



TEACHING

Schradiack TO YOUNG STUDENTS

by *Elise Winters*

I have discovered that children absolutely adore working on Schradiack, and are ready to do so at a young age.

I read a quote recently (for the life of me I can't remember where) that while musical maturity can be developed at any age, the best age to develop technical agility is in childhood, when the mind is quick and the body supple.

My teacher introduced me to Schradiack when I was 9. I remember my excitement upon beginning these etudes and discovering how quickly my fingers could move! I began each practice with this and looked forward to the ritual. It focused my attention and was one of the few areas in violin study which was absolutely straightforward: my ever-increasing speed was tangible evidence of my progress.

A review of 19th century method books suggests that technique-focused training from a young age was standard: Baillot, Blumenstengel, Campagnoli, Depas, Flesch, Hermann, Leonard, Sevcik, Sitt, Yost ... the list goes on. Etudes were the bread and butter of pupils' violin study. It is only with the modern recording technology that repertoire-based approaches have risen to the forefront, leading to a trend that might cause Francesco Geminiani a month of sleepless nights: etudes have been gradually pushed to the margins—or eliminated—in an overwhelming number of modern teaching studios.

As a Suzuki student I thrived in the repertoire-based approach, but as I reached competitive levels I discovered that my technique had been developed less systematically than I might have wished. So as a teacher, I strive to give my students the best of both worlds.

In the traditional Schradiack sequence, the youngest learners are often confounded by repetitions which obscure the location of the beats (e.g. the second line of the original). Observing this, I selected the most enticing, memorable, self-contained patterns as a "starter set." The students' initial success makes them excited for more! Once they are proficient on these few exercises, they begin learning the whole series sequentially from the beginning.

Some young students learn the "starter" exercises readily from notation. Others learn them verbally using solfège or finger numbers. These latter students are meanwhile working on their reading skills, so before long they can read the full set of exercises from the notation.

I hope your youngest students enjoy discovering the brilliant abilities of their fingers!

Warmly,

Elise

Introduction to *Schradieck*

All of the exercises below are to be played with four-note slurs, on the A string. Use fourth finger on A string rather than open E string.

During the learning phase it is fine to pause between groups, then eventually close up the gaps (including barlines) once you understand the pattern.

Repeat each line of music many times each practice to master it ... and have fun!

1.



You may wish to write the name of the initial note in each group on Exercises 5, 10, and 23. This is called the “skeleton” of the melody, and will make the pattern easier to remember.

5.



10.

Exercise 10 consists of two measures of music in treble clef, key of A major (three sharps: F#, C#, G#). The first measure contains four eighth-note pairs: (A4, B4), (C5, D5), (E5, F#5), and (G#5, A5). The second measure contains four eighth-note pairs: (B4, C5), (D5, E5), (F#5, G#5), and (A5, B5), followed by a double bar line with repeat dots.

15.

Exercise 15 consists of two measures of music in treble clef, key of A major (three sharps: F#, C#, G#). The first measure contains four eighth-note pairs: (A4, B4), (C5, D5), (E5, F#5), and (G#5, A5). The second measure contains four eighth-note pairs: (B4, C5), (D5, E5), (F#5, G#5), and (A5, B5), followed by a double bar line with repeat dots.

23.

Exercise 23 consists of two measures of music in treble clef, key of A major (three sharps: F#, C#, G#). The first measure contains four eighth-note pairs: (A4, B4), (C5, D5), (E5, F#5), and (G#5, A5). The second measure contains four eighth-note pairs: (B4, C5), (D5, E5), (F#5, G#5), and (A5, B5), followed by a double bar line with repeat dots.

Études 1–25 by Henry Schradieck

from School of Violin Technique, Book 1

Play all these exercises on the A string, with particular attention to the consistency of the tuning and rhythm of your left-hand fingers. All of the exercises should be played with slurs appropriate to the tempo. Gradually increase your tempo from ♩=60 to ♩=152.

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