, but deviation from the correct hold should not be allowed.

How the student holds the violin may also be addressed so that bowing problems are not compounded by the position of the violin held too low, too much in front, or too far to the side. If the violin is held too low, the bow stroke will likely not be straight. The length of the arm signals how much to the left side the violin must be held. If the bow is not straight while approaching the tip, the violin should be moved slightly more to the right. Near the tip, however, a slight bend from the elbow is necessary to avoid the arm from becoming completely rigid.

\[\text{Zagadnienia Gry Skrzypcowej, vol. 4, 30.}\]
\[\text{Eliot Chapo, Interview, 9 March 2001.}\]
Not only are elements of the hold emphasized, but it is also stressed that students should be taught to understand exactly why these elements are practiced this way. Certain bowing elements are simple to explain and are easy for the student to understand. Holding the violin “up” or “parallel to the floor” and playing with a straight bow stroke should be instilled in a student from the moment he or she picks up the instrument. Playing the violin or viola as natural as possible opens the student to several concepts and provides the key to understanding how to play correctly and not just on how to hold the bow in a particular way. Explaining how to play with a big or forte sound using “arm weight” instead of pressure is a concept most violinists at this level will understand and agree with. The basic stroke is a horizontal movement of the arm across the string.\textsuperscript{118} Vertical movements come naturally with string crossings but must maintain equal weight and contact with the string. Elements such as proper bow distribution, bow speed, and finding the correct contact point on the string should be explained and assimilated with the process. The specific elements of articulation and “preparation,” which most likely are new concepts, must be fully explained and consequently successfully implemented by the student.

Finally, the exact placement of the fingers on the stick will be a combination of recognized pedagogical principles explained in the previous chapter, the teacher’s expertise of the right hand, and natural elements, with slight differences, based on the student’s anatomy. Insistence on correct placement of the fingers for the best results of combining strength and flexibility, levels of the arm, and the use of flat bow hair, while presented with logical explanations, should be delivered in a way that best illustrates how the violin should be played.

\textsuperscript{118}Not to be taken literally, it is understood that each stroke of the bow consists of almost undetectable arc-like movements for the purpose of smooth bow changes and slurred portato strokes in this method.
Diverse Procedures

In order to establish the correct bow hold and master the *Etudes* successfully, diverse procedures must be followed. One such procedure deals with the aspects of the bow stroke. Applying appropriate dynamic levels for the *Etudes*, taking advantage of similarities between the *Etudes*, and maintaining flexibility and control throughout the method are equally important procedures.

Regularity must be maintained as to the articulation of the stroke, speed of the stroke, and making certain that the end of each stroke is still correct before preparing and initiating a new stroke. The “impulse stroke” must have proper articulation or execution to enable the student to move the bow while having the flexibility and firmness needed to maintain the new hand position. This stroke must begin with an emphasis, enunciation, or “pulse” though not as heavy as an actual accent. Combined with the correct speed, this pulse will allow firmness, flexibility, and comfort needed to maintain the hand position. This stroke will be used almost exclusively in all studies of the first exercise and initial etudes. The student must be aware that he or she cannot lift the bow from the string especially during whole bow strokes.

Various speeds of the bow will be emphasized at the start and proper arm weight must be comprehended to accomplish these different speeds. Time between the strokes is required, especially at the beginning, so that the student can be assured the bow hold is secure and correct and that the new stroke initiated is delivered with a clear and decisive tone. This will assist in such aspects as proper arm weight, flat bow hair, flexibility, and “preparation” for the next stroke.

While correcting the right hand position, preparation of the next note can also be mastered. Time is taken between each note to check for exactness of the hand positions. Additionally, the student can use this time to prepare string levels and the
fingers of the left hand. As stated in *Introduction* (chapter 1), the conclusion of a note played is at the same time an immediate preparation for the following note - both with the left and right hands (and arm). This technique, previously referred to as “preparation,” is incorporated early in the correction process. It may take time to implement but as the student solidifies the hand position and fully understands the technique, the amount of time between strokes to execute “preparation” will be minimized. From this point “preparation” will become part of the student’s technique and should be utilized in different aspects of violin playing. String players are constantly preparing for what happens next and what shifting, string crossings, or bow distribution, are required. The concept of “preparation” is a specific procedure that can be explained and effectively incorporated during the right hand correction process.

Exercises are played (unless otherwise indicated) in a full sound, *mezzo forte* or *forte* dynamic range. The use of arm weight, constant attention to gravity, a downward motion with knuckles, hand, wrist, and flat arm, will produce a big or heavy sound. With increased mastery and control of these elements, the student will be able to modify heaviness of the sound. No attempt should be made to create a soft or delicate sound so as not to disturb the “downward” motion. For the purpose of developing and maintaining the bow hold, some notes will use larger amounts of the bow while others will use smaller amounts of bow. With full arm weight, the changes in bow speed will determine the dynamic levels.

Most *Etudes* demand a difficult maneuver for the right hand that must be mastered. The student must maintain control and flexibility of the bow hold while learning the right hand procedures. In turn, an eventual feeling of ease and comfort during playing will aid the optimal progress for the student. The last significant procedure is to take advantage of the similarities between the *Etudes*. If the student (with the teacher’s
guidance) carefully discerns the aim of each exercise/\textit{Etude}, then a subsequent \textit{Etude} with a similar intent will be easier to master. Usually, the similarity is a more advanced or refined version of what has been previously learned.

Lists of abbreviations of various parts of the bow are as followed:

- Whole bow = WB
- Half bow = HB
- Quarter bow = QB
- Upper half of bow = UH
- Lower half of bow = LH
- Middle part of the bow = M
- Frog of the bow = FR
- Tip or point of the Bow = PT

In establishing the hold, concentrating on basic bowing techniques explained in the \textit{Introduction} (chapter 1), is a priority during the initiation of this method. The student is introduced to basic and specific elements and given open string exercises and less difficult \textit{Kreutzer Etudes} before being assigned the more difficult ones. This will require advancing left hand technique.

After basic open string exercises, the first of four \textit{Kreutzer Etudes} deal particularly with having the student become familiar with basic bowing elements and several specific bowing elements, and the new bow hold. The proceeding two \textit{Etudes} expose the students to advancing left hand technique, while sustaining the new hold. The next six \textit{Etudes} focus on the basic techniques of bowing with the new hold interacting with a more advanced left hand technique, such as double stops and shifting. Not until the final three \textit{Etudes} of Kreutzer, which are multifunctional and deal with higher levels
of left hand challenges, will the student focus attention more on the left hand and away from the new bow hold.

**Basic Exercises**

After a student is taught the correct way to hold the bow and can demonstrate the ability to pick up the bow and place the fingers on the stick in a correct and relaxed manner while utilizing arm weight, he/she is ready to begin bowing exercises. Short exercises with open strings concentrating on basic elements, specifically flat bow hair, correct placement of the fingers, flat wrist, along with a straight bow stroke, all should be attempted from the beginning and in a relaxed manner. The student, in the first exercise, will begin the bow stroke from the “square” position.\(^\text{119}\) [Ex. 12] Following this is the first introduction of the “impulse stroke.” It should be short and from the string. All strokes must be initiated and stopped while maintaining the correct hold. As the student performs these short strokes, the position of the fingers, hand, and arm should be observed and analyzed after each stroke. It is crucial for the teacher to be closely involved with every stroke, hence, checking finger placement, hand position, arm movement, weight, and relaxation. Constant explanations are delivered to the student on what is happening and being accomplished. The student should be asked to analyze what is occurring, how the hand feels, and what are the sensations. Playing in the lower half, particularly at the frog, should be emphasized at the first lesson.

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\(^{119}\)Galamian uses the term “square” as the position approximately in the middle of the bow, where the violin, bow, lower and upper arm at a 90 degree angle, form a square like pose. He states: “the control of the bow is easiest and most natural near the square position.” Ivan Galamian, *Principles of Violin Playing* Zagadnienia Gry Skrzypcowej, 18. My preference is at or about the middle of the bow depending on the comfort of the individual student.
The next exercises, also beginning from the middle part of the bow and using quarter bow (QB) strokes, consist of two down-bow strokes (utilizing half of the bow) followed by four up-bow strokes (consisting of the entire length of the bow), and continuing back with four down-bow strokes. [Ex 13] After each stroke, the student must take a moment and analyze each movement. From the first lesson, the objective is for the student to take a critical role in self-analysis in all that is occurring. Immediately after, half bow (HB) strokes are commenced from the square consisting of one down-bow stroke followed by two up-bow strokes. These exercises should be initiated on A and D strings, and then followed on G. Fingers may be added (starting with the open string as down-bow and adding fingers at each bow change) to keep the left hand active.

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\[120\] At this early stage, playing on the lower three strings is suggested. With a completely flat wrist and full bow hair, the hand has a tendency to hit the instrument with the thumb while playing at the frog on the E string. When E string playing is unavoidable, the student is instructed not to go completely to the frog. As the student becomes more comfortable and has a better control of the hold, the student can learn to “finesse” the hand to the frog on the E string without hitting the instrument or by changing the position of the hand.
The *Etudes*

The initial basic exercises will be followed by specific *Etudes* from Rudolphe Kreutzer’s *42 Etudes/Studies*. In the upcoming pages, fifteen *Etudes* will be examined, illustrated, and discussed, (some modified from customary editing) which will enable the student to establish and maintain the correct bow hold, while advancing to more complicated left hand technique. Left hand challenges should arise gradually and slowly and specific bowing elements will be emphasized. New *Etudes* will be added to existing *Etudes* and as the sequence proceeds, the student will practice several *Etudes* at one time. In the early stages, with fewer exercises and *Etudes*, the student practices for a shorter amount of time each session. Discipline is important and the student must allow for practice several times each day. Playing *Etudes* with progressively difficult technique, while maintaining the correct hold demonstrates the realization that the student has established correct basic bowing elements. At the conclusion of the method, it should become evident that not only the advanced right hand technique can be attempted with the knowledge that it will more easily be acquired, but noticeable advances in left hand technique are also evident.

The fifteen *Etudes* from Kreutzer’s *42 Etudes/Studies* are listed below. The *Etudes* are not presented in chronological order but in the order of study. [Exs. 14-30] Subsequent paragraphs will examine and illustrate the *Etudes*. Examples of beginning portions of the *Etudes* will be presented with explanations on how they should be practiced and what the student’s benefit will be from working on these *Etudes*.

* No. 2
* No. 7
* No. 6
* No. 29
Description of the *Etudes*

**Example 14 (Etude No. 2)**

This *Etude* is bowed essentially in the same manner shown in the preliminary exercises. The student will play four notes down-bow and four notes up-bow using QB strokes starting down-bow at the frog, not in the middle as is the earlier exercises. The *Etude* is attempted again with two notes down-bow and two notes up-bow utilizing HB strokes. The player must stop between each stroke and check the hand position,
weight and flexibility. Bow distribution is important and the student should make every attempt to divide the bow equally. Along with QB and HB strokes, the whole bow (WB) stroke may be introduced and attempted by the student. Careful attention must be made to the correct hand position when going from the middle part of the bow to the frog on the up-bow. A proper “pulse” articulation is especially vital in a successful WB stroke. Quick bow speed and sufficient arm weight are equally important in order to keep the proper contact point with the string. The *Etude* employs notes on the E string. The hand should not be changed to avoid contact with the instrument when approaching the frog but “just go” and have the thumb hit the instrument, or stop a couple of inches before the frog. Tempo is of less importance than the accuracy of the bow hold, which should be checked constantly. Generally, *Etudes* should be practiced slowly to maintain the bow hold and achieve accuracy of the bowing elements.

The articulation of the stroke may need to be reiterated and explicitly discussed with the student. For success in these early *Etudes* and due to unfamiliarity with the new hold, a firm articulation on each note (specifically each bow stroke, whether notes are separate or hooked together) should always be attempted. The bow is placed on the string before the stroke begins. The firmness of the stroke, initiated with arm weight and a “pulse,” will allow for many elements of the hold to be more easily maintained. As stated in the *Introduction* (chapter 1), the “pulse,” in addition to bow speed, is the components of the “impulse stroke.”

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121The introduction of WB strokes may be delayed until the next lesson (either *Etude No. 7* or *No. 6*) in case the student exhibits difficulty with the hold, flat bow hair, or articulation.
Example 15 (Etude No. 7)

Example 16 (Etude No. 7 with “preparation”)

This Etude [Ex 15] is first practiced in the upper half of the bow using HB strokes before attempting a WB stroke. The emphasis is on flexibility, maintaining the hold (which should be easier if first attempted in the UH) and arm weight. The new concept of “preparation” is introduced this Etude. [Ex. 16] Example 16 illustrates what takes place in the process of “preparation.” Time must be taken before each note is played and it must be executed in the bow and with the left hand. Once the student is familiar with the concept, this technique may be used in most etudes. Starting up-bow, this Etude requires the arm to rise when going to the lower string at the tip and the arm to descend when going to a higher string in the middle part of the bow (or frog on the WB). This motion is not difficult to perform but may require a thorough explanation to the student. Moreover, it allows for fewer problems in maintaining the correct bow hold.

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122 It is our aspiration that elements learned in this method, such as “preparation,” will carry over to both the student’s other practice requirements and into the music they play.
Example 17 (Etude No. 6)

"Etude No. 6 is the first *Etude* dedicated to the whole bow stroke. Generally, the down-bow stroke is less difficult than the up-bow stroke. At the time this *Etude* is added, the student will be playing the opening exercises, Kreutzer’s *Etudes Nos. 2 and 7* and using the WB. It is likely that the student will have difficulty with the WB stroke, especially on an up-bow. However, this is an important development for the student even if the bow shakes or its contact point with the string is disrupted. As long as the hold is intact, the student must persevere and continue working on the WB stroke. Taking time between each stroke is still necessary. In addition to continued perfection of the “impulse stroke,” this etude is excellent for “preparation.” Unlike *Etude No. 7*, in *Etude No. 6*, the bow descends to a higher string after the up-bow stroke. This stroke creates an increasing challenge in order to keep the wrist and fingers flat. The tendency is for the fingers to straighten and stiffen and for the hand to move independently from the arm and “roll over” to the higher string. This tendency not only changes the hand position (i.e., loosing the correct bow hold) but also causes the bow hair to tilt to the side."

\[123\]

\[123\] Wroński suggests to relax the muscles of the shoulder and allow a “free fall of the hand (and arm) stopping the fall lightly when you get to the next (string).” Tadeusz Wroński, *Zagadnienia Gry Skrzypcowej*, vol. 4, 33.
Etude No. 29 is used for further development of the WB stroke and is studied two ways. The first step is a stroke with two notes on a bow, and the second step is to play four notes on a bow. Different amounts of bow will be used on each note with most of the bow on the first note. The second note will use little bow at the end of the stroke. Subsequently, on the four-note stroke most of the bow is used on the first note with the remaining three notes utilizing small amounts of the bow. [Ex. 19] Arm weight, contact with the string, bow speed, and the “impulse stroke” are important in a successful WB stroke. Since two or four notes are played during each stroke, this Etude requires control and demands flexibility with precise bow distribution. The arm and hand must anticipate string crossings. Multiple string crossings may appear within the four-note stroke. Sufficient time should be taken between bow changes in order to prepare the next stroke. On the up-bow stroke, the difficulty is in not allowing the basic hand position to change when playing the three remaining notes, and using a small amount of bow prior to the bow change at the frog. In describing this stroke, the first note is the main note, while the remaining note (or three notes for the second step) is (are) an afterthought. In utilizing bow distribution in this way, the first note creates a louder dynamic than the other note(s), a softer dynamic.
Example 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PT 2nd note</th>
<th>1st note (“Impulse”) FR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PT 2, 3, &amp; 4th notes</th>
<th>1st note (“Impulse”) FR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As stated previously, students have more difficulties in maintaining the hold with the up-bow. *Etude No. 9* is similar to *Etude No. 6*, with the arm raised to the lower string on the up-bow, but is more challenging because the string crossings are on the same bow during the slurred notes and not after the bow change.

Example 20 (*Etude No. 15*)

*Etude No. 15* combines increased left hand technique with the WB stroke in the right-hand. The trill may be played as a mordent initiated from the main note or as an ornament played from the note above, thus a four-note segment. Either way is acceptable and may be used exclusively according to the comfort level and left hand development of the student. This *Etude* also incorporates frequent shifting. It should begin in an up-bow so that the mordent and accent commence from the down-bow.
stroke. As this *Etude* is placed early in the series and the up-bow stroke may still be difficult, focusing the entire movement of left hand on the down-bow should aid the student. However, commencing the *Etude* with a down-bow may be attempted. The “impulse stroke” is essential and shifting will be added to the “preparation” concept.

*Example 21 (Etude No. 36)*

![Example 21](image)

*Etude* No. 36, adds double stops to the increased technical elements of the left hand. By starting down-bow in the middle part of the bow, the second eighth note comes on an up-bow at the tip. Each note receives one half of the bow. Time must be taken between hooked strokes to prepare double stops. This *Etude* must be practiced slowly. Good intonation from the left hand is essential as well as a proper right hand position. “Preparation” should also be stressed. While “preparation” with the bow is less extreme, “preparation” for the left hand provides challenges because of the double stops demands.

*Example 22 (Etude No. 27)*

![Example 22](image)
Etude No. 27 has reverse similarities with the Etude No. 29. Etude No. 27 can be played literally with a whole bow, following the printed markings. By starting up-bow, the first three notes are to be played piano using a small amount of the bow, with the last forte note using most of the bow. Exaggeration may be used to describe this bow stroke. No more than two or three inches of the bow is required for the first three notes with the bow speed “exploding” for the final note. This kind of bow distribution causes the first three notes to be played at a soft dynamic and the last note to be played loudly. There is no “impulse stroke” articulation in this Etude and all notes are played subsequently without a break. If the student understands the continuity of the up-bow stroke and the down-bow stroke, such a continuous bow change can be incorporated and the flexibility of the hand will allow the bow changes to be smooth. Previous Etudes encourage the student to take time between each stroke and to make sure that the next stroke is correct. The three soft notes at the beginning of the stroke serve as the preparatory time for the bow change. Hence, it keeps the continuity of the bow movement and allows the student to prepare for a new stroke while playing.

Example 23 (Etude No. 30)
There are bowing modifications in *Etude No. 30* from standard bowing editing’s. Starting down-bow, the first two notes are slurred with most of the bow used on the first note, while the second note is played at the tip of the bow as seen in *Etude No. 29*. All succeeding separate notes are played at the tip, with the last two slurred notes returning to the frog of the bow and with most of the bow used on the first of the two slurred notes. In the second measure, after the first slur takes the bow to the tip and following the separate notes, the first two notes of the third beat are also slurred, which makes the bow return to the frog for the final two beats of the measure. Quick bow speed, arm weight, and a solid contact point are necessary for the slurred notes along with careful attention not to raise the wrist on up-bow strokes. This *Etude* deals with constant string crossings and flexibility for smooth bow changes. The hand, wrist, and arm move and the fingers stay flexible. The arm level descends so that it reaches the higher string. To play the next note on the lower string, the wrist must sink and the fingers should tilt the bow up while flattening the bow stick and allowing the bow to strike a lower string. This will cause the knuckles of the right hand and bow hair to stay flat. Measure 11 should be played with equal bow distribution for all four notes with small separations before each accent. Measures 13-15 double the slur pattern in contrast to the first ten measures. This *Etude* demands flexibility and control, particularly in the first ten measures of slurred up-bows and at the end of the measure to the slurred down-bow of the next, for continuity of the stroke.

*Example 24 (Etude No. 13)*
This study is similar to the previous Etude and it is both a continuation and “rebound” affect that the student can achieve at the bow change. Beginning with a down-bow stroke and using the “impulse stroke,” the first two slurred sixteenth notes played with a WB (most of the bow should be used on the first note as in Etudes Nos. 30 and 29) dictate that the next four notes should be played at the tip. Following two sixteenth slurred notes bring the bow back to the frog before returning to the tip on the next stroke (as in Etude No. 30). All the single notes are played at the tip. The difficulty lies in the two notes slurred on the up-bow followed by two slurred notes on the down-bow. This pattern occurs more frequently than in Etude No. 30. Notes 7, 8, and 9 all occur on different strings. The adjustment the arm makes at the bow change after note 9 is similar to the arm movement in Etude No. 7. Because of this greater frequency, attention to the bow hold at the frog on the up-bow is vital. Hence no significant changes occur in the bow hold. With flexibility and control, the bow “rebounds” from the up-bow to the down-bow strokes. Some editions of Kreutzer’s 42 Etudes suggest keeping the fingers of the left hand down as much as possible, which is recommended.

At this junction, more than one half of the Kreutzer’s Etudes have been attempted. In the beginning, basic right hand technique is introduced, then a focus on the left hand, followed by left hand/right hand complexes which require greater flexibility and control at the frog. While this in no way suggests a change or “time out” in the procedure, the teacher and student become more aware of which Etudes are less difficult for the student. Some Etudes may be heard less or even discontinued (in lessons only, but still practiced by the student) in order to focus on what is more demanding. At this time, the open string exercises may be discontinued depending
upon the student’s progress. It is important for the student to recognize progress that has been made within certain exercises and Etudes.

Example 25 (Etude No. 10)

Etude No. 10 focuses on both the frog and the tip ends of the bow. The first eighth note is played with a WB (as an “impulse stroke”) followed by all notes played at the tip of the bow. The next eighth note brings the bow back to the frog and the remaining notes in the measure are played at the frog. The sixteenth notes must be played at the absolute tip and frog. This Etude exposes the student to the use of the bow beginning on the low string and going to a high string, while keeping a flat wrist. Attention must be given to the hand, which should not “roll over” from the flat bow hair to a tilted bow during the string crossings, or change the basic position of the hand. The fingers must be flexible, especially at the frog, and tension abated if at all possible.

Example 26 (Etude No. 24)
Etude No. 24 is similar to the previous Etude, except that it offers more difficulties (octaves) for the left hand and fewer difficulties (less string crossings) for the right hand. The WB and “impulse stroke” executed within the eighth notes or slurred sixteenth notes remain. Additional left hand challenges are the frequent shifting on the slurred sixteenth notes. As in the previous Etude, the separate sixteenth notes should be played at either the tip or the frog. Flexibility must be preserved in the right hand as the left hand performs the octaves. After the initial “impulse stroke” the notes are sustained as seen in Etude 27.

Example 27 (Etude No. 9)

Etude No. 9 concentrates on string crossings. The left hand position utilizes string crossing between notes whenever possible. However, measures nine and twelve are placed in the first position as to not complicate shifting and to give a respite to the student. Correct movement of the hand and arm, maintaining the bow hold, as well as keeping the bow hair flat is the focus of this Etude. There must be flexibility in the fingers and in the hand as well as in the small motions while crossing the strings. This may be attempted slowly by using one bow per measure. The tendency is to have the wrist “roll over” to reach the higher string. On the contrary, if the arm level is slightly lower on the string crossings, the wrist can sink and the hand tilt higher to the lower
string. This procedure is also found in *Etude No. 30*. Small motions, flexibility, and control must be achieved while maintaining the flat hand.

*Example 28 (Etude No. 31)*

Example 28 is a multifunctional *Etude* that tests skills developed from previous *Etudes*. The first up-bow stroke utilizing the “impulse stroke” is similar to *Etudes No. 29* and *No. 13* with the second note coming at the end of the bow. Unlike previous *Etudes*, the bow should rebound and be continuous within each bow change until the *staccato* marking in the middle of the first measure. Following the grace notes at the end of the trill on the eighth note, the sixteenth notes should be played at the frog on the up-bow or tip on the down-bow. On beat three of measure two, the eighth notes are played with the WB. The speed of this etude will be assigned a slow tempo, in eight or subdivided four. While all previously discussed aspects of basic elements should be assimilated, this *Etude* encompasses specific elements of the right hand, including articulation, bow speed, bow distribution, “preparation,” and crossing strings. Complicated left hand shifting and numerous accidentals combined make for an accurate test of the stability of the bow hold.

*Example 29 (Etude No. 37)*
Etude No. 37 has multiple functions as well. The first up-bow note begins with an “impulse stroke,” avoiding the temptation to lift the bow from the string. The double stops begin within a legato, no articulation, with each eighth note receiving a HB. The next two sixteenth notes are played legato at the tip and followed by a WB “impulse stoke” in a repetitive procedure throughout. Bow changes, articulation, bow speed, bow distribution, as well as double stops test the student’s abilities. Keeping the bow on the string after the first note as well as flat bow hair, and keeping the hand into the bow stick, with its natural arm weight, are important. The “impulse stroke” on beats one and three will naturally be loud or at least in mezzo forte dynamic. However, the remaining notes should be played piano, while maintaining a flat hand position. This Etude should be played at a slow tempo.

Example 30 (Etude No.35)

The final Etude (Example 19) in this method is also one of the most difficult of the Kreutzer’s 42 Studies. After beginning with a fully sustained WB, the dotted pattern is played with a slight separation between the dotted eighth and sixteenth note. The sixteenth note sustains into the change of the bow to the next dotted eighth note. Bow distribution is similar to Etudes Nos. 29, 13, and 30. The shifting within the dotted patterns is performed with “preparation.” Measures five and six require multiple string crossings. When available, as in measure 7, the student should use fingering which
require a finger replacement to aid intonation. Other elements include keeping the bow on the string, sustaining the sound, distributing the bow correctly, and proper dynamics. This *Etude* should be learned as a whole piece and practiced to achieve the suggested tempo. As the student continues with the *Etudes* in the correction process, emphasis should be placed on musical elements. This should be especially encouraged in the later *Etudes*, particularly Nos. 31 and 35.

Goals are achieved when the proper right hand position is maintained, while assimilating increasingly difficult left hand challenges in given studies. With most of these *Etudes*, it is not necessary to learn the entire *Etude*. Even in the early stages of the correction, while practicing *Etudes* Nos. 2, 7, and 6 with the repetitiveness of the elements concentrated upon, less than one half (or as few as eight to ten lines) of the *Etudes* need to be practiced. When several *Etudes* are studied as the method continues, it is overwhelming to play *Etudes* all the way through. Hence, it is sufficient to concentrate on the first sections and have time to move to the next study.

During lessons with the student, this method works best with dividing the typical hour-long lesson into two half-hour lessons a week. In the early stages, when the concentration is at its peak and with fewer exercises/*Etudes*, a half-hour lesson is desirable and should be satisfactory for both the student and the teacher. It is advisable to see the student more often so that errors can be corrected quickly. While several *Etudes* are practiced simultaneously and the student is mastering the techniques required, one-hour lessons a week should resume.

While this method does not use specific exercises with the bow away from the violin (other than learning the hold with the bow only and practicing the hold with a pencil), any exercise contributing to better flexibility or control is allowed. Rolland’s “roll the arm,” “teeter-totter,” (without straightening the fingers), and “place and
“lift”\textsuperscript{124} are exercises that emphasize flexibility with control. An exercise such as the “creepy-crawler” (moving the fingers up and down the bow stick) is an additional example of a beneficial exercise. Exercises that require lifting one or two fingers at a time from the bow hold are not recommended as this may facilitate overcompensation and/or undo strain and tension on the remaining fingers.

At the beginning of the method, with only exercises and few \textit{Etudes} attempted, the student will have short practice sessions as well as an expectation to practice often during the day. The number of new \textit{Etudes} attempted per lesson will vary from student to student, based on the difficulty of the \textit{Etude}, and how fast the student masters the technique. Generally, after lessons in which the establishment of the bow hold is completed, one or two \textit{Etudes} may be assigned to the student each lesson. As the student progresses, even with some difficulties, it is advantageous to continue presenting the student with new challenges.

As the correction method progresses, time no longer allows for all \textit{Etudes} to be heard by the teacher during each lesson. As stated previously, at the point the student reaches the \textit{Etudes Nos. 15} and 36, the open string exercises may be eliminated from the lesson. \textit{Etudes Nos. 27 through 9} displays a variety of both left hand and right hand challenges. Early \textit{Etudes} such as \textit{Nos. 2} and 7 may also not be heard regularly. By the time \textit{Etude No. 9} is introduced, with the twelfth \textit{Etude} in the correction method, some of the \textit{Etudes} will be prominent, thus requiring extra concentration while others will require less focus. It is likely that \textit{Etudes} such as \textit{Nos. 2, 7, 15, 27 and 10} will demand less attention, and \textit{Etudes Nos. 29, 36, 30, 13, 24} and 9 will require additional practice. At this point (or before) the student will resume an hour lesson with the teacher. Even

though the student will not play each Etude during the lesson, all Etudes need to be practiced on a daily basis. The hold must become familiar and comfortable to the student and the more time the student spends playing the violin or viola, the quicker the process will be ingrained into the student. By the time the three final Etudes are assigned, the Etudes that give the student significant problems should be concentrated on most during the lessons.

Completion of the Method

Once the entire procedure has been completed, a few Etudes will be helpful and necessary to maintain the concept of the new bow hold as the student progresses to different material. Suggested Etudes (and the focus) are:

No. 2 - the correct hold, bow distribution, whole bow stroke, and articulation.

No. 13 - rebound, and continuous motion, keeping the wrist flat.

No. 37 - various articulations and double stops.

No. 31 - multiple functions for both left and right hands covering all bow techniques.

No. 35 - the last and most difficult of all Etudes; it covers all bow techniques. This Etude may require additional practice to master all elements of diverse technique.

Other Etudes may be added or substituted depending upon the deficiencies or needs of the student. These Etudes do not necessarily need to be in any particular order but can be practiced by the student to fulfill the solidification process. The student should be aware which Etudes are helpful to his/her individual needs and practice them accordingly. If the student possesses less then adequate technique to master Etude No. 35, then that Etude may be eliminated or postponed to a later time. In such cases, the order of Etudes Nos. 31 and 37 will be reversed, and the method should conclude with
No. 31. Since this *Etude* is multifunctional and closely resembles a real piece of music, the student will feel like there is a finalé to the method.

The teacher may add an easy piece of music at some point during the process (possibly avoiding the E string) if the student is loosing focus or is having trouble grasping the aspects of the correction method. If this strategy is applied, the appropriate time considered is to be at the approximate halfway point or after *Etude* No. 13. The underlying focus is to have the student practice the violin, desire to practice the violin often, use whatever means are necessary for a correct right hand position, and understand the basic and specific bowing elements.
students, because they must study theoretical education and become familiar with all
instruments, “must be trained with particularly clear sightedness, trained all-round,

and trained with (correct) modern methods.” Unfortunately, the BME student is frequently considered a less skillful performer and more overworked with the education course of study.  

Leopold Mozart wrote “It is easy enough to acquire the wrong habit, but not so

127 The necessity of this method is to change or correct deficiencies in the learning process of bowing or to change and correct bad habits. Of the six Subjects in this study, all recognized problems with bowing and expressed a desire to correct the deficiencies in order to become better violinists or violists. An important part of this method is explaining to the student the required process of correction and having the student understand what is involved in correct bowing. The student must become aware of his or her body and the responsibility and function of all parts (fingers, hand, wrist, elbow, arm, and shoulder). Visualization of each part, whether by looking directly at the arm and hand, or using a mirror, will aid in this understanding.

For centuries, string teachers and students have had to cope with bad habits in the process of learning to play the violin or viola. During early training stages, most students are aware of the necessity to make changes or fix bad habits in their learning process. Extraordinary determination or a superlative mental approach is not required to be successful within this method. However, an understanding of the need to improve, an awareness of the problem, a desire to relearn or correct the deficiencies, an optimism that it can happen but with the realization that it will be tedious, must be the mind set of every student undertaking this method.  

128 Students take lessons in

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128 Martin Seligman states: “You can best prepare yourself to change by learning as much as you can about what you can change and how to make those changes.” He also says: “Improving is
order to improve with the expectation that through study they will become better players. Frustration may arise during this process. The student should try and imagine that he or she is doing the method correctly. “You can if you think you can.”

The basic bowing elements are not difficult. The correct bow hold is natural, comfortable, and easily implemented. The arduous task is assimilating the basic bowing elements without deviating from new bow hold. Students should go through this procedure only one time in his/her career. It is imperative that the procedure is taken seriously, the student’s persistence to be absolute, and the prescribed method to be undertaken fully and correctly. Repetition of the correct procedure, as is the case of successful violin practicing, is the fulcrum in sustaining the bow hold. Wroński’s definition of practicing as “repeating correct playing” is essential in maintaining the new hold.

John E. Anderson offers nine points on how to be successful and to make a procedure such as this method work effectively:

1. Work hard but work effectively
2. Block out times for practice during the day
3. Take one step at a time
4. Work most on the difficult spots
5. Recognize when an achievement has been made
6. Look back at what has been accomplished
7. Take some time off to rest, reflect, and regroup
8. If possible, look for encouragement from friends or colleagues
9. Focus on the end result


“Patience… patience… patience!”^131

Subjects

This method has been utilized strictly and in varying degrees by the author on a number of students. For the purpose of this treatise, I have applied and documented this method with six students. In describing the Subjects, four of these students have similar levels of ability with one at a slightly higher level and one with a significantly higher ability. The ages of the students are relatively close among the six Subjects and range from 17 to 24. Five are undergraduate students, while one is finishing high school. Four of the students are female and two are male. Three of the students have previously studied Kreutzer’s *42 Etudes ou Caprices pour le Violon* and three have not. All students did specific but different procedures well yet had difficulties with other procedures. All students showed inconsistencies during the method process. Finally, all the students periodically expressed frustration during the time period of going through the method.

For the purpose of identification, the students are labeled as Subjects A, B, C, D, E, and F. While documenting the progress, references and comparisons have been made between the students. “Before and after” photographs have been taken to visualize the problems and document the transformation of the hand positions during the correction process. Although the correct right hand position was explained and implemented by the student from the first lesson, the “after” pictures were not taken until the end of the method procedure.

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^131^ Tadeusz Wroński’s advice on commencing an arduous procedure such as: correcting the right *Zagadnienia Gry Skrzypcowej*, vol. 4 (Warszawa, Poland: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1967), 22.
The six Subjects are categorized into three groups with three fundamental areas of deficiencies. Two students, A and D, required a total reworking of the hand position and arm. [Exs. 31 and 34] Subjects B, E, and F had stiffness problems, incorrect finger placement, and improper movements of both the fingers and the arm during strokes. [Exs. 32, 35 and 36] Subject C, having the least deficiency, needed correct placement of the fingers, had some degree of stiffness, and required slight modifications of the wrist and arm during the up-bow stroke. [Ex. 33]

*Example 31 (Subject A)*

*Subject A*, an undergraduate student, required a complete change in her bow hold. Her deficiencies consisted of a very high arm level and high elbow. She played with straight fingers and a stiff “locked” thumb, while keeping her wrist high. She had a small sound and limited use of the bow with an almost non-existent utilization of the lower half of the bow. The Subject played on the side of the bow hair almost
exclusively. While playing, her shoulder was raised and tense. However, there was flexibility in her wrist and fingers.

*Example 32 (Subject B)*

Subject B, an upper division undergraduate student, had very stiff fingers and thumb and demonstrated little flexibility. Her wrist and arm were high and rigid and she played continually on the side of the bow hair. Her stance was stiff and bent and the violin was held down, which caused her bow stroke to be crooked. This student is an advanced player, excellent in using the entire bow along with good bow distribution, and posses a good sound. She explained that she tired easily, was uncomfortable at the frog, and had to work hard for a good sound.

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132 This Subject was not my student. I encouraged her to undertake my bow correction method since she was eager to improve her bow arm. During our preliminary discussions, I explained some of the aspects of the bow hold and correction. On her own she attempted to incorporate some of these ideas as evident in the display of the “before” pictures. In actuality, she played with a higher wrist and arm than what is shown in these “before” pictures. In hindsight, I should have insisted on pictures that illustrate her habitual bow hold.
Example 33 (Subject C)

Subject C, a senior in high school, had the least deficiencies of all the Subjects. His basic hand position was relatively good and relaxed with a curved thumb. His problems consisted of both a low elbow and a high wrist at the frog on the up-bow. His little finger was straight and he raised the knuckles of his hand. The Subject’s elbow was slightly stiff and he lacked flexibility in the wrist. There was little horizontal bend in his wrist when going to the frog, which resulted in a crooked bow stroke.
Subject D, another undergraduate student, was in need of a complete reworking of the bow hold. Problems consisted of very high wrist and arm, straight fingers placed too high on the stick and playing on the side of bow hair. Because the violin was not held up high enough her bow stroke was crooked. She had an extremely small sound and shied away from the frog. She was flexible in the wrist and arm, and her thumb was curved.

Example 35 (Subject E)
Subject E, an undergraduate student, had specific problems, stiffness, and a great deal of tension in her bow arm. One such problem included the incorrect placement of the index finger on the stick, which resulted in her hand being overly tilted or pronated towards the stick. She played on the side of the bow hair and raised her wrist when playing up-bow at the frog yet she kept her elbow low. As she approached the tip, her fingers became less curved, and she stiffened the hand and changed the contact point of the index finger on the bow. She also played with a curved thumb. Overall, the placement of the fingers on the bow was almost correct in the lower half. However, she held the violin low and had to overcompensate to play with a straight bow.

Example 36 (Subject F)

Subject F was an upper division viola student. He possessed a good sound, utilized the entire bow, and had a bent thumb with some curvature of the fingers. However, his little finger was relatively straight, his fingers too close together, and the placement of
his index finger on the bow stick was almost at the base joint. He played mostly on the side of the bow hair and raised his wrist, arm, and elbow on up-bows when approaching the frog. His bow stroke was not straight as his viola was held too low, and he was somewhat stiff from his shoulder down to the fingers. Both arm and elbow were too high and he seemed to “muscle” the sound out of the viola instead of allowing the arm to use its natural weight.

Problems of Subjects

As to be expected, all students had problems with various right hand techniques required from this method. The range of problems occurred with basic bowing technique to the advancing left hand technique required later of Kreutzer Etudes/Studies. The most prolific and problematic issue of the bow was the up-bow stroke from the middle part of the bow to the frog. All subjects, to varying degrees, played on the side of the bow hair and raised the arm or wrist while straightening the fingers during the stroke. These two deficiencies are interconnected. This is done in an attempt to control the heavy part of the bow and keep the sound even at the frog. While a slight raising or adjusting of the wrist is acceptable in preparation for a smooth bow change, excessive raising or “leading” of the fingers and hand will disrupt arm weight, change the position of the hand, cause stiffness, hinder the bow change, and in some cases cause the student to shy away from the lower half of the bow.

Basic Bowing Elements

The violin held higher and/or changing the placement of the violin (holding the violin more “in front” or “to the side”) has a significant influence on the bow arm. These include changing the contact point on the string, bowing closer to the tip
without the fingers moving out of position, changing a crooked bow stroke, and the adjustments the arm and wrist make in the bow strokes. *Subjects B, D, E, and F* did not hold the violin (or viola) high enough. Because of the advanced training, *Subject B* had little difficulty in adjusting her bow arm to a higher violin level. However, she struggled with maintaining proper level and posture throughout the procedure. With *Subjects D and E*, not only were the levels of the violins corrected (made higher), but also the positioning of the violin on the shoulder was also slightly adjusted. Primarily because of these problems, both subjects experienced impediments during the early stages of the correction in playing with a straight bow. *Subject F* required some prompting in order to keep the instrument high enough and not to disrupt the rectilinear of the bow stroke. *Subject A* required focus on playing with a straight bow due to the drastic changes in her bow hold, and *Subject C* had to bend the wrist differently and consequently made adjustments in order to play with a straight bow.

In producing a sound on the violin or viola, all *Subjects*, from the beginning, had to understand the concept of “arm weight” in contrast to “pressure” with the bow. Hence the *Subjects* knew that arm weight was the proper tool to generate a better sound. This concept, though not automatic, was made easier in combination with the application of the correct bow hold. By allowing “gravity” to produce the tone, it appeared to be an extension of a hold that was both natural and flexible. All *Subjects* had some degree of stiffness or lack of flexibility and each were aware of such. The design of the bow hold from the fingers up to the shoulder made the cognizance of playing naturally. *Subjects B and E* had the most adversity with stiffness and flexibility; a source of contention during the correction process.

Having the students play without tilting the bow hair and not raising the wrist and straightening the fingers on an up-bow when approaching the frog, were two
particularly arduous obstacles that required emphasis in the correction method. While
the bow change was not a primary focus in this method, this important element was
addressed to each Subject. With a natural bow hold and the elimination (or drastic
reduction) of tension and stiffness, all Subjects enjoyed bow changes that were
smoother and more comfortable than before the correction. An improvement in the
bow change was an automatic benefit from implementing the correct hold.

As stated, all Subjects, to varying degrees, played on the side of the bow. Subjects
A, B, D, and F tilted the bow noticeably more than Subjects C and E. Additionally,
each Subject raised their wrists and straightened their fingers while playing up-bow
approaching the frog. Not surprisingly, Subjects A, B, D, and F did so more than
Subjects C and E. Of all the basic techniques, these two elements confronted the
students with the highest challenges especially in lower half playing. String crossings
in certain Etudes compounded the defect of inaccurate tilt of the bow hair while
keeping the hand flat and fingers curved. As stated previously, playing with flat bow
hair helps to keep the wrist flat and fingers curved as well as for an easier
implementation of the bow hold.

Specific Bowing Elements

The first specific element confronting the Subjects was the articulation of the
“impulse stroke.” The “pulse” articulation combined with bow speed was explained,
and demonstrated, and attempted by the Subjects at the first lesson together with the
new bow hold. As stated previously, not only was the arm weight easily understood
and implemented by all Subjects, but also the “pulse” articulation and bow speed.
Subjects B and E, with the most tension problems, had to concentrate further to
perform the articulation in a consistently relaxed manner. Subjects A, C, and F, with
less tension complications, and Subject D with little tension, had more satisfactory results. Subject A, however, had to deal with some tension and raised the shoulder early in the method and throughout the correction process. In addition, bow distribution became a focus of these first strokes. Subjects B and C did well with bow distribution while Subjects A, D, E, and F struggled, especially in the early Etudes.

An area of the bow generally avoided by student violinists and violists is playing in the lower half. As one would expect, the more advanced Subjects did well using the lower part of the bow. However, in time, all students played and felt more comfortable in the lower half. Etudes with specific instructions for lower half playing were conscientiously followed by the Subjects. Subject D shied away from the frog area of the bow more than the other Subjects.

All Subjects, except for Subject E and F, quickly and successfully implemented “preparation.” As previously stated in chapter Three, this specific element is introduced by the second Etude of the method. After several attempts to implement “preparation,” the element was abandoned and reintroduced at a later time for Subject E. The procedure brought an increased tension and a feeling of “panic” in preparing the bow and left hand concurrently for this subject. The concept of “preparation” was reintroduced after many discussions, demonstrations, and analogies, and after the Subject felt more comfortable with the correction process. Subject F continued to work on “preparation” having difficulties with assimilating the element with both hands simultaneously, however, he slowly improved.

Crossing strings, while keeping the correct hold, was a specific element that offered challenges to the Subjects. All Subjects had difficulty with keeping the wrist flat and fingers curved, and not tilting the bow on certain string crossings. Playing up-bow and moving the arm downward toward a higher string presented the most adversity. All
Subjects tended to reach down to the higher string by rolling the hand over, and tilting the bow using the side of the hair. Several of the Etudes featured this process and most of the Subjects experienced perplexity in each instance by having to adjust to proper form.

The First Lesson: The Starting Point

A starting point must be found to prepare the student for the correction method. Explaining and demonstrating the bow hold and the concept of playing in a natural way are the first steps. The teacher must spend time with the student without the violin and “discover” the correct hand position. Repeated attempts of picking up the bow and placing the fingers on the stick are essential. The process of picking up the bow and finding the hold several times without the violin, in the first lesson, had insured that the subjects could repeat the correct method without the teacher. The Subjects were encouraged to practice with a pencil, so that they could feel the contact with the fingers, and reiterate the feeling of flexibility. The next step for each student was to pick up the bow at the middle of the stick with the left hand and find the proper placement for the right hand fingers without the teacher’s involvement. It was explained to the Subjects the reason as to what was to take place in the method. The students stated that they realized that each step would be explained and that they would understand the process.

The primary concentration in the first lesson was to explain and establish the proper bow hold with all six Subjects. Each Subject managed well in this regard. None experienced significant adversity in finding the proper placement of the fingers on the bow stick or applying the bow hold. Two Subjects, A and D, due to their poor hand positions, needed more time in applying the correct hold while attempting exercises on
the open string. Nevertheless, both of them were successful in learning the new hold during the first lesson. Subjects B and E were adapting quickly to the new hold but had to understand the concept of playing without tension. Each stroke had to be evaluated to make certain no tension was present. Frequent stops were required to prevent the reoccurrence of the tension in the hand and arm. Subject C had less severe problems and progressed systematically, yet had to deal with a slightly different finger placement, bending the arm and wrist in the correct way during a bow stroke, and some degree of stiffness. At the commencement of his correction, Subject F (the violist) was already thinking about the bow hold and experimenting with it. When presented with the correct hold, he instinctively placed his fingers deeply around the stick, but his fingers were too close together. Difficulties with excessive bow tilt, raising the wrist, a crooked bow stroke, and some stiffness in the arm necessitated staying with open string exercises during the first lesson for Subject F. In the first lesson, Subjects A and E received Kreutzer’s Etude No. 2 in addition to the open string exercises. Advancing beyond Kreutzer’s Etude No. 2 in the first lesson were Subjects B and C, additionally receiving Etudes Nos. 7 and 6. Subject D, like Subject F, also remained with the open string exercises only.

The Rudolphe Kreutzer’s 42 Etudes/Studies

For the purpose of explaining the progression of the subjects using the Kreutzer’s 42 Etudes/Studies, I will divide the Etudes into four sections. This division is not a

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Both Subjects B and C had played Kreutzer previously. Subject B, even with significant right hand deficiencies progressed, thus was an advanced player and had a thorough understanding of the basic techniques and specific elements required. Subject C advanced quickly because the problems were not drastic.

Subject D was able to find the correct hold every time she picked up the bow but when she attempted to play strokes, whether down-bow or up-bow, she immediately straighten her fingers and raised her wrist. Subject D and F continued with only open string exercises after the first lesson, however, added left hand fingers to each string in order to keep their left hand utilized.
systemic approach to teaching the *Etudes*, but a way of observing and ensuring the student progresses through them. The basic bowing elements are addressed in the open string exercises from the first lesson. Though certainly not mastered, the student is aware of these elements from the beginning. The first four *Etudes* (Nos. 2, 7, 6, and 29) introduce and concentrate on all specific elements previously discussed in the *Introduction*. Idealistically, the assimilation of specific elements and basic bowing techniques begin to be incorporated in these *Etudes*. The proceeding two *Etudes*, Nos. 15 and 36, combine left hand technical challenges with specific elements. The *Subjects* begin to concentrate less on the hold exclusively and more on the combined left hand/right hand requisites of violin playing. *Etudes* Nos. 27, 30, 13, 10, 24, and 9 relate to various bowing and left hand techniques reviewed in earlier *Etudes*. The last three *Etudes* (Nos. 31, 37, and 35) are multi-functional etudes used to test the solidity of the hold and synthesis of left and right hand techniques.

**Kreutzer’s *Etudes* Nos. 2, 7, 6, and 29**

In the early stages of the correction method, *Subject D* had the most difficulty in maintaining the correct bow hold. She struggled to keep the hold with both up-bow and down-bow strokes in Kreutzer’s *Etude No. 2*. The spacing between fingers while holding the bow required adjusting continually and her little finger was not curved. At the beginning of *Etude No. 7*, the down-bow stroke was working well but the up-bow stroke still presented her with obstacles. The student was slow to grasp “preparation.” Preventing her wrist from rolling over causing the bow to tilt and proved to be difficult in *No. 6*. The whole bow (WB) stroke, as expected, proved to be arduous for her in the early stages (though problematic with all the *Subjects*). The new hold (correct finger placement and flat wrist) was not comfortable, yet she was capable of maintaining it
regularly. By the time she was assigned No. 29, the open string exercises and *Etude* No. 2 were progressing well. *Etude* No. 29 compounded her effort to keep the wrist flat, especially with the up-bow. In the course of lessons, the more she practiced the more she succeeded. When she was deliberate and took time, especially on the up-bow from the middle to frog, she was successful. By the time she was assigned *Etude* No. 15, all previous *Etudes* were going well except for No. 29. Both her attitude and determination were positive and she was not discouraged.

While *Subject F* experienced frustration in the early stages with stiffness, a crooked bow stroke, tilting the bow and raising the wrist, additional problems included articulation of the bow stroke and bow distribution. However, he established the hold well and as *Etudes* were introduced, considerable progress was made in all deficiencies. Considerable attention by this subject was to keep the bow hair flat as well as improve flexibility and proper levels of the wrist and arm. While Kreutzer’s *Etude* No. 2 exposed adversity with articulation and bow distribution, each new *Etude* with its corresponding challenges, brought about improvements in previous materials attempted. Articulation and bow distribution improved not only as the *Subject* struggled with “preparation” but also with the WB stroke in Kreutzer’s *Nos. 7 and 6*. Correct movement of the arm down to the higher string proved less of an obstacle than for the other *Subjects*. With the introduction of Kreutzer’s *Etude* No. 29, all elements were improving, the hold was solidifying, and the student was working diligently.

*Subject A* also required extra time in establishing the bow hold at the initial stage of the correction. Besides a radical change in her hand position, her entire arm needed adjustment in order to develop a straight bow stroke. In Kreutzer’s *No. 2*, she experienced difficulties in keeping the bow hair flat as well as not raising her wrist at the frog. Another difficulty was the tension in her shoulder. The “impulse stroke”
required time for her to grasp. As WB strokes were introduced in Kreutzer’s *Etudes Nos. 7* and 6, the shorter strokes became noticeably comfortable. The hold itself became secure as her fingers stayed in place. Kreutzer’s *No. 29* proved to be a challenge for the placement of the notes in the left hand and at the same time keeping the right hand flat.

*Subject B* had difficulties in the early *Etudes* as well. As stated previously, she had extra time to think about the bowing concept before beginning the correction and her advanced level in general helped in all the basic techniques attempted in those early *Etudes*. Her bad habits were so ingrained that changing the hand position took constant focus and observance. She was inconsistent; some aspects of her playing were excellent while other aspects accentuated her bad habits. She was impatient and did not allow enough time between notes. She had problems with the “impulse stroke” but mastered it with the *Etude No. 29*. Additional problems included raising her wrist at the frog, a crooked bow stroke caused by a sagging violin, and her poor posture when playing.

Struggling to find the correct bow hold in the early *Etudes* was a major obstacle for *Subject E*. Her index finger was too close to her middle finger and her thumb was tense. While not needing a complete change in her bow hold as with *Subjects A* and *D*, her tension and inflexibility proved to be a significant impediment in the early stages. Correcting her violin level and ensuing arm adjustments were a significant focus in Kreutzer’s *Nos. 2, 7, and 6*. As stated previously, preparation was difficult for her to grasp. Her crooked bow stroke was caused by the fluctuating hand position. Interestingly, HB bow strokes became easier for her to handle than QB bow strokes. *Subject E* had Similarities to the others because she raised the wrist at the frog,
especially in the WB stroke and during the study of Kreutzer’s No. 29. The earlier Etudes improved after she was introduced to the subsequent Etudes.

Subject C progressed quickly through the first four Etudes. Though he had several small problems, none were severe or ingrained and he was able to make the changes, avoiding lapses. By the time Etude No. 29 was introduced, his fingers, wrist, and elbow made necessary adjustments for a proper WB bow stroke. However, he still struggled with straightening the fingers at the frog. His bow arm remained crooked and it required a longer length of time to learn the proper bending of the wrist needed at the tip and frog. He felt comfortable with the hand position from the beginning. By finishing lesson three, he was already receiving the next series of Etudes.

Kreutzer’s Etudes No. 15 and No. 36

Subject B had no difficulty and Subjects C and F had only slight problems with technical demands that the left hand presented in these Etudes. However, concentrating on the left hand brought out deficiencies in the establishment of the correct bow hold for Subjects B and C. Subject F continued to cope with “preparation” in both the left and right hands and had a persistent tilt to the bow. However, he was assimilating the hold well and with flexibility. Subject C’s bow stroke remained crooked at times and he lacked proper arm weight. Subject B continued to have problems with stooped posture, stiffness in her hand, and raised wrist at the frog. The Subjects however, were mastering the first four Etudes but Etude No. 29 remained a challenge (four notes on one bow) for Subject B, C, and F.

Subjects A, D, and E had difficulty with the left hand demands of these Etudes. Subject A diligently worked through the mordents and shifting in the Etude No. 15 but struggled with the double stops in No. 36 while Subject E did well with double stops
but persevered with the mordents. *Subject D* experienced hardship with both *Etudes*, especially, No. 15. The combination of the mordent and constant shifting presented complications and stretched her technical abilities. However, all were making progress in the first four *Etudes* and solidified their new bow hold. *Subject A* had a tendency to tilt the bow while *Subjects D* and *E* raised the wrist and straightened the fingers occasionally during the up-bow at the frog.

**Kreutzer’s Etudes Nos. 27, 30, 13, 10, 24, and 9**

These *Etudes* form the “heart” of the method (a time when the correct position should be established and somewhat in control by the *Subjects*). All aspects of a correct bow hold and the basic bowing techniques should be in use by the student. The student needs to feel comfortable and familiar with the right hand position. At this time the student must be accustomed with the routine of working exclusively on *Kreutzer Etudes/Studies*. With each new *Etude*, a new or different challenge is presented; however, it must be attempted and mastered with the correct hold intact.

In most cases, *Etude* No. 27 arrives as a respite and is enjoyed by the *Subjects*. The challenge lies in articulation and adjustments in bow distribution. The goal is to let the stroke “flow” into the smooth bow change. *Subject B* had difficulties with this as well as keeping the arm weight sufficient, not only on the *pianissimo* and on the slow bow speed, as well as the *forte* in the fast bow stroke. Her nemesis included hand stiffness, raising the wrist, and poor posture, which were present with every new *Etude*. *Subject C* also had trouble with arm weight and raising the wrist. *Subjects A* and *E* used too much bow on the first three notes, thus spending additional time learning correct bow distribution. *Subject F*, while coping with bow distribution, lifted his bow off the string slightly at the end of each bow stroke until he was instructed to keep the bow in
motion on the bow change. After taking one lesson to learn the procedure, Subject D did very well on this Etude. She continued, however, to struggle with a raised wrist on the up-bow, the tilted bow, and overall left hand technique in previous Etudes.

Etudes Nos. 30 and 13 proved to be problematic to all Subjects. While Subjects B, C, and F had trouble with the right hand only, Subjects A, D, and E had additional problems in the left hand with shifting in No. 30, and the chord-like configuration in No. 13. The affliction that all Subjects consistently encountered was the wrist rolling over, and slurring up-bow on the WB stroke followed by the slur down-bow. As described in Method (chapter 3) the tendency when starting from a lower string and moving down to a higher string is to roll the hand and tilt the bow in order to reach the new string, instead of bringing the whole arm down to the new string level.

Augmented with the WB stroke, proper bow distribution, and a smooth bow change, each of the Subjects had to spend considerable time practicing these Etudes. All Subjects understood what their individual problems were. The Subjects with left hand difficulties practiced using open strings in order to understand and feel the movement of the right arm. These Etudes were not popular by the Subjects, however, most of them worked hard in meeting these challenges.

Prior to the confrontation of these two difficult Etudes, all Subjects were doing well with the previously assigned Etudes. Subject A looked very comfortable and consistent with her bow hold; however, she struggled with the left hand. At this time, Subjects C, E, and F were progressing correctly, though each had problems with their bows not being straight as well as some degrees of stiffness. Subject B had bouts of stiffness and incorrect posture. Subject D continued with the left hand difficulties but did well assimilating most basic and specific bowing elements.
The *Subjects* dealt with *Etude No. 10* more successfully than with the previous *etudes* as there were fewer demands on the left hand. At this juncture, the WB stroke was in command by all *Subjects*. The challenge remained for the students not to raise the wrist as well as not to turn over the hand at the bow change after the up-bow stroke (WB) while going down to a higher string, which was a focal point in the previous two *Etudes*. *Subjects A, C, and F* had little problems with this *Etude* after learning how to practice it. *Subjects B, D, and E* needed additional time to work on proper arm movement on the bow change.

*Etude No. 24* presented problems for *Subjects A, D, E, and F* regarding the left hand. All *Subjects* needed various amounts of practice time to feel comfortable with the octaves. Exultantly, no matter how each struggled with the left hand, the right hand position remained intact. The bowing concepts in this *Etude* were addressed early in the method so that the main difficulty came from dealing with the octaves while preserving the correct bow hold.

While *Subjects A, C, D, and F* executed *Etude No. 9*, satisfactory, *Subjects B and E* did not succeed due to their lack of flexibility. Though *Subjects A and D* had some left hand finger obstacles, the back and forth string crossings seemed comfortable. This *Etude* proved to be an aspiring test in the battle to overcome stiffness and tension, especially for *Subjects B and E*.

**Kreutzer’s *Etudes Nos. 31, 37, and 35***

The purpose of these three *Etudes* is the solidification of the hand position with increasingly more difficult and sophisticated music. They are also used to encourage the student to play in a more artistic way. As stated in *Chapter Three*, the left hand advancement of the student determines the viability of attempting all three final
Etudes. For this group of Subjects, B, C, and F did all Etudes while A, D, and E studied No. 37 first and concluded with No. 31. Subjects A, D, and E struggled with the left hand technique of these Etudes but maintained the proper right hand position. Subject A faired better with the double stops than Subjects D and E in Etude No. 37. In Etude No. 31, all three were challenged with connecting the sixteenth note passages on the bow change in conjunction with shifting. Vibrato, less accented articulation with the bow, and urgings to listen to the sound, were additionally concentrated on with these Etudes. While the Subjects generally played only the first four to eight lines of the Etudes during lessons, as a final Etude, additional lines of No. 31 were performed and students were encouraged to study the whole Etude.

For Subjects B, C, and F, playing in a musical way was also the focus while practicing the final three Etudes. Subjects C and F had some difficulties with the left hand and Subject B was still coping with tension and posture. All Subjects struggled with the difficult technique in Etude No. 35.

The correction method is designed to be complete within a six to eight week period. Subjects B and C required six weeks to make it to the final Etude, while Subject F took slightly less time. Subject E completed the method in approximately seven weeks; Subject A took eight weeks, while Subject D took slightly longer. Taking extra time to learn the method is certainly desirable, however, semester constraints and the fact that a student has to prepare for juries do not allow for this indulgence. It is crucial that the student is not overwhelmed while understanding the correct means to execute an Etude. However, the student must be impelled to continue each succeeding Etude. The Subjects consistently had “up and down” lessons, with one lesson showing vast improvement while the next revealed problems or perplexities. Occasionally, frustration arose, which was to be expected, but the stress and vicissitude had to
remain “in the brain” and not make its way to the hand. All *Subjects* made steady improvement throughout the method, and knew that the correction was taking hold. See below the *Subjects* at the end of the correction method.

*Example 37 (Subject A)*
Example 38 (Subject B)
Example 39 (Subject C)
Example 40 (Subject D)
Example 41 (Subject E)
Example 42 (Subject F)
By the end of the correction method Subject A was holding the right hand properly and naturally and she stated that she felt extremely comfortable with the new position. Subject B immediately went to a summer festival and played in an orchestra, which is not recommended. Although the hand positions are solidified during the correction, a student must pay careful attention, proceed slowly, and continue to focus on the right hand. Subjects B and F were not the author’s students. Both Subjects left the area, and no monitoring took place once the procedure was completed. The other Subjects continued as the author’s students, and were monitored as the right hand solidified. An increase in confidence was also instilled in the left hand, as they developed as violinists. Subject C indicated that over the years he had developed bad habits and the correction method transformed his right hand back to how he used to hold the bow. Subjects D and E continue as the author’s students and both are encouraged to practice Etudes/Studies and commemorate the correct right hand technique every day.

As stated previously, all Subjects had difficulties at the frog with the up-bow stroke in which they did not allow the wrist rise or lead with the fingers. The method calls for an exaggerated flatness in the hand, wrist, and bow hair. After the correction and normal playing scenarios, there may be a slight rising of the hand and less curving of the fingers in order to allow a smooth bow change. As long as the violinist or violist remembers the basic concepts of using arm weight, being flexible, and not rolling over the wrist, the bowing will continue successfully.

Some important points were observed. When a new Etude was assigned and practiced, the performance of previous Etudes improved together with basic bowing technique. Usually, after subsequent etudes were assigned, issues such as arm weight, increased flexibility, playing in a relaxed and easy way, improved from the previous
Etudes. As the Subjects gained his/her confidence, playing with the correct technique, going beyond the mechanics and playing artistically was more likely achievable. One interesting point included the Students tuning their instrument before the lesson. In the early stages of the method, most of the Subjects picked up the bow with their previous incorrect bow hold for tuning purposes only before finding the correct hold at the start of the lesson. Once the Subject was made aware of this procedure; this ceased to happen. The correct bow hold was completely ingrained by halfway through the method in the Subjects and they would instinctively pick up the bow correctly from the beginning of lessons. All Subjects made gains with the left hand. This was particularly noticed in the less advanced Subjects A, D, and E.

All Subjects were pleased with the end result of the correction method. The fact that having a good bow arm and possessing excellent basic bowing skills has allowed the students to focus more on the advanced aspects of violin playing. As Music Education majors, Subjects A, D, and F appreciated the knowledge and explanations learned from this method. With this understanding, they will be capable of instructing other students, not only how to hold the bow correctly but also in other aspects of proper right hand technique. Subject C, no matter what his career aspirations may be, has a solid underlying technique with the bow arm. Subjects B and E, in preparing for performing careers, must have training on the highest level to undertake the demands called upon as professional violinists. While Subjects B and F were already capable of listening to their sound, the other Subjects were beginning to listen to their sound and consequently become better violinists. At this point of their development, all Subjects heard improvements in their sound and were prepared to initiate a more advanced bow technique.
5. CONCLUSION

Is it necessary for a student to undergo an extensive step-by-step method of bow hold correction in order to play advanced bow technique and become a better violinist or violist? Should a student be satisfied with merely a functional bow arm that allows the bow to move back and forth and make a sound? Furthermore, can a student with a functional bow arm draw a straight bow, use the bow entirely, and play with proper bow distribution? In the cases where the right hand bow hold is incorrect, basic bow techniques may push students to their limit of capabilities while some students may not be able to use basic techniques at all. What about the student who avoids the lower half of the bow, has a crooked stroke, presses into the string for loud playing, and cannot play advanced bow strokes? Many students have problems with basic bow strokes as a result of an incorrect bow hold. Can a student with a functional but incorrect bow arm expect to successfully learn advanced bow techniques such as *spiccato, sautillé, ricochet,* and flying *staccato*? Frustration and energy spent to overcome deficiencies in the bow arm take a toll on the student practicing basic bow strokes. Finally, can a bow arm that merely functions produce a beautiful tone or bring forth nuances in tone color?

If a change is necessary and the new hold has been implemented, what can be expected from a student at the completion of the right hand correction method? What accomplishment can a student expect in a six-week period? This method is a step-by-step account of the process of implementing and solidifying a correct bow hold by a
student who holds the bow incorrectly. First a student is identified for correction, explanations are delivered, and the new hold introduced. Then, a systematic series of exercises and etudes follow in a regimented method. What a student going through this correction process can expect at the completion may be less tangible. Results could be ambiguous. The main accomplishment is the expectation for the student to be a better violinist or violist. Hence, the student should have more than just a “functional” bow arm. Within this procedure, it is important to be rigorous and allow very little deviation to the correct hold. In reality, a student will not maintain 100% of the full correction after the method is concluded and with the resumption of playing literature. As individuals, the hold will conform to their physiological makeup. Ideally, from this point forward, the student will play using important elements such as properly placed fingers on the bow curved and flexible, more control, less tension, and an effective use of arm weight. Additionally, basic bowing elements such as playing with a straight bow, bow distribution, better string crossings, and smoother bow changes should be improved.

Tadeusz could be measured as such. An 80% or better retention of all aspects of the right hand correction method should be considered excellent. A 60% improvement may still be regarded as successful considering the relatively short amount of time invested in the correction. A less fortuitous student who struggles with the correction method but improves finger placement and curvature, raises the arm and hand less, thus able to apply arm weight instead of pressure, plays with less tension, and learns some of the specific bowing elements, will be a better player.

Is the student ready to shift attention away from the bow hold after the correction? Continued practice and emphasis must be placed on the right hand as the student
resumes playing music. In the *Method* (chapter 3), several of Rudolphe Kreutzer’s *42 Studies/Etudes* are suggested to a student to practice after the correction has been completed. Be dedicated to bow solidification. Furthermore, he suggests selected aspects of the bow, which may still need additional focus. These include string crossings, bow changes at the frog, and certain bowing patterns found extensively in violin literature.

Bow changes and string crossings occur constantly in violin playing; continued practice with the correct technique involved will improve these important elements of bowing. The finger movement required in the bow change should be initiated before commencing with the change. The bow change will be audible if the fingers move at the same time of the bow change. Kreutzer’s *Etude No. 14* is excellent in achieving subtle and delicate string crossings. In measure one, while moving back and forth from the A, E, and D strings, a student approaches the new string with the arm level from the previous string. [Ex. 43] Gradual anticipation of the new string by adjusting the arm before arriving to the new string will allow for smoother string crossings.

*Example 43 (Kreutzer’s Etude No. 2)*

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136 ibid., 37-38.
137 ibid., 27.
Two bowing patterns worthy of concentration and found frequently in violin literature include, dotted patterns (jambic rhythms) and the so-called Viotti bowing. [Exs. 44 and 45]

Example 44 (Kreutzer’s Etude No. 2)

Example 45 (Kreutzer’s Etude No. 2)

After the first note is played, notes two and three should be played with the same impulse. [Ex. 44] Additionally, after the first note, one should think only of the up-bow required with the third note. The down-bow stroke on the second note should be articulated lightly before the third note is played and the hand should relax after the first note. The pattern can be repeated with a reversed bowing.

After the first articulation [Ex. 45] only every second note will receive a new “impulse” while the penultimate note should proceed without any influence of it. There is a natural “bow throwing” of the second note - not too long and not too short
but energetic. The exercise should be practiced at first with a pause between bow changes with a gradual elimination of the pause when the stroke is mastered.\textsuperscript{138}

More advanced bow strokes may be attempted after the student has achieved correct bowing elements within a correct right hand position. Additionally, practicing bow changes and string crossings in a correct way will enable the student to use and develop a sustained \textit{legato} stroke within this method. Solid \textit{martélė} and \textit{détaché} strokes will already be a part of the student’s technique after the correction procedure. Possessing a correct bow hold will allow the student to begin to play with confidence and use more advanced bow strokes such as: \textit{spiccato, sautille, ricochet}, and flying \textit{staccato}.

\textbf{Specific Requisites for the Viola}

Most of the requirements for the violist are the same as the violinist. The bow hold and motions of the hand and the whole arm are equivalent for both. Since the viola is a larger instrument, emphasis may be placed on different aspects of playing. Viola pedagogues suggest that there are fewer margins for error playing the viola. Violists cope with the problem of producing desirable sonority and tractability. Working harder to play a bigger instrument is not the correct response. The hold should be firm yet “supple,” not loose, and the fingers should encircle the stick more fully.\textsuperscript{139} Arm weight is imperative for producing a proper sound on the viola. Tone produced by pressure eventuates when the arm level is higher than the bow itself. William Primrose

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{138}Tadeusz Wroński states that in the Viotti bowing the bow motion is like an arc. He suggests, however, not analyze the arc but instead to concentrate on the energy. Tadeusz Wroński, \textit{Zagadnienia Gry Skrzypcowej}, vol. 4, 37-38.
\textsuperscript{139}Yehudi Menuhin and William Primrose, \textit{Violin and Viola} (New York: Schirmer Books, 1976), 175-76.
\end{footnotesize}
states that “pressure and viola playing are immiscible.”

As with the violin, the bow of a violist must be held in a relaxed, natural, and flexible way, with fingers and thumb curved. The level of the arm, wrist, and hand should not be above the level of the bow stick. Raising the knuckles on the hand will straighten the fingers and decrease flexibility, as with the violin. Reiterating the importance of a secure hold, Primrose suggests beginning the stroke with a “slight attack” from the string even while playing piano. The sound should be “felt in the mind” ahead of time, before actually playing. Advocating the use of full hair he states that a violist may converge additional weight “on the side” of the bow to allow the lower strings to speak more freely. Henry Barrett says to permit the larger muscles of the arm to generate power. The violist will loose sound if there is too much variation in the hand position. At the frog, he cautions that it is particularly important to keep the knuckles flat and the wrist bent horizontally not vertically.

Lillian Fuchs states that if a violinist switches to viola, the player has to have “a fine ear and a well trained bow arm.” She adds that during the bow change there will be less movement from the fingers, though they should remain flexible.

Smooth bow changes should be made primarily with the wrist.

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142 Henry Barrett, The Viola, Complete Guide for Teachers and Students (University, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1972), 76-77 and 86.
Tone production

The final step undertaken is learning how to make artistic music from playing the violin or viola. The violin is an instrument of melody. The melody as cantabile speaks for its beauty and expressiveness yet it is the bow that produces a fine, pure, and expressive tonal quality. Aaron Rosand states: “But when it comes to stressing a note, or beginning or ending a phrase, or any other mode of truly expressing the music, it is the bow that makes the difference.” How successful the bow’s physical and mechanical properties are applied, controlled, and understood determines the production of beautiful tone. The “suitable exploitation of momentum and gravitation are elements in producing a beautiful sound.” As the student becomes more confident in his ability to hold the bow correctly and manage strokes in a natural way, attention can be focused on manipulating the bow to make changes in the tonal quality. The realization of locating the desirable contact point is such that with more arm weight and speed, the bow comes closer to the fingerboard, hence, both less weight and less speed suggest a closer relationship to the bridge. Changes in dynamics occur in utilizing correct arm weight. More arm weight gives the violinist or violist power and a forte dynamic. What is particularly difficult is playing piano, for the violinist has to “defy gravity” and lift the arm upward, hence, not use as much of the natural weight that comes with the arm if correctly done as a unit from the upper arm down to the fingers.

144 Leopold Auer describes the violin as “a homophone instrument, a melody instrument, and a singing instrument” Leopold Auer, Violin Playing As I Teach It (London: Gerald Duckworth and Company Ltd., 1921), 31.


Using bowing to facilitate phrasing should be instigated after the correction. “Styles of bowing” described as a single bow stroke or combination of strokes of different duration and lengths aid the musical process. Thus, techniques such as bow distribution, bow speed, changes in arm weight, articulation, and the contact point should also be utilized in enhancing the musical ideas of a phrase. Combining these types of technique allows a wide range of sound, timbre, character, as well as brings color to the sound.

Without diminishing the necessity of a developed left hand and the facility of the fingers (shifting, and accurate intonation), it is the player’s bowing that unveils his/her musicianship. Understanding and interpreting the composer’s work, the ability to transform the meaning and style of the music, and individual expression as a performer, come from the bow interacting properly with the violin. Karl Flesch says that violinists need more than the correct technique and manipulation of the bow to ensure good tone quality. He sites that dynamics and articulation as indicated by the composer and left-hand requirements such as shifting, which alters the length of the string, have an impact on artistic playing. In addition, he points to bow speed, arm weight, and the contact point as ingredients for the production of a good tone. The student must be capable of confronting the difficult and awkward demands of the composer and giving a complete performance without constraints of improper hand positions.

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148 ibid., 83.
Finally, the student must learn to listen to the sound that comes out of the violin. Dorothy Delay says “The player should be able to tell you what he heard and he frequently can’t.” It is “necessary to hear the sound.” She suggests having the student listen to the sound played with different kinds of strokes, bow speed, and placement on the string. She advises students to practice ear-training exercises, listen to other players, and describe exactly what kind of stroke has been produced. Lastly, she suggests listening for different tone colors.\textsuperscript{152}

The Subjects were asked about their sound and encouraged to analyze the tone emulating from the violin. All Subjects were pleased to realize that with the correct right hand position, the perception of their playing was of a fuller and richer sound. With control and confidence in the right hand, they were able to recognize future possibilities, which they consequently would be capable of achieving. This should be the ultimate aspiration and goal for a student desiring to be a skilled violinist or violist. A successful performance is not achieved by playing all notes correctly. A performance that contains a variety of style, tone color, and other characteristics, brings life to the music.\textsuperscript{153} Correct hand positions enable the student to achieve these goals.

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