

# The Techniques of Bowing. Op.50

A. Casorti

## INTRODUCTION

### *The Six Fundamental Bowings*

**T**HERE are six fundamental bowings; all others are variously combined from these. I cannot too urgently advise young violinists to study these six bowings diligently, they being the foundation of and key to all the rest. They are classified thus:

1. The rapid detached stroke with whole bow (*grand détaché*).
2. The singing stroke.
3. The hammered stroke at the point (*martelé*).
4. The detached stroke with the forearm (*détaché*).
5. The springing bow.
6. The thrown stroke.

For the execution of these six bowings, see Nos. 5, 10, 4, 11, 15 and 17. For the development of the right arm, see Études 2, 3 and 4.

### *Rules for Bowing*

1. To get a fine tone the bow must be drawn, up or down, at a right angle to the strings; and on no account should it be allowed to slide from the bridge towards the fingerboard, or *vice versa*.

2. The bow should be kept between fingerboard and bridge, somewhat nearer to the latter.

3. The hair must lie flat upon the string, and the stick should be tilted a trifle toward the fingerboard.

4. In order to produce an elastic and sympathetic tone, do not draw the hair too taut with the screw.

5. Never hold the bow too tight; for the wrist and the various joints of the hand and fingers must always be kept perfectly flexible. The thumb, by aid of which the bow is balanced, should be kept slightly bent.

6. Always hold the elbow lower than the stick, so that the arm may not weigh upon the strings and impair the quality of the tone.

7. In *down-bow* the forefinger should press lightly on the stick to keep it steady; in *up-bow* the little finger presses, with the elbow drawn inward and the wrist gradually lifted so as to resume its correct position over the bridge.

8. All movements of the bow must be directed solely by the wrist and forearm, never by the upper arm or the shoulder.

9. By maintaining the string in steady and equable vibration, a tone can be developed which will "carry" to a great distance,—but not by exerting an exaggerated pressure of the hair on the string

10. All accents must be produced with the wrist by a slight pressure of the hair on the string and of the stick between the fingers.

11. The hair should never leave the strings; and great care must be taken to avoid interrupting the tone on changing from down-bow to up-bow, or the reverse.

### *How to Hold the Left Hand*

In stopping tones, the fingers must press firmly on the strings; they must also be raised high enough to produce, in falling, the effect of little hammer-strokes. Hold the left elbow in front of the chest, to give the fingers their proper position over the fingerboard; by this means you will avoid drawing the strings out of line, which would lessen the sonority of the tone.

### *Signs*

□ = Down-bow.

∨ = Up-bow.

← signifies that a whole bow is to be taken for one note (or two slurred notes).

A-B shows which portion of the bow is to be employed.

### §1. Legato Stroke Near the Nut

Performed entirely by the wrist, with a short bow, and holding the stick lightly between the fingers.

Play the notes in a smooth legato, the wrist held above the bridge without letting the arm weigh upon the strings.

**Allegro**

B A

B A

#### ÉTUDE I

#### Allegro

First time, down-bow; second time, up-bow

0 0 0 0 0 4 0 4

0 4 0 4 0 0 0 0

2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

2 2 0 0 0 0

0 0 0 0 1 2

2 2 4 4

1 2 2

4 3

1

Copyright, 1909, by G. Schirmer, Inc.  
Copyright renewal assigned, 1939, to G. Schirmer, Inc.  
Printed in the U.S.A.

### § 2. Legato Stroke Near the Point

To be executed entirely by the wrist, bearing slightly with the forefinger upon the stick to keep the hair evenly down on the strings. It

should also be practised at the middle of the bow, as this requires still greater independence of the wrist.

**Allegro**

### § 3. Hammered Stroke Near the Nut

Each note must be accented, but not roughly, by pinching the stick lightly between the fin-

gers without any stiffening of the wrist. Execute with short bow, and let the string vibrate.

**Allegretto**

## Third Fundamental Bowing

### § 4. Hammered Stroke Near the Point. (Martelé)

To be executed with the wrist, aided by the forearm. All the notes should be uniformly articulated and accented by pinching the stick

slightly between the fingers. Employ the same length of bow for each note.

**Allegretto**

## First Fundamental Bowing

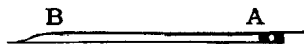
### § 5. The Rapid Detached Stroke. (Grand Détaché)

It must be executed with the whole bow with the rapidity of a  The difficulty to be o-

vercome is, to keep the bow at a right angle with the strings, both for down-bow and up-bow, without lifting before each note. When either point or nut is reached, the arm should come to a dead stop. Each note is to be strongly

accented, but only by the wrist and without roughly scraping the strings. The stick should be held lightly between the fingers.

*N.B.* All strokes ought to be practised at first on the open strings, and then with the finger-exercises.



**ÉTUDE II**  
**Adagio**

The musical score for Étude II Adagio consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a forte dynamic marking 'f' and contains several measures of eighth-note patterns. Above the first measure, there is a diagram of a violin bow with 'B' at the left end and 'A' at the right end. The word 'segue' is written above the first measure. The second staff continues the eighth-note patterns, with another 'segue' marking above a measure. The third and fourth staves continue the piece, with a '4' marking above a measure in the third staff and a '4' marking above a measure in the fourth staff.

**§ 6. Mixed Bowings**

The first measure with the martelé - stroke at the nut of the bow, the first and last note of the second measure with the rapid detached

stroke, followed by the martelé-stroke at point or nut, according to the position of the bow.

**Allegretto**

The musical score for Allegretto consists of a single staff of music. It starts with a forte dynamic marking 'f'. The first measure is labeled 'nut' with an arrow pointing to the right. The second measure is labeled 'point' with an arrow pointing to the left. The third measure is labeled 'nut' with an arrow pointing to the right. The fourth measure is labeled 'point' with an arrow pointing to the left. Above the first and third measures, the word 'rapido' is written with arrows indicating the direction of the bow stroke. The piece ends with a double bar line.

**§ 7. Detached Stroke Near Nut**

To be executed without accent, somewhat more bow being employed than for the hammered(mar-

telé) stroke. The wrist must be kept very supple.



**Allegro**

The musical score for Allegro consists of a single staff of music. It starts with a forte dynamic marking 'f'. The piece is composed of several measures of eighth-note patterns, with a '0' marking above each measure, indicating a detached stroke. The piece ends with a double bar line.

### § 8. Detached Stroke with Whole Bow without accent

This bowing-exercise aims at entire independence of the forearm and its complete development, and likewise at acquiring a full volume of tone without bearing too heavily on the strings. For up-bow the wrist must be lightly raised, that it may not bear down on the strings; for

down-bow the arm is to be extended to its full length, always holding it lower than the stick.

This stroke should be executed with full energy, and with scrupulous avoidance of interruption between the separate notes.

#### ÉTUDE III

**Allegretto** First time *f*, second time *p*



## Second Fundamental Bowing

### §10. The Singing Stroke

To be executed without the least break in the notes between up-bow and down bow, the hair lying flat on the strings. The tone should be powerful, and the change from up-to-down-bow should be imperceptible. At *f* the tone must not

lose in fullness when about to pass to *p*, neither must it increase at *p* when about to pass to *ff*. In *f* the stick should be pressed slightly between thumb and forefinger, and should move freely in the fingers at *pp*.

B A

**ÉTUDE V**  
**Adagio**

## Fourth Fundamental Bowing

### §11. Detached Stroke of the Forearm

The strings must be touched energetically, but not roughly. Executed by a half-bow across

the strings, which must be kept in equable vibration to develop a full tone.

Wrist and finger-joints must be flexible, and the stick held lightly between the fingers. This bowing must be executed with breadth and energy.

**ÉTUDE VI**  
**Allegro** *Broad*

*ff*

B A

This bowing must also be practised with the finger-exercise for springing bow, page 11.



### § 12. Undulating Stroke

Execute with whole bow and from the wrist, the bow gliding gently over the strings. The undulatory movement must be kept up from nut to point throughout the down-bow, and likewise throughout the up-bow. The movement of the bow in passing from one string to another must

be imperceptible, and the hair must nearly rest on both strings at once, to avoid executing the undulating movement by the arm. The movement should be very rapid, and the execution spirited.

### § 13. Combined Bowings

For the legato notes the whole bow is taken. The staccato notes are executed alternately with

the forearm and nut. This bowing requires an extremely supple wrist.

### § 14. Sparing the Bow

Not more bow should be employed for the three legato notes than for the one staccato note; above all, there must not be the slightest break

between them. The strongly detached note must be executed by the wrist alone.

Up-bow

Up-bow

**Energico** 1<sup>st</sup> time at point. 2<sup>d</sup> time at nut

**Largamente**

point nut

Short bows, the > strongly accented.

BA

**Allegro**

G

## Fifth Fundamental Bowing

### § 15. Springing Stroke

Executed by the wrist, at the middle of the bow. The stick must play freely between the fingers, so that it can rebound on the strings. The bow is

to be kept nearer the bridge, the elbow drawn inward. The notes should be very distinctly detached, employing short bows.

Exercises for the springing bow, and the detached stroke with the forearm. (It. *Spiccato*.)

**Allegro**

BA

A

**B**

Musical score for section B, consisting of six staves of music in G major, 3/4 time. The music features a series of chords and arpeggios. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4. A dynamic marking 'f' is present at the beginning. The piece concludes with a fermata over a final chord.

On the G-string

**C**

Musical score for section C, consisting of four staves of music in G major, 3/4 time. The music is primarily composed of sixteenth-note patterns on the G-string. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4. A dynamic marking 'f' is present at the beginning. The piece concludes with a fermata over a final chord.

The image displays a musical score for violin, consisting of ten staves. The first system (staves 1-5) is in B-flat major, 4/4 time, starting with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. It features a melodic line with slurs and a complex rhythmic accompaniment of sixteenth-note chords. The second system (staves 6-10) is in B major, 4/4 time, also starting with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. It features a melodic line with slurs and a complex rhythmic accompaniment of sixteenth-note chords.

**D**

*p*

*4 times*

**E**

*p*

*6 times*

The image displays a musical score for violin, consisting of ten staves of music. The first three staves are in the key of B-flat major (one flat) and 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a *cresc.* marking. The second staff includes fingering numbers 4 and 3. The third staff includes a *dim.* marking and a fingering number 1. The fourth and fifth staves are in the key of F major (one flat) and 6/8 time, starting with a *f* dynamic marking. The sixth and seventh staves are in the key of F major and 3/4 time, featuring triplet markings. The eighth and ninth staves are in the key of F major and 2/4 time, with a *4* marking above the first measure of the eighth staff. The tenth staff is in the key of F major and 2/4 time. The score includes various bowing techniques such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.



*f* *pp*

always springing

*ff*

*f*

## Sixth Fundamental Bowing

### § 17. The Thrown Stroke

It is distinguished from the others in being executed entirely by the arm; the bow is lifted between each two notes, then being allowed

to fall again in the same place. The notes must be distinctly articulated, the stick pressed somewhat between the fingers.

*f*

B A

### § 18. Staccato

The first note must be accented by suddenly holding back the bow. The main point is, to keep exact time with short bows in an allegro movement. One need not take it too much to heart if in the beginning the notes are not equally accented, for this imperfection will dis-

appear after a time. After the accent on the first note the stick must be held lightly between the fingers, and the wrist kept perfectly supple.

The staccato should never be executed either by the upper arm or by the shoulder.



A

Repeat 12 times

Detailed description: Exercise A is written on a single staff in 3/4 time. It begins with a forte (f) dynamic marking. The first measure contains a quarter rest followed by a quarter note G4. The second measure contains a quarter note G4 with a bowing mark (a square with a diagonal line) above it. The third measure contains a quarter note G4 with a bowing mark above it. The fourth measure contains a quarter note G4 with a bowing mark above it. The fifth measure contains a quarter note G4 with a bowing mark above it. The sixth measure contains a quarter note G4 with a bowing mark above it. The seventh measure contains a quarter note G4 with a bowing mark above it. The eighth measure contains a quarter note G4 with a bowing mark above it. The ninth measure contains a quarter note G4 with a bowing mark above it. The tenth measure contains a quarter note G4 with a bowing mark above it. The eleventh measure contains a quarter note G4 with a bowing mark above it. The twelfth measure contains a quarter note G4 with a bowing mark above it. Above the staff, there are three pairs of horizontal lines with 'B' and 'A' labels. The first pair is above the first two measures, the second pair is above the next two measures, and the third pair is above the final two measures. The text 'Repeat 12 times' is written to the right of the staff.

This exercise is to be continued on all the open strings.

B

C

D

E

F

G

H

I

6 times

Detailed description: Exercises B through I are arranged vertically on separate staves. Each exercise is in 3/4 time and consists of two measures. Exercise B starts with a forte (f) dynamic marking. Exercises C through I show various rhythmic patterns and bowing techniques, including slurs and dynamic markings. Above the staves, there are six pairs of horizontal lines with 'B' and 'A' labels, corresponding to the exercises. The text '6 times' is written above the first staff.

**K**

**L**

**M**

**N**

**O**

**P**

**Q**

**R**

**S**

### §19. The Sustained Tone

The sustained tone is at once the most difficult and the most important of all strokes. It is executed with whole bow, without expression and with a mere breath of tone, letting the bow move smoothly and imperceptibly. The duration of each bow should be one minute.

Viotti, having neglected playing for a time, practised the sustained tone for two hours with and without finger-exercises; and then remarked

that his fingers felt as if he had never been out of practice.

For those who feel timidity before an audience, the practice of the sustained tone is indispensable for steadying the nerves and giving precision of bowing. It is also well to execute this bowing with a full tone, in which case the duration of the sustained tone is 30 seconds.



**Adagio** Duration 1 minute

Duration 44 minutes

### § 20. Sustained Tone with Finger-exercises

**Adagio**  
G-String

**A**

D-String

**B**

A-String

**C**

E-String

**D**

## § 21. Melody in Sustained Tones

### Adagio

Duration, 1 minute for each measure

## § 22. Sustained Tones in Double Notes and *ppp*

The difficulty is, to bring the two strings into vibration simultaneously, and to maintain this vibration evenly from the nut to the point.

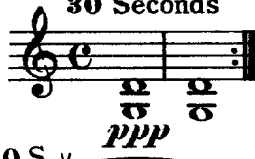
The hair must first be set upon the strings; then sustain the tone without accent and without interrupting the tone between the notes. In the middle of the bow the forefinger must be pressed on the stick to keep it from trembling.


For the up-bow lift the wrist towards the middle of the bow, in order to sustain the tone to the nut. The duration of each bow is 30 seconds.


*N.B.* These exercises also have the particular advantage of steadying the bow on the strings; they contribute toward the elasticity of the tone by making it sympathetic.


### How to Sustain Double Notes with a faint, scarcely perceptible tone


**Adagio**  
30 Seconds

1 


2 

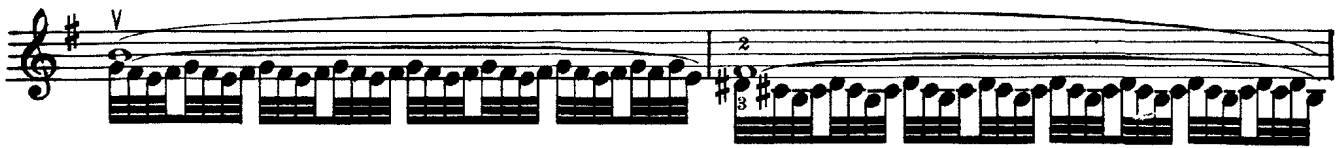
3 


4 


5 

### Sustaining of Tone with Finger-exercises

6 

7 

8 

9 

10 