

Bars 41 - 54

Poco meno mosso, $\text{♩} = 88-84$

The musical score consists of ten staves. The first staff begins with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The second staff starts with a dynamic marking of *f*. The third staff contains a triplet of eighth notes. The fourth staff has a dynamic marking of *mf*. The fifth staff includes a measure with a '0' below the staff. The sixth staff has a dynamic marking of *f*. The seventh staff has a dynamic marking of *f*. The eighth staff has a dynamic marking of *f*. The ninth staff has a dynamic marking of *mf*. The tenth staff has a dynamic marking of *mf*. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and dynamic markings like *mf* and *f*. It features a key signature of one flat and a 4/4 time signature. The piece concludes with a 'poco a poco accel.' section and a final measure marked 'a tempo I'.

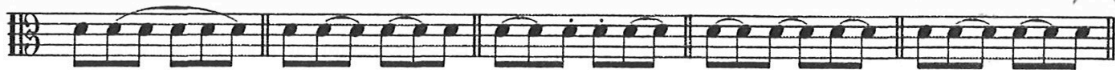
⁵ Bartók, Béla 1949, *Viola Concerto, Op. posth.* Ed. Tibor Serly. Boosey & Hawkes. London. Music score. Pg 2 -3.

Issues:

- Triplet rhythm
- Sequencing

1. Triplet Rhythm –

- Practising extremely slowly with tiny bows for control in finger tips first and focusing on the tuning of the chromatic intonation was very important.
- I again used a Primrose bowing exercise for triplets, followed by my 'standard method'.



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Primrose's bowing exercise for triplets, to be practiced in the same way as the previous example.

- Also in the first two bars, the ascending pattern can be continued all the way up the string like a scale so it becomes increasingly more difficult the higher it gets. This made the original pattern much easier to play as a result.
- Practising without my left thumb against the neck of the viola was also extremely effective in strengthening my fingers and getting them in the correct position for good intonation and was a method Rivka frequently got me to exercise with.

2. Sequencing –

- I found the structure of the phrasing by playing only the first note of each triplet group up to and including bar 47, then doing the same thing but only with the second note, and finally with the third note (where possible).
- Then playing only the first and second note of each group, followed by first and third, and second and third. This helped to build up a picture of the structure and gave the passage a direction.

⁶ Dalton David. 1988, *Playing the Viola. Conversations with William Primrose*. OUP: New York. Pg. 29.

Sequencing exercise to break down the pattern and build it back up.

Bars 61 – 76

Poco meno mosso, ♩ = 92

60 rit. II

Vln. *mp (più dolce)*

mf

mp

f

poco rit. 70 a tempo, ♩ = 96

sub. p

cresc.

poco allarg. *f* *ten.* a tempo

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Issues:

- Starting in a high position
- Chromaticism
- Shifting
- Bowing and string crossing

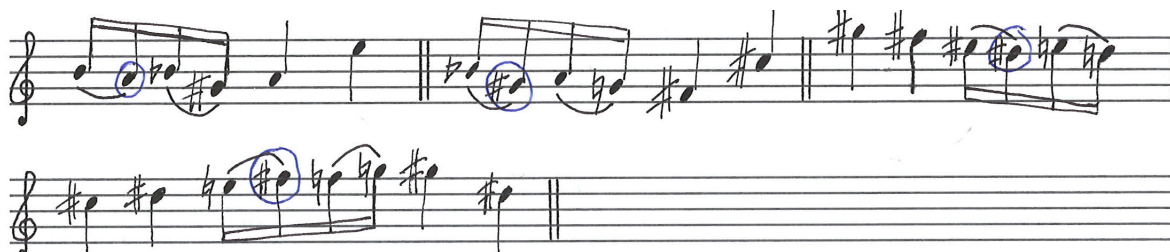
1. Starting in a high position –

- This was practised in the same way as the very first note of the piece. Again I tuned with the A string which gave rise to a perfect 5th with the E.
- This meant finding the position, taking away the hands, then the viola and finding other ways to break any familiar habits or patterns in order to build up an instinctive knowledge of where the fingers should be placed.

2. Chromaticism –

⁷ Bartók, Béla 1949, *Viola Concerto, Op. posth.* Ed. Tibor Serly. Boosey & Hawkes. London. Music score. Pg 4.

- When the sixteenths arise (bars 62, 62, etc) I paid extra attention to the relationship between the fingers and I used the second note of each group as a core position where the other fingers can be based around.
- For example, using the A in bar 62 to gauge where the B, B \flat and G \sharp go.



The blue marking shows the note with which the other fingers should work around – for intonation and physical position.

3. Shifting –

- This was only a major problem in bars 75 – 76 where the scale ascends towards the upper regions of the viola.
- Each shift was worked on using the ‘four-second rule’ and at bar 76, the D was tuned with it’s open string counterpart to check the intonation.

4. Bowing and string crossing –

- In bar 67, the I divided the bowing into 2 sixteenths a bow, alternating legato and staccato. Therefore, the bowing, for the flexibility of the wrist could be exercised as follows:



Subdivision exercise for articulation. I tried to do as many as I could.

- Bars 70 – 71 are an example of difficult string crossing. By practising the bowing 10 times at the frog, tip and middle of the bow (so a total of 30 times) my right hand became freer and very familiar with the pattern. Rhythm and accent practice also greatly helped.
- Practising with double stops also got my right hand prepared for the correct position.

Bars 79 – 90

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Issues:

- Rhythms
- String crossing
- Chromatic half-position shift

1. Rhythms –

- To practise the notated ritardando, I found the use of a metronome to be of particular help – making sure the sextuplets move to duplets move the triplets in as smooth and as natural a way as possible.
- An affective way to use the metronome was to put the click on the half-beat to avoid accents on the change of rhythm (which in any case can become obvious with the bow changes)

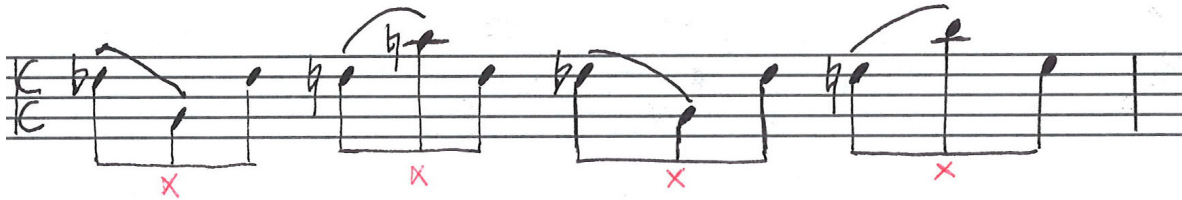
The crosses represent the click of the metronome – strengthening the rhythms.

- Practising the trill as a demi-semiquavers in bar 79 also helped to create a more linear motion.
- Once the melody returns I went back to the 'standard method'.

⁸ Bartók, Béla 1949, *Viola Concerto, Op. posth.* Ed. Tibor Serly. Boosey & Hawkes. London. Music score. Pg 4.

2. String crossing –

- Bar 87 has bow changes before each string, which adds a little complication to getting a smooth line, so stopping before each bow change, and moving the bow on the spot, noiselessly, to the new string position helped to reinforce the movement in a faster tempo.



The crosses indicate where the string change takes place. Stopping the bow before the change of string developed a greater control of the right hand.

- In bar 88, using Primrose's bowing method and my 'standard method' really helped me secure the notes.
- Again, I stopped before each change of string, moving the bow arm and left hand on the spot before continuing with the motion to enhance the position of the hands in a faster tempo.

3. Chromatic half-position shift –

- In bar 89, the shift happens between the top E \flat and E \natural , then down again between the lower F \sharp and A \sharp . My thumb needs to be particularly free from gripping the neck of the viola in this passage, so practising it without the thumb first to encourage the strength and independence in the fingers first, then with the thumb lightly rotating against the neck of the viola in order to support the fingers and ease the shift.

Visual Example

Bars 95 – 101

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Issues:

- Melody on C string (sound quality and intonation)
- Bowing articulation

1. Melody on C String –

- Because the melody returns on the C string in a very quiet dynamic, maintaining the sound quality was very important, so practising each note separately, non-vibrato and experimenting with the bow was the best way to find the warm sound that I wanted.
- I only added the vibrato once I was satisfied with the quality of the bow sound, and then I concentrated on the quality of the vibrato – speed and broadness.
- Once this was done, I repeated the process whilst following the written material.

Sul C

Playing long slow notes helped in developing sound quality

- The intonation can be quite difficult in this place so while doing the above exercise, I also paid attention to the intervals and shifting back and forth between notes to secure the pitches.
- Adding the melody together note-by-note was also effective in gradually building it up (eg. 1, 1+2, 1+2+3, etc).

Building up the melody from the beginning, note-by-note.

2. Bowing articulation –

⁹ Bartók, Béla 1949, *Viola Concerto, Op. posth.* Ed. Tibor Serly. Boosey & Hawkes. London. Music score. Pg 5

- From bar 100 – 101 there is a similar feature to bar 67 in that the 2nd and 4th beats can be practised with a subdivision of the articulation. This increased the flexibility of the wrist and means the rhythm as originally written became much easier. The idea was to make the problem much harder so once I got used to it, the original became much easier.