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PERFORMANCE

THE STORY OF THE SECOND VIOLIN
PRINCIPAL IN THE ORCHESTRA

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ABSTRACT:

Key words: orchestra, orchestra playing, second violins, principal, violin, leader

This thesis investigates the role of the second violin principal in the orchestral environment. The intention is to create a useful tool for violinists who might be interested in a better understanding of this specific position. Understanding the role will also enable other musicians and music lovers to appreciate the complexity of the position and the orchestra itself. Orchestral excerpts relevant to this position will be recorded and explained.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Playing in an orchestra has been a part of my education since the early childhood. As a good student in primary music school, I played first violin and was then promoted to concertmaster. In music high school, I was concertmaster of the orchestra for all four years. Upon beginning Bachelor studies, my professors decided that I should lead the second violins – older students were the concertmasters. Initially, I regarded their decision as a demotion. It seemed that they considered me an unskilled musician, surely the word “first” always sounds better than the word “second” – how wrong I was!

Soon enough I learned that my “new” position was quite challenging and required a partially different set of skills compared to my previous experience. I recognized the opportunity to learn something new about my instrument and eventually felt grateful to the professors for my new position. Thanks to this experience, the many questions started to form in my mind:

How is the position of second violin principal important?

How does my technique need to be different when I am playing as second violin principal?

What is the body language of the second violin principal?

How does one become a second violin principal in a professional orchestra?

Which music pieces are important for this position?

These were only some of the questions that arose and I was determined to find the answers to them in order to be able to play in that position in a professional manner.

I performed as principal of the second violins for the next five years, and during this time I gained experience and broader knowledge about this orchestral role. During my Master course in Sweden, I continued to investigate the role of the second violin principal. I was determined to answer my questions in order to be able to one day perform in that position at a professional level. Furthermore, I chose this subject for my Master thesis because this orchestral role seems to be often neglected by the academic world, while there is a lot of material written about the role of the concert master. My goal is to suggest that this role should not be overlooked and this thesis can be considered as an homage to the role of second violin principal.

I therefore decided to concentrate on, analyze and perform L. van Beethoven’s third symphony, from the point of view of the second violin principal. During my studies, I had the opportunity to perform this work multiple times and with the different orchestras. This experience gave me the tools for a better understanding of the piece, and for an active comparison between the most important orchestral roles, as well as the possibility to illustrate specific music passages that will help to illustrate the results of my investigation.

I hope that this paper will make the reader curious enough to ponder the answers to the questions about the amazing role of the second violin principal, and even more - to formulate new ones.

2. DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROLE OF THE SECOND VIOLIN PRINCIPAL THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES

2.1. Beginnings

The beginning of the orchestra which resembles today's, dates from around the year 1730. The composition and dynamics of the first orchestras were important for determining the foundation and future development of the role of the second violin principal.

During my education I was trying to learn about the development of the role of the second violin principal because I believed that it would help me to better understand the importance that the role has today. I have found that both the importance and the purpose of the role have changed a lot throughout the centuries.

“Most would probably agree that the history of the orchestra – whether as an institution or as an instrument – in any useful sense of the term begins somewhere in the seventeenth century in the instrumental bands in late Renaissance churches such as St. Mark’s, Venice, or in the North Italian courts.”¹ In that period, orchestras were merely covering and alluding to the four voice ranges of soprano, alto, tenor and bass, where second violins were mostly playing the part of the alto voice. Based on that information, we get an idea of the second violin principal’s role at that time. Even in the beginning, in my opinion, that musician needed to be somebody with excellent rhythm, in full control of the middle part of violin’s sound range and with an ability to create and control the collective sound and style of his section.

“The early history of the orchestra is closely tied to the opera house; the same applies to the early history of orchestral music, not least the symphony.”² In that birthplace of the role of the second violin principal, above everything previously stated, I think that an outstanding ability to accompany other players and, equally important, the singers, was essential. His importance can be seen even in these early stages of orchestral development. While first violins, with a concertmaster who was sometimes also the conductor, had usually melodies similar to those of the singers, second violins with their principal had a role of making harmonic progressions in long notes or motoric movement.

The pronoun "he" in the last few sentences simply reflects the early facts. As Colin Lawson said, although opportunities for employment in orchestras have been open in theory to both genders, in practice the symphony orchestra has remained strongly resistant to engaging women until relatively recently.³

¹ Colin Lawson, edit., *The Cambridge Companion to the Orchestra* (UK, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1.

² Ibid, 2.

³ Ibid, 14.

Historically speaking, from the moment when Jean-Baptiste Lully added wind players to an original group of "The King's 24 Violins" in the late seventeenth century, we can talk about type of Baroque orchestra.⁴ In the Baroque period, the orchestra was not standardized in size. There were large differences in size, instrumentation and playing styles - and therefore differences in orchestral soundscapes and palettes - between the various European regions. The "Baroque orchestra" ranged from smaller orchestras (or ensembles) with one or two players per part, to larger scale orchestras with many players per part.⁵ This means that the second violin part was sometimes written for one player and it needed to be played quite vigorously and like a solo part while taking care to never be above the sound of the concertmaster. Regardless of the number of the musicians, the second violin principal was in charge in some pieces. It seems that one of the most important things was to be able to permit the more important line to project. Phrasing, technique and the sound were dependent upon the capabilities of the instruments of that time period.

In the beginning of the eighteen century, composers started to write pieces only for the orchestra without connection to the opera. I would like to argue that this is where the role of the second violin principal was starting to have its future shapes and demands. For example, in some of the Handel's Concerti Grossi, there is already the clear distinction between the first and the second violins and their roles are very different. In the first movement of the fourth Concerto Grosso (example 1), the difference is even visually very clear. My opinion is that the first violins had to play more, and be more exposed, while the seconds had the role of accompanying them and leading the other accompanying instruments, viola and bass in this case. The principal of the second violins needed to have very precise rhythm and feeling of the tempo because of the repeating notes (bar 4, for example) and a sense of how the concertmaster wanted to lead the melody and support it.

⁴ Lawson, *The Cambridge Companion to the Orchestra*, 42

⁵ "Baroque Orchestra". In *Wikipedia*. Accessed March 12, 2018, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baroque_orchestra

CONCERTO IV.

Larghetto affettuoso.

Violino I.
conc. e rip.
Violino II.
Viola.
Tutti Bassi.

The image displays a page of musical notation for the first movement of G.F. Handel's Concerto Grosso No. 4, Op. 6. The score is arranged in five systems, each containing four staves: Violino I (with the instruction 'conc. e rip.'), Violino II, Viola, and Tutti Bassi. The tempo and mood are indicated as 'Larghetto affettuoso'. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and fingerings. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4 for fingers and 5-7 for thumb and index finger. Some fingerings are written as '6 6 6' or '6 7 6'. There are also some unusual fingerings like '6 5 4 3' and '6 7 6 5'. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The score ends with the instruction 'II. w. so.'.

Example 1: G. F. Handel, Concerto Grosso No.4, Op. 6, I movement, publisher: Deutsche Händelgesellschaft (Leipzig, 1869), p.54

While researching the early development of the modern orchestra and the role of the second violin principal itself, I observed that the second violin principal was an important player if we consider that he was in charge of minimum two or three players. On the other hand, they were mostly blended with other strings. My impression is that the importance of this period for the role of the second violin principal was mainly in the changes in music that opened the path for future developing of the second violin's role in the orchestra.

2.2. After 1730.

By the 1730s there were numerous orchestras across Europe recognizable in the modern sense of the term. Orchestras were absolutely not immediately standardized in number of players and instruments. There were quite striking variations in different orchestras and in changing in the number of players on different occasions. Because of that it is difficult to know the exact moment of establishing the position of the second violin principal. The chart that follows (Picture 1) can give an insight in changes that occurred in the second violin section and their importance throughout the years. As one can see, there are some attempts to separate a violin section in Berlin 1712, but the section was standardized more or less around the year 1771. In the beginning, the average number of second violins was 3-5. Around 1730, the number of second-violin players was around 6-10, and after the 1770, the average number of second-violins was around 10-18 musicians. The need for the role of the second violin principal probably showed up with the increase in the people playing in the second violin section. Some specific duties for that position were developing along with the development of the modern orchestra itself.

The constitution of selected orchestras, 1670–1865

Note: Given the *ad hoc* nature of instrumental groupings in the early and mid Baroque period, attempting such an overview would serve scant purpose. For the period up to 1800, at least, statistics such as these must be treated with caution: they variously rely on haphazard sources, do not always take account of possible doublings or additional players, and sometimes tend to reflect extraordinary events. For this period, too, a 'continuo' group should be assumed even if it is not specified.

Date	Place	Strings					Woodwind				Brass				Other			Additional instruments	Notes
		Vn 1	Vn 2	Va	Vc	Cb	Fl	Ob	Cl	Bn	Hn	Tpt	Trbn	Tuba	Hp	Timp	Perc		
1670s–80s	Paris	6	12	6			2	2		1		2					1	1 hpd	For Lully operas, violas in various sizes
1708	Rome, Palazzo Bonelli	23	4	6	6		4				2	1						1 va da gamba; 1 hpd	For Handel, <i>La Resurrezione</i>
1712	Berlin, Royal Chapel	6	5	2	5	3	4		3	3								Court trumpeters and drummers	Same players on fl and hn
1713	Paris, Opéra	12		7	8			8									1		Violas in various sizes
1728	London, King's Theatre	22	2	3	2	2	2		3	2								2 hpd; 1 theorbo	
1730	Leipzig, Thomaskirche	6	4	2	1		3		2		3						1	2 kbd	
1738	Hamburg, Opera	8	3	2	2	5	5		5	4	6						1	various flutes; 2 ob d'amore; 2 chalumeaux; 2 cornetts; va d'amore; va da gamba	

Date	Place	Strings					Woodwind				Brass				Other			Additional instruments	Notes	
		Vn 1	Vn 2	Va	Vc	Cb	Fl	Ob	Cl	Bn	Hn	Tpt	Trbn	Tuba	Hp	Timp	Perc			
1740s–50s	Naples, Teatro S. Carlo	28		5	2	4		4		2		4						1	2 hpd	
1751	Paris, Opéra	16		6	10	2	3		3–4		1–2							1	2 va da gamba; 1 hpd	
1754	London, Foundling Hospital	14		5	3	2		4		4		2						1	1 kbd	For Handel, <i>Messiah</i>
1771	Milan, Regio Ducal Teatro	14	14	6	2	6	2	4		2	4	2						?1	2 hpd	For Mozart, <i>Mitridate, re di Ponto</i>
1773	Paris, Concert spirituel	13	11	4	10	4	2	3	2	4	2	2						1		
1777	Mannheim, Court Orch.	10–11	10–11	4	4	4	2	2	2	4	2	?2						?1		
1781	Leipzig, Gewandhaus-Orch.	6	6	3	4	2	2		3	2	2							1		
1781	Vienna	40		10	8	10	4	4	4	6	4	4						1		Society of Musicians benefit concert, including a Mozart symphony
1781	Vienna, Burgtheater	6	6	4	3	3	2	2	2	2	4	2						1	1 kbd	
1783	Eszterháza	6	5	2	2	2		2		2	2									
1784	London	48	47	26	21	15	6	26		26	12	12	6					2	? 1 double-bn; 1 org	For Handel Commemoration
1791	London, Salomon Concerts	12–16		4	3	4	2	2	?2	2	2	2						1		
1805	Dresden, Hof-Orch.	17		4	4	4	3	3	2	4	4	x						x	x	
1810	Paris, Opéra	12	12	8	12	6	2	4	2	5	4	4	3					x	x	1 hpd
1811	Berlin, Hofoper	11	11	5	11	5	4	4	4	4	7	2	3					x	x	
1814	Vienna, Redouten-Saal	18	18	14	12	17	2	2	2	2	2	2	2					x	x	
1818	London, King's Theatre	10	9	4	4	5	2	2	2	2	2	2	1					x	x	For Beethoven concert

(cont.)

Picture 1: *The Cambridge Companion to the Orchestra* (UK, Cambridge, 2003), edited by Colin Lawson, Appendix 1 p.

Date	Place	Strings					Woodwind				Brass				Other			Additional instruments	Notes
		Vn 1	Vn 2	Va	Vc	Cb	Fl	Ob	Cl	Bn	Hn	Tpt	Trbn	Tuba	Hp	Timp	Perc		
1823	Dresden, Königlich-Sächsische Kapelle	18		4	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	2				1		2 Org	
1828	Paris, Société des Concerts	15	15	8	12	8	4	3	4	4	4	2	3			1		1 ophicleide	
1831	Leipzig, Gewandhaus - Orch.	8	8	4	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2				1	X		
1837	London, Philharmonic Society	14	14	8	8	6	2	2	2	2	4	2	3			X			
1841	Paris, Padeloup Concerts	15	12	10	13	11	4	3	2	4	4	4	3			X			
1842	Vienna, Philharmonic Orch.	10	10	7	4	5	3	3	4	3	6	4	4		2	2	2		
1844	Munich, Hof Orchestra	26		3	8	6	7	6	7	4	5	5				2	x		
1850	Dresden, Hofoper	18		5	5	5	4	4	3	4	5	8	3	1	x	1	1		
1855	Paris, Opéra	11	11	8	10	8	3	3	3	4	5	4	4		2	1	4		
1858	London, Philharmonic Society	14	14	8	9	8	2	2	2	2	4	2	3			1			
1859	Paris, Conservatoire Orch.	15	14	10	12	9	4	2	2	4	4	2	3		1	1	1	1 cornet 1 ophicleide	
1865	Leipzig, Gewandhaus - Orch.	16	14	8	9	5	2	2	2	2	2	4	3			1			

Sources (adapted): Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London, 1980), vol. xiii, p. 690 (table compiled by Eleanor Selfridge-Field and Neal Zaslaw); Ludwig Finscher et al. (eds.), *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Kassel, 2nd edn, 1996-), 'Sachteil'; vol. vii, cols. 835-52 (table compiled by Christoph-Hellmut Mahling); Daniel J. Koury, *Orchestral Performance Practices in the Nineteenth Century: Size, Proportion and Seating* (Ann Arbor, 1986).

Picture 2: *The Cambridge Companion to the Orchestra* (UK, Cambridge, 2003), edited by Colin Lawson, Appendix 1 p. 274

The persons who have the credits for the formation of the section of the second violins and the role of the principal of the second violins were mostly composers. The greatest conductors were almost without exception great composers; in the eighteenth century they included Vivaldi, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and many others.⁶ All of them were writing string quartets and they introduced idea of string quartet's seating and arrangement into the orchestra. Equality between two sections of violins was changeable in the beginning, and it was not still sure what the role of the second violins is. There was a tendency to treat the first violins as soloists and the second violins as accompaniments and in the lower register. In my opinion, that created a big gap between the sections and their approach to the playing. It is interesting to notice (Picture 1 and 2) that since the separation of violin section into first and second violins, there were almost an equal number of players in both sections, and I believe that sections were starting to be more or less equal in spreading of the musical thoughts.

After 1730, many aspects of the orchestra changed. One of the changes was the development of "the sophisticated technological designs that enhanced violins' capacities for greater tonal power, range and agility."⁷ In that period of time, the violin became established in the general form in which we find it today, but around 1740, the neck angle was still low, the fingerboard was still relatively short and gut strings were used. "These instruments lacked the power that was to be demanded of them in the near future."⁸ In my opinion, the second violin principal probably was a player with a warm sound with rich overtones, great abilities for accompany the first violins and a perfect control of the middle sound range of the violin.

⁶ Lawson, *The Cambridge Companion to the Orchestra*, 114.

⁷ Ibid, 7.

⁸ Ibid, 30.

The chief and enduring development of this period was in string instrument bows. “The old outward facing curve was turned inwards, allowing the player control over the tension of the horsehair.”⁹ As I see it, with these changes, the role of the second violin principal was entrusted with the whole aspect of the modern role as we know it today - support of the first violins with a warm but clear sound in the middle sound range of the violin, brilliance in the thematic materials and fragments in the pieces and a perfect articulation of the different rhythm patterns with an improved, so called, “Tartini’s” bow.

In the 19th century orchestras started to get bigger in size, and they started to spread all around the world sponsored by provincial courts and musical centers. “The creation of a new orchestras became a matter of civic pride and even obligation.”¹⁰ During that period, the violin took the form that it has maintained to the present time. Some of those changes were a longer neck which was angled back, a longer fingerboard, higher bridge and tougher strings. In my opinion that may have helped players to develop greater virtuosity and better speed, and clearer and faster response of the strings and instrument itself. The second violin principal and the section of the second violins had to master the bigger tonal range that longer neck permitted, and better control of the articulation of the bow. As I see it, from this moment, the role of the second violin principal was finally standardized.

⁹ Lawson, *The Cambridge Companion to the Orchestra*, 30.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 8.

3. SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE TECHNIQUES

If one wants to see how the second violin principal's role can be different from any other role in the orchestra, one will need to have an insight into the second violin principal's particular tasks in the orchestra, and the way those tasks and responsibilities are executed. As I said before, when I first started to play in this position, I was not quite sure of the purpose of this position, and whether I needed to play in a different way. I didn't know if I should change my playing. Now, at the end of my master education, I can say that I got acquainted with sitting on the chair of the second violin principal. I've dealt with the various difficulties and obstacles which this position entails, and I managed to overcome them. With more experience, I started to realize and comprehend the techniques that a second violin principal, should be able to master. Those techniques can sometimes be very specific and a common listener or even musician can easily overlook them.

The instrumental abilities of the second violin principals are varied. Most of them are well known, like the ability to perform some difficult solos that appear in the repertoire, to be an able sight-reader, to have a strong sense of rhythm and good projection of the sound. However, some of the responsibilities are not so obvious or can be noticed only in rehearsals, like the responsibility to choose or keep the *tempi*, find a perfect balance for the section, to choose a specific interpretation of some pieces and in which way something should be played. These decisions can be changed during every rehearsal to some degree. On the day of the performance, the second violin principal will, in my experience, always try to find the "golden middle" or a perfect balance. Gradually, the work becomes harder and more complex if the violin section is bigger.

3.1. Bowings

"For all string players bowing is the most fundamental and personal technique."¹¹ Because it is so personal there are many different styles and schools of teaching it. The second violin principal needs to be able to play various bowing techniques and to quickly decide in which way he/she wants the second violin section to play specific parts of the pieces. The second violin principal needs to be aware which way of playing in the section will give the best results in particular pieces, sound wise or considering interpretation requirements. This problem is as old as the orchestra itself, and still its solution is always tricky to find. Like Christopher Adey says, "it is not always easy to achieve an evenly balanced section and any discrepancies will often need to be adjusted by the use of more, or fewer changes of the bow direction than might at first seem necessary for any given phrase."¹²

When I first started to deal with the problem of writing bowings, I was trying to make as few changes as possible, and to play everything "as it comes", meaning the stroke was always downbow – upbow as much as possible. In my experience, almost every young musician will try to choose the

¹¹ Christopher Adey, *Orchestral Performance, A Guide for Conductors and Players* (London: Faber & Faber, 1998), 181.

¹² *Ibid*, 181.

bowings that do not involve too much cognitive effort. Then dealing with the bowings of some specific parts of the piece will look something like in the example taken from the *Eroica* (example 2).



Example 2: L. van Beethoven, Symphony No.3, I movement, second violin part, publisher: Ernst Eulenburg (Leipzig, 1938), p.1

With experience, the bowings start to have a meaning and some kind of logic. I personally started to think more about why and what I am doing. Because the first tactic “play as it was written” wasn’t always working, I started to develop my own rules for writing the bowings for the second violin section. My rules, or guidelines, developed over years of practicing, playing in orchestras and lots of lessons with various professors.

1. The concertmaster’s bowings are the best.

In my opinion, the person sitting on the position of the concertmaster should have the “last word” in deciding the bowings for the rest of the strings in the orchestra, even if that orchestra is a student orchestra. Usually the person sitting in that spot is an exceptional and experienced player who has already played the piece before, so he/she has already tested the bowings before deciding which ones work best. Of course, this rule of mine only works in the passages where the second violins are playing the same melody with the first violins, or the same rhythm. Also, the bowings should be the same when imitating and repeating the melody of the first violins.

2. The conductor’s suggestions are not to be overlooked.

Usually, in the first rehearsals the conductor would say something to the second violin section about some disturbances in the section or something considering interpretation requirements and the sound being produced. In those moment I was obliged to try to fix the problem and to do so instantaneously, and usually the problem was fixed with the changing of the bowings. In a lot of cases, conductors were the ones to explain the subtle connections between the music and the way of playing, so from there I developed the next rule.

3. Follow your musicality.

To explain this, I will use the same motive from before (example 2), just with the new bowings (example 3). In the music, the first beat is considered to be the “heavy” beat, and the second – the “light” one. The motive (bar 66-67) finishes with the two quarter notes. If the first quarter in the bar 67 is not on the downbow (as it is the case in the example 2), the bowings should be changed for that particular place. Notes played with downbow are naturally stronger (sound-wise) than the ones being played upbow, and because of that the first note in the bar 67 should be played downbow.



Example 3: Beethoven, Symphony No.3, I movement, p.1

However, in bar 71, the first two beats are syncopated, and it starts with an eight note with a dot on top (meaning it should be played lighter than the following quarter note). In this case I would chose, following the same rule, to put the eight note on the upbow (example 3). Before, I was leaving these kinds of places to be played downbow and then “as it comes” (bar 71), hoping that the players will make the eight notes light enough. My experience now indicates that if I put the bowings to follow the natural “lightness” and “hardness” of the bow stroke, the sound will also be more natural and played correctly.

4. Follow the esthetic.

If the passage that the second violins are playing is a supportive accompaniment, but with similar strokes of the bow to the strokes of some other section that is playing melody, I will usually try to match the bowings of the second violins with it, even though this may not be strictly necessary. Of course, this will only happen if the other three rules are already considered.

I think that, unconsciously or not, almost every leader in the string sections is doing the bowings following similar rules and the way of thinking. Because of these things, before even coming on the first rehearsal, I believe that the second violin principal needs to have pieces prepared not only to be perfectly played, but to also know which bowing problems may appear during the first rehearsals in the section. The second violin principal should also know how to help the section to overcome the problems as fast as possible and to know how it wants important passages to be played while consulting with both the concertmaster and conductor.

As can clearly be seen, given these points, the second violin principal’s decisions on bowing style are actually just a tool for achieving greater sound and better musical communication with other sections. Equally important is the bow positioning of the section. This decision is made in cooperation with a concertmaster because it’s a one of the main tools of achieving excellent quality of sonority and style.

Symphony N°3

I

Allegro con brio $\text{♩} = 60$ L. van Beethoven, Op.55
1770-1827

2 Flauti

2 Oboi

2 Clarinetti in B

2 Fagotti

3 Corni in Es

3 Trombe in Es

Timpani in Es-B

Violino I

Violino II

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabasso

Example 4: Beethoven, Symphony No.3, I movement, p.1

3.2. Choice of tempo

After just a few bars of the opening of the symphony (Example 4) the importance of the role of the second violins and the second violin principal become apparent. After two bars of opening chords, the second violin principal needs to choose the tempo of the piece in cooperation with the violas (Bar no.3). The conductor shows initial tempo but it is on the second violin principal to lead and encourage his group and the violas to achieve and keep that tempo. The balance of the tempo needs to be found in a fraction of a second, actually after four eighth notes, because those notes will determine the tempo frame for the principal cello, who in that moment plays the beginning of a theme (Ex. 5).

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Violino II, Viola, and Violoncello. The Violino II staff is at the top, the Viola staff is in the middle, and the Violoncello staff is at the bottom. The music is in 3/4 time and features a series of eighth notes. Dynamics are marked with 'f' (forte) and 'p' (piano). The Violino II staff starts with a 'f' dynamic and then moves to 'p'. The Viola staff also starts with 'f' and moves to 'p'. The Violoncello staff starts with 'f' and moves to 'p'. The score is for the first page of the first movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 3.

Example 5: Beethoven, Symphony No.3, I movement, p.1

Sometimes a section can lose control over the tempo of their eighth notes, and the responsibility of the second violin principal is then to keep the initial tempo and to try to synchronize it with the leader of the violas and also the co-principal of the second violins, while simultaneously respecting the desired tempo of the conductor. In the professional orchestras those disturbances will be fixed already in another bar (bar 4) which, as Christopher Adey observes, "...must become the point of collection."¹³

My method of reaching these conclusions was very difficult, because it needed to be learned through the repetition. The first time I played this symphony as the principal second violin, I was not experienced in this position and was unprepared for challenges with something so simple as repetitive eighth notes. The conductor restarted the piece many times in an attempt to force my section to play it together and in the tempo he wanted. Initially, I could easily follow the tempo he wanted, but the section as a whole was falling apart. I overcame this problem by understanding that I needed to have perfect tempo/rhythm and dynamic while I played, and also ensure that the section could hear and see how I was playing. In the practice room I would play the beginning of the piece with the metronome and then without, using my "inner metronome". I needed to be sure that the beginning of every eighth note could be heard while being played in piano dynamics. During rehearsals, when I was confident in my playing and the tempo that I wanted, the other musicians felt more secure and started to follow and listen to me more attentively.

¹³ Adey, *Orchestral Performance*, 502.

While thinking about the tempo, great care regarding dynamics needs to be present, and the second violin principal needs to “extract” that awareness from his section. After the chords in *forte* (Bar 1-2), the second violin section must begin softly enough so the theme in the cello (bar 3) can be heard, but it must also set the tempo, and keep it, even if the first violins are unclear in their syncopes (bar 7). So, the second violin principal must relate to the conductor (pick up the tempo), must have clarity even when playing piano in order to show the tempo, and must be able to maintain that tempo even if other parts disturb the flow.

Choosing/determining the tempo is as much an individual problem as it is a problem for the whole section. In the practice room you can practice in the tempo bpm = 60, but the conductor can begin slower or faster than that and that’s something the whole orchestra should be aware. Now, at the end of my master, I personally always try to maintain eye contact with the conductor and look at the baton and be on the beat with his moves. I try to play the eighth notes clearly and exude enough confidence so both the section and conductor can perceive it. If I am not precise and assured/assertive in what I am playing, the section starts to lack confidence, and the conductor loses trust that the section can perform well because the principal is the reflection of the whole section. If the problem begins to manifest itself in the other sections, like insecure syncopes in the first violins, the best solution can be to try to focus attention solely on the conductor and the other stable sections.

In the beginning, it was difficult to force myself to ignore disturbances. Over time, it became easier to stop to ignore disturbances and just follow the conductor in order to keep the tempo until the problem is resolved. In this way, the problem is resolved faster. These kinds of difficulties can arise in many different pieces. The other good example of a similar problem for the second violin section is Mozart’s violin concerto No.5 (Ex. 6).

Example 6.1: W. A. Mozart, Violin Concerto No.5, K.219, I movement, publisher: Kassel, Bärenreiter-Verlag, (Leipzig, 1983), p.6

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The image shows a musical score for the second violin part of Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 5, K. 219, I movement. The score is in G major and 2/4 time. It features a first violin part with a trill and a solo line, and a second violin part with repeating sixteenth notes. Dynamics include forte (f) and piano (p).

Example 6.2: W. A. Mozart, Violin Concerto No.5, K.219, I movement, publisher: Kassel, Bärenreiter-Verlag, (Leipzig, 1983), p.6

The second violins in this example (example 6) are the section with the repeating sixteenth notes in their part, and as such, they are the ones setting the tempo of the *Allegro aperto*. Again, the second violins need to follow the tempo of the conductor and the soloist, and have clarity in their performance, especially when they start to play *piano* (in the middle of the bar 46). The most important function here is to maintain the tempo and simultaneously be flexible to make it faster or slower depending on the conductor's and soloist's preferences.

One of the many skills that the second violin principal needs to excel at, as it was already stated, is a perfect control of rhythm and tempo. Yet, that control can vary from case to case, coming from different sources and styles of playing and can therefore be even more challenging to achieve. For example, as Christopher Adey observes, for the strings, "although the left hand is of prime importance in providing clarity and definition of rhythm, it is the bow arm from which much of the control of movement comes."¹⁴ In Beethoven's *Eroica*, the tempo of the first movement depends a lot on the harmony, underlying structure and constant rhythmic impulse placed in the second violin's part. Even in this quite rigid equality of the pulse, a good second violin principal needs to be able to make subtle movements within the phrase. In fact, this can be seen in bars 45-55 where the second violins, along with the violas as support, accompany the wind players and first violin melodic solos (Example 7).

¹⁴ Adey, *Orchestral Performance*, 504.

The image shows a page of a musical score for Beethoven's Symphony No. 3, I movement, pages 4-5. The score is for a full orchestra and includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Fg.), Cor Anglais (Cor. (Es)), Trumpet (Tr. (Es)), Violin I (Vl.), Violin II (Vla.), Viola (Vc.), and Cello (Cb.). The score shows a complex texture with various dynamics such as *sf*, *ff*, *p*, and *sfz*. There are also performance markings like "zu 2", "zu 3", "1. b.", and "1.2.". The score is written in a major key with a 3/4 time signature.

Example 7.2: Beethoven, Symphony No.3, I movement, p.4-5

While the dynamic mark is *piano* all throughout, some variations in dynamic and in control of the sound should be made to help solo instruments to achieve high virtuosity and freedom while holding the tempo. The second violin principal should communicate his musical ideas to the section in order to achieve good depth of sound within the section. Intimate knowledge of which instruments are playing the melody and at which time is obligatory in this case. The conductor may want to “move” the musical phrase, speeding it up a notch, and it’s the second violin principal’s job to make this happen by playing in the desired style and showing it to the sections. Techniques that the second violin principal will use to achieve some musical effects are varied and countless.

When I was playing in this position for the first time, I knew my part very well, but I was not aware of what the other instruments had to play. Furthermore, when I finally started to listen to the instruments around me, I couldn’t distinguish the rhythm and tempo of the other instruments, and I was also unsure whether I was playing correctly. If the section of the second violins was trying to strictly stay in the tempo, things did not feel or sound right. I realised, after few tries, that I need to check the full score. I understood then that the wind players, with the first violins, have the imitation sequence, and that if even one section makes some kind of mistake or wants to prolong something, I need to be aware of it and deal with it immediately on the spot – slowing the tempo a notch or speeding it up. After those insights, I was able to play and fit the section of the second violins into the orchestra better than before, but still there was some disintegration in the section that I was able

to fix with the visual components that I am going to address in the next chapter– my body language was “showing the way”.

3.3. Articulation - musical standpoint

The ability to use articulation like a tool to achieve a musical finesse, and not only in bowing techniques, is one of the specific techniques that the second violin principal, in my opinion, should possess. Otherwise, the principal will have even more difficulties to show his musical intentions to the section of the second violins. The moments where articulation is in close relation to the musical finesses can be seen in various examples.

Changing between legato and staccato technique of the bowing can sometimes produce some tempo/rhythm disturbances, and players need to be precise while they play, but at the same time very flexible because of the theme in other sections. In the beginning of Eroica, where bar no.9 starts with legato and bar no. 15 returns to staccato, this needs to be done with a great care (Ex. 8).



Example 8: Beethoven, Symphony No.8, I movement, p.1

The precision of this legato change is also important because of the sound it will produce. “Precision in the movement of a legato phrase is essential, for only when the turn of the bows is exactly synchronized will the conductor have any control over the sound at the moment of turning.”¹⁵ In addition to this, the second violins with the smallest rhythmical values in legato (bar 9-14, eight notes) are in charge of keeping the tempo, and this task in legato is even more difficult for the section because the players need to cross strings at the same time.

While playing this passage (example 8), in the beginning I had never felt like my sound, or the sound of the section of the second violins, belonged to the overall sound of the orchestra. To fix that problem, I tried to be even more exact in the tempo, listen to only one section at a time or try to produce the same sound quality and musical expressions as the colleague sitting next to me. To my surprise, only trying to be completely in sync with the co-principal of the second violin was helping me feel like we were improving. Because we were focussed on making our articulation exactly the same, we were matching the sound and everything else too. Now, I could make a small change in the speed or the amount of the bow I used when it was necessary. His attention was more focused on me and he was following the things I was doing. I tried to implement this on the rest of our section and the precision increased and the sound got better.

¹⁵ Adey, *Orchestral Performance*, 183.

Places like bar no. 19 and bar no. 20 (Ex. 9) need to be executed with a special care because of the subtle melodic importance.

The image displays two systems of a musical score for an orchestra. The first system starts at bar 10 and includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Cor (E♭), Violin (Vl.), Viola (Vla.), and Cello/Bass (Vc.). The second system starts at bar 20 and includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Fg.), Cor (E♭), Violin (Vl.), Viola (Vla.), and Cello/Bass (Vc. e Cb.). The score features various dynamics such as *sf*, *p*, and *cresc.*, along with articulation marks like accents and slurs. The key signature is three flats (B-flat major or D-flat minor).

Example 9: Beethoven, Symphony No.3, I movement, p.2

While everybody else has rests, the second violin principal needs to “move” his and the viola sections to play with more emphasis in these bars even though it’s still only moving in eighth notes. These bars contain latent melody movement (b-des-c; c-des-e) which can be easily neglected if the second violin principal does not react on time and give to these eighth notes an additional meaning. Usually, it will come naturally, but sometimes the conductor is the one who shows if he wants to hear something more exposed. I am very aware of conductor’s hands and his face while the orchestra is playing, because there I can see some additional messages and signals about how I can use my articulation to express the music even more. If a place like this bar (bar 18) shows up, the

conductor sometimes points in the direction of the second violins and raises his hand. For me, that started to be the sign that conductors want those places to be a bit more present. Now, even if the conductor does not specifically ask for it, I try to mark those kinds of passages.

3.4. Supporting vs. Leading

How fast the change from the supporting to the leading role can be, and how quick the second violin principal should be in his decisions, can be shown in bars 30-36 (Ex. 10).

The image displays a page of a musical score for Beethoven's Symphony No. 3, first movement, pages 30-36. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with staves for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Fg.), Cor Anglais (Cor. (Es)), Violin I (Vl.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello and Double Bass (Vc. e Cb.), and Basses (Bassi). The music is marked with *sf* (sforzato) and *cresc.* (crescendo). A 'zu 2' marking appears above the Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, and Bassoon staves in bar 35, indicating a ritardando. The second violin part (Vl.) shows a transition from long, syncopated notes to sixteenth notes starting in bar 35.

Example 10: Beethoven, Symphony No.3, I movement, p.3

In this situation one can see the *sforzato* chords which should be played in the style of the concertmaster's choosing while keeping tempo and a direction of the melody, and the movement in the sixteenth notes. Playing like a second violin principal usually means that you are not expected to lead the whole orchestra. When somebody is inexperienced in the position of the second violin principal, the places in which the principal needs to do exactly that – lead the whole orchestra – can come like a surprise. These sudden leading moments I was figuring out during the rehearsals, or in the practice room while practicing with a full score. The practicing needs to be from the score, because you cannot see the places like the bar no.35 (example 10) in the second violin score, and you cannot realize how fast the second violin principal should react. Bar no.35 brings a transition from a supporting to a leading role because of the sixteenth notes which suddenly emerge after the long and syncopated notes. The second violin principal, along with the leader of viola section, begins the melodic sequence which leads to another presentation of the thematic material in the

winds and celli. The change from supporting to the leading role should be fast because of the rapid changes and music development in the score.

To learn how to become faster in this change from supporting into the leading role, one should work in the practice room. When I practice for a new project where I am a principal, I try to learn my part very well, and then try to play that piece along with some recordings of the famous orchestras around the world. Like this I notice the places where I am not completely synchronised with the recording and try to memorise those places like a possible problem for the rest of the section while simultaneously trying to fix the problem. Also, I notice faster the places where the second violin section is important, because I am not stressed like during a real rehearsal. Repetition is one way to success, so the practice before the rehearsals start is the time when the principal should try and test his knowledge of the program that will be played and the speed of dealing with the particular moments like changing from the supporting to leading role in the example 10.

The decisions that the principal second violin makes while playing should be, in my opinion and experience, very fast. This became apparent when I wasn't quite sure how to do something and was therefore slow in the making of decisions. This resulted in the section not knowing what to do, and complete confusion for the rest of the orchestra. My ability to make quick decisions came from my self-confidence in my performance at rehearsals, my experience, and from the security that I had learned the score well enough to be relaxed while I play.

In order to learn where the second violin principal should start to lead the whole orchestra (like in bar no. 35, example 10), one should always consult the more experienced musicians (professors, colleagues) and actively listen to what the conductors say. In my experience, the advice and tips that the conductors offer to other sections during the rehearsals usually apply also to the second violins somewhere else in the score. Therefore, active listening during the rehearsals, and researching the music being played, always had a positive impact on my playing as a second violin principal and on my ability to identify the important places in the scores.

A long and detailed commentary can and should be offered regarding even just one bar of music. For example, the principal should also play his part (example 10) in a way that he/she is not pushing the tempo from bar no. 35. I have committed this error in the past. If one is nervous in the first rehearsals, and there is a pressure from the position where you are sitting, sometimes a rushed feeling will appear. The places which are important have a tendency to also become rushed. I was trying to correct this by trying to control the situation more. A few bars before the important place (bar no. 35), I was trying to prepare myself to play that passage, to be already focussed on that bar and to visualize how would I play it. I was calming my breathing and the movement of my body, because that place would require additional body movements. Additionally, thinking about trying to slow down and to "feel" every sixteenth note in the beginning is helpful to get the control of the tempo. In my opinion, the stable tempo comes from thorough preparation and security in the music being played and calmness while playing it.

In bar no. 35 the second violin principal should start with a dynamic which will allow the first violins to make a gradual entrance and easily develop a crescendo, and to make a big impact on the second violin's section to play this scale down with an additional brilliance. This additional importance needs to be emphasised because the second violin section is the lower boundary of the

orchestra's tonal register in this bar (bars 35-36), whereas the rest of the orchestra is melodically going up and the second violins are going down. I came to learn these things during rehearsals and while studying the scores. For example, I learned that my *forte*, or the *forte* of my section is not the same as the *forte* of the orchestra. The orchestra's *forte* will be made from the *mezzo forte* of the other sections playing at the same time. In this case (example 10), the crescendo will start from the second violins, and thus should start from at least *mezzo piano* dynamic. In this way, the orchestra's dynamics will have space to grow more up until the *forte*. If the second violin section starts in the *forte* dynamics, the orchestra will not have space to make the crescendo. Therefore, the principal of the second violins should, from the dynamic aspect, lead the whole orchestra. The principal can acquire these insights also with the experience and instinct to feel and hear which level of dynamics should be used.

In all of the examples presented so far, one can see the subtle and fast decisions which the second violin principal needs to make, sometimes in a split second, between supporting, leader role and the latent, "silent" co-leadership. With these decisions of the principal, the entire second violin section helps the orchestra to achieve the artistic depths of the music. They are expressing the little melodic movements as the keys of better understanding of a piece. In view of this, one can easily understand the expression: "Beauty lies in the details.". However, achieving better musical expressions and depths in the section will sometimes depend, to a great extent, upon non-musical aspects, which will be further explained in the next chapter.

4. BODY LANGUAGE

Body language of the leading players in the orchestra, from my experience, seems to serve mostly to transmit the content and intention of the music they are currently playing to the other players around them. Now, at the end of my master program, and after a lot of tests, attempts and different ways of playing, I realize that every attitude and movement of the second violin principal, elicits a response, however minor, from somewhere in the second violin section and from other players in the orchestra.

While trying to consciously plan my own body language, and understand its purpose, I noticed that similar techniques of visual communication to those that the conductors use to affect the musicians' playing can also be used in the second violin principal's approach to the section of the second violins. The subconscious translation into the sound is a well-known aspect of the corporal response. I concluded that a good second violin principal should also have the ability to project his musical thoughts through the movements of his body and achieve an equal strength of communication with the entire orchestra. Sometimes, while I was testing how my movements affect my section, I was corrupting my sound, and that was something that I didn't want to allow to happen. My opinion is that while trying to use body language to affect music, the second violin principal should be aware that, even though communication is important, production, control and shaping of the sound is the crucial thing that can never be put on the side.

My experience has taught me so far that the intentions of what should be done and what is happening in each moment while playing, have to be understood by everyone in the orchestra. At rehearsals I observed that the conductors usually try to address their remarks and direction of the music to the leaders in the orchestra. After that, the leaders will try to translate those intentions into sound in cooperation with each other, and the second violin principal's job will be to project those intentions to his own section. This process will happen repeatedly throughout the piece and it needs to be done without any miscommunication. If one bears in mind that this kind of communication between the groups of people in orchestra is happening virtually instantaneously, and silently and without words, it will not be difficult to comprehend the importance of the body language of the second violin principal.

Body language, in my opinion, can be observed and therefore divided into a few categories which are: body posture and breathing of the principal, body movements with the movements of the arms, eye contact with other people in the orchestra and facial expressions.

4.1. Body Posture and Breathing

Body posture and changing of the body posture during the playing of the principal of the second violins, help to shift all the other players' attention, to a greater or lesser degree, from their own individual lines towards the wider appreciation of the whole. The second violin principal's body posture needs to emit confidence and security from the first rehearsal till the end of the concert. At the first rehearsals the second violin principal needs to show the self-esteem, that he/she is fully

capable of playing through the program with ease, and that he/she is aware of what is happening in the pieces and not getting surprised by anything. In that way, the second violin section will, without any word said, be more secure in the material that they need to play.

I found out that my posture is important when the players sitting next to me started to tell me that they feel very comfortable with sitting next to me because I was emitting confidence, and that they felt more relaxed in their playing and more confident. I realised that if I can spread my confidence and awareness to the rest of my section as much as to the players that I was surrounded with, I would finish with a section which feels more relaxed and secure in their playing. I started to play at the rehearsals with even more confidence and I was getting that feeling from the fact that I was certain about how to play. Also, I was trying to maintain the same behaviours and procedures on every rehearsal. Now, after a lot of experience, my opinion is that the players are starting to react to my body posture and its changes not on the first rehearsal, probably because of the problems they have as individuals while playing. The second stand of the second violins will usually notice everything almost immediately, but other stands will need time (maybe on the second or the third rehearsal), so it is important for the principal to keep his intentions (of when and how to change the posture during the piece especially) unchanged through all the rehearsals, and in that way keep the stability of the group. That being said, if the second violin principal decides, for example, to show some entrances and beginnings in some specific way and time at the rehearsals, those entrances should be given in the same way also on the concert.

The phrase ‘breathe’ is a vital aspect of all ensemble playing. Since I was a little, every professor told me that with proper breathing comes the proper music phrase. I found out that if it’s used thoughtfully, breathing can be a very helpful tool for the principal to achieve an intended melody line or a musical expression. In a combination with the right moves, it can inspire the whole section to work “as one”. As long as it’s not disturbing the other players or the sound produced, it can help the section to phrase better and to be more involved in the music they are currently playing. I found breathing to be most useful in the slower melodies with a *piano* dynamic where the section of the second violins is playing alone or leading the melody, as in the following example (example 11).

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff is numbered 286 and the bottom staff is numbered 295. The music is in a key with two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a common time signature. The top staff features a melody with slurs and dynamic markings: *p* at the start, *sfp* at bar 288, and *sfp* at bars 292 and 294. There are asterisks above bars 288 and 292. The bottom staff has a *cresc.* marking at the beginning and a *p* marking at bar 295.

Example 11: Beethoven, Symphony No.3, I movement, p. 12, bar 286-295

The breathing should be instinctive and natural, but some guidelines can be found in the written slurs. In the example, I marked the place, where I would take the short breath, in the beginning of the melody (bar 288) and right before the beginning of the repeating phrase (bar 292). This usually helps the section to start and play the phrase in the same manner and at the same time.

During the rehearsals or even on the performances, I noticed that the energy and motivation of the orchestra can sometimes drop and be very low, or the opposite, be too much high. I have found

that it's the second violin principal's job to be able to feel when the section of the second violins needs to get more motivated. On the other hand, the principal should sometimes try to keep the motivation and the energy of his/her section in level not too high, so it will not disturb the quality of playing. A drop in energy usually occurred after a long break of the section during some pieces, when there are more than twenty bars of break, as well if the section was playing similar notes or rhythm, long notes, pizzicato or tremolo during a long period of time and repeatedly. A decrease in energy can lead to the sound being too dull and uninteresting, and if the section is accompanying somebody, it can affect the melody line significantly. When I notice a drop in energy/motivation these days, I deal with it in the way that I found to produce the most positive response from my section. I always try, with my body language, to be more animated than usual and to try to push the section to "wake up" as well. Music material can sometimes look boring and not inspirational for the section, but it's the principal's job to find a beauty in it and show it to them.

Body posture is also very important if there is a long break. I found this approach useful; While counting bars, the second violin principal should be a bit relaxed, but he should straight up his body around the four bars before the start, put his violin up around 2 bars before, and be fully prepared to play approximately one bar or two-three beats before. Reason for this is that it will help the section to prepare on time too, because they will do the same preparations, but a bit delayed. The principal's preparation needs to start sooner so the section will see that preparation and prepare too, stand by stand. In my experience, this kind of preparation should always be uniform at the rehearsal, because if the principal changes his entrance time too much, that will bring insecurity to the section. Knowing this, my opinion is that when the principal chooses the timing for starting of the preparations, he/she should always continue to do it at the other rehearsals and performances in the same way.

Under other conditions, the energy of the orchestra can be raised too high. These fluctuations, especially when the energy is raised, are very common in young orchestras, and as the principal I needed to deal with it all the time. If the section has a melody or some interesting passage to play, usually in *forte/fortissimo* dynamics, there was also a disturbance considering quality of the sound, or rushing forward or slowing down. In those moments I found it helpful to try to calm down the section by showing tranquility in the way of playing that passage. I was trying to show that my body posture emits some kind of ease in approach to the melody, and if it is necessary, show the intended tempo with the aid of the movements of the body.

4.2. Body movements

For me, dance and music were always the two inseparable art forms. Even as a child, I was always trying to deepen the expression of the music I was playing with the movements of my body. When I started to play in orchestras, my body movements started to be a plus when I was leading something, but confusing for other people when I didn't have an important role. I realized that I need to "fine tune" my movements, they needed to be appropriate depending on which position I was playing. For example, I was trying to be very calm when I was playing on the second or a third stand. That resulted in me realizing that people felt much easier playing with me, and even more

important that my sound is sometimes better when I am calm. My focus was more on the sound I was producing and my bow arm was calmer. Then I tried to find a golden middle – to keep the free movements, but to do them only when necessary, and to be careful that they don't disturb my sound. That fine tuning of the movements became even more important when I started to lead the second violins. Now, at the end of my master, my movements are starting to be executed instinctively, and are not something I am actively thinking about. But to arrive at that stage, I followed the rules that come from the search for the best solutions.

As I have said, I've always claimed and thought that the movements of the player should be natural and come "from the music". This is something that, in my opinion, should be especially true and important for the second violin principal. My experience taught me that every exaggerated movement can inadequately disrupt the produced sound and therefore it needs to be performed in an easy and non-elusive way. Additionally, when I was moving more, I realised that the section was playing louder and, conversely, when I was calmer- they were quieter. I tried to use that in my advantage, and that resulted in me starting to change my movements in order to achieve some dynamics in the section of the second violins. Learning all of this, the one of the ways in which I am now using my upper body movements is when I am trying to get a better legato and the singing sound of the section, and the right dynamics. The amount of the movement is always connected to the dynamic of a particular phrase; if the dynamics were in *forte* spectre, the movements will be wider (example 12)¹⁶ and in *piano* more controlled and lighter (example 13).¹⁷



Example 12: Beethoven, Symphony No.3, IV movement, p. 12, bar 101-109



Example 13: Beethoven, Symphony No.3, IV movement, p. 13, bar 268-275

Some specific movements of the upper body I observed while watching other principals of the second violins play in orchestras. For example, I found it interesting that while playing passages in *piano*, especially when that *piano* comes *subito* in the part, the approach of using upper body moves will be different from person to person. If the second violin principal hears that his/her section is not

¹⁶ Recording 1

¹⁷ Recording 2

playing the *piano* on the right “level” – usually louder than it should be – he/she will try to show the section how to correct that. One approach would be, while playing, to place his body little lower than normally and thereby give a sign to the section to lower the level of the produced sound (example 14).¹⁸



Example 14: Beethoven, Symphony No.3, IV movement, p. 12, bar 70-77

Some leaders, while dealing with the same problem, will try to straighten up the body as much as they can and lean back closer to their section so they can better hear the dynamics that should be achieved (example 14)¹⁹. I was trying to use both approaches, and they turned out to be useful in communicating with the section, because the section started to react better to the written dynamics. Both approaches are useful and effective and they will help solving the problem. It’s just a matter of preference how the second violin principal chooses to deal with the situation. Some similar movements can be observed while dealing with a too loud dynamic.

Movements of the arms, in cooperation with body movements, can have the most varied meanings while playing. In my opinion, left arm movements are usually in charge of giving signs of entrances and tempo intentions, while right arm movements are reserved for showing the intention of the desired sound and dynamics. As said before, these movements should be natural, but also noticeable for the section.

While playing as the principal in various orchestras, I learned that my arm movements should be very precise. My experience is that, depending upon the character of the piece and the tempo, the movement of the left arm should be fast and vigorous or slower and softer. The goal is to make sure that the movements are noticed not only by the section of the second violins, but also the other sections. Additionally, if the movements being made are slow, and the tempo is fast, this usually will lead to late entrances or commotion in the section. On the other hand, if the movements are fast, and the tempo is slow, it can lead to the entrances being played too fast by the whole section, or to a harsh sound. The movement of the left arm should be even more pronounced in the beginning of the movements and in the beginning of the larger sections, especially if there was a bigger break before them. The beginning of the fourth movement of Beethoven’s Eroica is quite fast and virtuoso written, so the second violin principal’s sign for the beginning should be quite pronounced and precise to avoid malfunction of his/her section (example 15).²⁰

¹⁸ Recording 3

¹⁹ Recording 4

²⁰ Recording 5

1~

FINALE
Allegro molto (♩ = 76)

Violine II

Example 15: Beethoven, Symphony No.3, IV movement, p. 12, bar 1-11

Additionally, as one can perceive in the recording (recording 5), I am always trying to give strict signs for the chords (bar 8-11), and even mark the endings of the long notes being played (bar 11), so I can be sure that the section will see that and try to play in a similar manner. I came to learn and use these movements after a lot of trying in the practice room, and then testing how it works during rehearsals. I was trying to record myself to see what the other musicians see, and if it's clear enough. While practicing the piece, I was also deciding which movements and signs I will use and then repeated them. Even though I was alone in the room, I was constantly trying to make the same movements which I will use during the rehearsals to communicate with the section. Repetition and practice only made those movements better and more secure. I used the same principle of learning to decide most of the other movements, and the most efficient of them I recorded and explained.

Smaller movements of the arms, in collaboration with the rest of the body, should be made if there are some pauses that separate the notes and, in that way, making the rhythm and tempo (example 16).²¹ These movements will allow the section to be better prepared for the beginnings of the notes and be more together as a group. The dancing motion which is thus produced, will also sometimes help in the building of the music's character.

Example 16: Beethoven, Symphony No.3, IV movement, p. 13, bar 177-184

Movements of the right arm are closely connected to the bowing technique. What I have learned so far is that the second violin principal should always try to slightly exaggerate the movements of the right hand just to be sure that the section can see what the principal wants them to do. For example, if I want for my section to play wide bow strokes, I will try to make my strokes as wide as they can be. And *vice versa*, if I want slow and subtle usage of the bow, I will try to make my bow hand look like it's not even moving. These movements sometimes need to be so exaggerated and obvious for the section to see, that it borders on the edge of tasteful playing. Here

²¹ Recording 6

we come into the domain of, as I like to call it, “fake” playing. These tactics I have observed in the playing of various principals of second violins, and then I implemented them in my playing. I learned it and observe it while I was playing in their section, on the back stands, and because of that it’s my opinion that they work - they were able to show and communicate this through their body movements.

As said before, sometimes too wide usage of the bow can lead to disruption of the produced sound quality, but sometimes the second violin principal anyway needs to show what the section should do. In my experience, this usually happened if the section was not prepared enough for the rehearsals. The principal would start to play wider bow strokes, but almost with no change in the volume or the quality of the sound while expecting the section to actually make a change and raise the volume. The principal will look like he/she is giving a lot more sound, but the dynamic will stay the same.

On the other hand, in the passages in *piano*, if the second violin principal notices that the section needs to lower their dynamic, he/she will use the different tactic. If the passage is in *piano*, but with the wider strokes, the second violin principal will keep the wide strokes, but lower the dynamic completely, and expect from his/her section to hear this dynamic drop and follow suit. In addition to that, if the passage in *piano* is played with a subtle usage of the bow, the principal will try to not produce the sound even though his/her hand is moving, or he will shorten the bow strokes so much that his/her hand will look like it’s not even moving (typical for the tremolo passages in *pianissimo* dynamics). This technique of faking has its supporters and opponents, and it’s just a matter of the preference of the second violin principal and one’s ability to achieve the desired results.

There is a compelling reason why this difference in the sound level between the second violin principal and the second violin section is so crucial and Christopher Adey has a convenient explanation for it, seen through the eyes of the conductor. “Faced with a small section, the temptation to get the one or two stronger players at the front to power the sound through is sometimes very strong, but it will not carry, and the conductor, placed centrally, among them, will only hear an illusion of strength that is not apparent from any other position.”²²

It is my belief that the importance of the body and arms movements can be seen best in the production of the musical sound that does not require usage of the bow- *pizzicato*. In music circles, there is an expression that one can distinguish a good orchestra from an average one just by looking at how they play *pizzicato* sections and discerning whether they are synchronized while doing so. I think this is because string musicians do not assign that much importance to learning how to play *pizzicato* and also, because the principals do not address this problem seriously enough. The principal’s role is of the great importance in these cases because I think that he/she should choose the way of playing *pizzicato* and then encourage the section to play in the same manner. Movements of the right arm, especially the hand, should be very precise and anticipate the moment of impact. With a support of the left arm and the body, the precision will be even greater (example 17).²³

²² Adey, *Orchestral Performance*, 487.

²³ Recording 7

4.4. Body reactivity

It is my belief that reacting to the differences at the rehearsals and also the performance is probably the most instinctive area of the second violin principal's position that comes from experience and talent.

“For the performer, the projection of the scope²⁴ cannot always be accomplished within a totally predetermined span. This is especially true of orchestral music due to the large number of individual performers involved. Many new and changing circumstances will influence every musical performance, and some allowance for these will have to be made at the time.”²⁵

As one can see, the conductor will be the first to notice these disturbances and start to deal with them, but the second violin principal's process of reacting will be a bit different. For finding an example for this kind of situation one can again turn to observing Beethoven's 3rd symphony, *Eroica*. A typical place for these disturbances can be seen in the fourth movement of this symphony (example 18): after very vigorous and *marcato* passage there is a melody in the first violins (bar 258) that should be played in a very light and *legato* style, almost with a slower tempo (that will be the conductor's choice).

²⁴ “The scope of a work or a movement may be considered both in architectural and aural terms. In a perfect structure, scope will be apparent from the outset.”, Adey, *Orchestral Performance*, 763.

²⁵ Adey, *Orchestral Performance*, 765.

Example 18.1: Beethoven, Symphony No.3, IV movement, p.20

Example 18.2: Beethoven, Symphony No.3, IV movement, p.21

The duty of the second violin principal and the second violin section will be to realize which tempo the conductor intended to have and to try to realize it through rhythmical eighth notes that set the tempo of that section (bar 258-265). During those few seconds of music a lot of things will happen; if in the first bar (bar 258) the conductor realizes that the tempo of the orchestra is not right, he will try to establish eye contact with the second violin principal. With facial expression, the second violin principal will convince the conductor that “he/she received the message” and he/she will try with eye contact to communicate with the concertmaster about his/her intentions to speed or slow down the tempo. Simultaneously with some body movements, the second violin principal will show his/her section and the violas the appropriate tempo for this section of the fourth movement. Everything needs to happen fast because after eight bars the second violins need to “imitate” the theme again one octave lower (bar 266). The theme should be placed in the right tempo with first violins accompany it in sixteenth notes.

The second violin principal needs to be sufficiently familiar with the printed page to be able to concentrate on everything happening around him, rather than the individual sound; he/she needs to be able to perform some sections as a whole, even by heart, and not be constrained by having to find the notes in the part.

Moments like the ones explained above can happen any time during rehearsals and also on the night on the performance. If it happens during the rehearsal, the second violin principal needs to remember that passage and try to repeat it every time with the same body language procedure that he/she was using the first time. He/she will then gain some kind of stability of that section of music in the performance, and everybody around him/her will have more freedom to be occupied with more important things, like the projection and color of the sound, vibrato, etc.

As a listener one cannot very easily notice and observe these details happening on the stage or know about the things that were happening in the rehearsals, but the true orchestra-lover will know that orchestral music is not only about music art itself, it's also the fragile and alluring art of communication.

5. INTERACTION WITH OTHERS

Till now, I was describing abilities that, in my opinion, the second violin principal should possess in order to be a good player, and the techniques that I have learned while studying. However, becoming the second violin principal does not depend only on that person being able to play the second violin part. During my studies, I learned that in order to be a good principal, it is maybe even more important to be able to musically and socially interact and communicate with other people in the orchestra.

“We spend years striving to be the best we can on our instrument and, of course, this is essential to have any chance of success as a musician. Interestingly though, I consider the greatest challenges I have faced in my 25 years of being a section leader as having come from issues in effective communication and people skills. A section leader is responsible for a team and when that team is dysfunctional the result is going to be considerably less than what it could be.”²⁶

Kees Boersma,
Sydney Symphony Orchestra
Co-Principal Double bass

These kinds of interactions are often neglected while still in school, and they are usually learned when the person already starts to play in an orchestra. I find it interesting that some persons have the talent of being aware of the interactions in an orchestra immediately after the first rehearsal. However, in my opinion, this awareness often comes from experience and a constant willingness to improve the performance and better blend the sound in the orchestra. The importance of the second violin principal being able to be exceptionally good in both social and musical interactions with the section and the rest of the orchestra is self-explanatory. Instead of explaining it, I will present the principles of the mechanisms used in the interaction in the orchestra that I observed and learned, and which helped me to become a better orchestral musician.

5.1. Musical interactions

“At music college no one prepared me for the profound aural awareness that is required within an orchestra. I am talking about the art of listening to other players so intently that you adapt to them and become part of their playing; about possessing the ability to get inside their vibrato and intonation; about blending subtly into their instrumental colours, using identical articulation, and matching phrasing and note-lengths.”²⁷

Richard Davis
BBC Philharmonic
Principal Flute

²⁶ “*The Strad* (2017). How to be an effective orchestral section leader”, accessed December 28, 2017, from <https://www.thestrاد.com/how-to-be-an-effective-orchestral-section-leader/2892.article>

²⁷ Richard Davis, *Becoming an Orchestral Musician* (London: Giles de la Mare Publishers Limited 2004), 85.

Richard Davis, in his book “Becoming an Orchestral Musician”, dedicated a whole chapter to the necessary requirements for playing in ensembles.²⁸ Reading it, I deduced that everything that he considers to be a good set of abilities that one orchestral musician should have, I can put in one group - musical interactions with others. In this group one can find the skills to blend sound in different orchestras, to know when a person should lead or follow, even produce vibrato similar to the other colleagues in the orchestra. There are some skills that require a very subtle understanding of the orchestra; a level of communication with a group that sometimes even the experienced players can not immediately perfectly achieve, the ability to observe and use the same note-endings as the rest of the orchestra, the same articulation, rhythm, rubato and dynamics. These abilities are something that will make the difference whether the principal, or any other player, is a right fit for the orchestra or he/she will not be offered the position after the trial period.

This subtle musical interaction I love to compare with learning a new language. To speak a new language is like playing an instrument. Music is, after all, like Henry Wadsworth Longfellow said, “the universal language of the mankind”.²⁹ Getting an opportunity to play in a professional orchestra is like going to speak a foreign language in the country of its origin; the “goal” is that other people should not notice that you are “the foreigner”. That can be achieved only by copying, to the minutest detail, accentuation in the speech, the speed of it, and phrases that should be used in particular moments. In music, this is achieved through musical interaction and communication. If one aspires, like myself, to one day become a second violin principal, it goes without saying - the big picture consists of the small details!

5.2. Social interactions

“...you also have to get to know the person sitting next to you personally. That is when an orchestra becomes an orchestra and not just ninety individuals.”³⁰

Patrick Addinall
BCC Philharmonic
Principal Trumpet

One of the first social interactions with the orchestra members will be through one’s CV on audition day. “Just like the very first note you play, the first sentence of your resume must grab the panel’s attention.”³¹ For musicians, such as myself, it is usually quite difficult to distinguish which information should be put into the CV. Reading the “Becoming an Orchestral Musician” by Richard

²⁸Davis, *Becoming an Orchestral Musician*, 85.

²⁹ “Henry Wadsworth Longfellow”. In *Wikiquote*. Accessed December 28, 2017, from https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Henry_Wadsworth_Longfellow

³⁰ Davis, *Becoming an Orchestral Musician*, 95.

³¹ *Ibid*, 56.

Davis, helped me to have some guidelines as to what the orchestra's members find important to see/not see in the CV.³² This can be summarized in few main points:

- The most important information should be at the beginning.
- Information about which instrument you play should be at the top of the form.
- There is some irrelevant information that should not be added when applying for an orchestra position.

I've learned that the second important interaction will be during the audition interview, and there you need to be able to present your natural personality but be aware that the "golden middle" is always the most appreciated.

Finally, the most important social interactions will occur when the second violin principal starts to work in the orchestra. The main point will be the communication with the section of the second violins, and also how he treats and communicates with non-musicians that work in the orchestra, as well as other colleagues will be of crucial importance. I always thought that the section should approve and respect the principal personally as well as musically. Usually, I read or hear that also from other musicians; "In an office, you can close the door to get a moment to yourself. In an orchestra you are together as a unit, in the same room, all the time. Every player is interdependent, and it is crucial for the musical standard and for the smooth running of the orchestra that personalities don't clash."³³ Therefore, the personality of the second violin principal should be very well adjusted.

What my experience so far has taught me is that the communication should not be aggressive or passive-aggressive while dealing with the section, but rather assertive. In my own experience with leading the second violins, the "atmosphere" in the section was always better if before the beginning of the rehearsal I said hello to everyone in the section with a smile and tried to address possible problems with calmness. However, nobody can be in a positive mood all the time, and musicians always need to try to hide those moods and to leave their personal problems and disputes off the stage. As far as I can tell, the listeners should never become aware of any problems going on in the orchestra.

Besides the concertmaster, as I see it, the persons with whom the second violin principal should have the most pleasant interaction are the co-principal of the second violins and the other principals of the second's if there are any. "Some orchestras may have two principals for each of the sections, allowing the key players to share their hectic schedules between them."³⁴ The reasons why the principal of the second violins should have a warm relationship with these persons are, fairly obvious: the co-principal is the person who will sit next to you at every rehearsal and concert, and who will represent you to the section when you are busy dealing with something else. In the most bizarre occasions the co-principal will be the person who will save your own performance; if the

³² Davis, *Becoming an Orchestral Musician*, 58.

³³ *Ibid*, 212.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 186.

string on the principal's violin snaps in the middle of a performance, it is custom that the second violin principal will take the co-principal's violin and continue to play while the co-principal will deal with fixing the principal's violin. Sometimes it can happen that the other second violin principal will be your co-principal and *vice versa*, so the same applies to them. I find it very interesting that most of these things I learned only when I started to play in an orchestra, not before. In my opinion, the professors leave these "social" lessons to be taught by experience rather than from teaching.

Considering how the second violin principal should lead the group, I personally believe that the principal should have an authoritative rather than an authoritarian role in the orchestra. By that I mean that he should treat the musicians in his section equally, that he clearly knows and shows what he is expecting from each member individually, and that he is trying to tell them that clearly too, that he is supporting them and standing up for their rights...

While his personality and approach to his section need to show signs of leadership, in comparison to the concertmaster and the conductor, his role needs to be less assertive. The second violin principal needs to be able to accept and to understand the leadership hierarchy in the orchestra. In my earliest experiences with leading the second violins, after a few years of being the concertmaster in a different orchestra, I occasionally forgot that I should not lead the orchestra. Sometimes I was trying to be too influential, without realizing that this kind of behavior would not be well accepted in the orchestra. After a few remarks from the conductor, I realized that I needed to "calm down" my personality and approach, and to let the concertmaster do his job. I tried to keep my opinions to myself, and only express them when necessary or when improving the section of the second violins. After that, the mood in the orchestra got much better.

Last but not least, there are a lot of people who work in the orchestra but are not musicians. Depending on each person's role in the orchestra, the second violin principal should interact with them accordingly. Almost every larger or major orchestra will have a Stage Manager, Producer, General Manager and Orchestral Manager with their staff who will work hard to keep the orchestra going. Respecting their roles as much as any musician's role should have major importance. Most of the interactions with them should be clearly spoken, well organized and, on top of all, done in the friendly manner.

Finally, I would like to conclude this chapter with some general rules of social interactions in the orchestra which I find useful. I have become acquainted with these over the years, some of them I've learned from books, some came from experience, and all of them I use in my daily life as an orchestra musician now. Richard Davis is speaking about these rules as "survival tips" and denoting them as such emphasizes their importance in a very witty way.³⁵ The rules are:

- Arrive on time.
- Always try to be cheerful and gracious.
- Take a pencil to all rehearsals.
- Check that you have the music and your instrument with you.

³⁵ Davis, *Becoming an Orchestral Musician*, 217.

- Have your diary with you at all times.
- Don't look at someone's part when they are playing.
- Resist the temptation to turn around and look at a musician who is playing a solo.
- Only play other people's solos in the privacy of your home.
- Cut out additional, unnecessary movements while playing.
- Don't put too much cologne or perfume.
- Sometimes buy a coffee or a tea for your co-workers.

6. APPLYING FOR THE JOB OF THE SECOND VIOLIN PRINCIPAL

To even have an opportunity to play in the position of the second violin principal, one should be able to pass the audition for that position first. All theoretical knowledge and, to some extent, even the practical knowledge of how to be the principal will not help if the person does not pass that first step, the audition. When I first became interested in being an orchestra musician, I didn't know anything about how to get a job once I finish the master. Now, at the end of it, I am happy that I realized that I should learn something about that process because it's quite different from normal job interviews. Now, I feel able to go and search for jobs confidently and without fear of not knowing what the audition process will look like. At my master program in Sweden, I learned all that I should know about the audition process, but I regret that I didn't learn that even earlier. Anybody who aspires to become an orchestra musician, and especially, a second violin principal, should first learn about this process. Thorough familiarity with the process will shorten the time to achieve these ambitions.

In my opinion, the audition's paradox is that the audition process can help the orchestra find an exceptional player, but the orchestra will still not know if that person is a good leader. That ability will be clarified during the trial period of 3-6 months or 1 year in the orchestra. Nevertheless, being a gifted player is the quality for which all the orchestras are searching in the first place. Accordingly, applying and passing the audition is essential to that one person, looking to become a successful second violin principal.

These days, most orchestra vacancies are advertised on the internet. In my experience, the website that has the most information about job offers for violinists is:

- www.musicalchairs.info

All the auditions for the violinist's positions in the orchestras are quite similar to each other with few differences. Those differences generally concern different excerpts, but this is not always the case. Until now, I have participated in a couple of auditions, and done a lot of mock auditions at the University. From my experience, the audition will have two or three steps and this is the general order of events in all of them:

- The first step is ordinarily a classical concerto from W. A. Mozart's concertos No. 3, No. 4 and No.5. The first two concertos are sometimes considered "too easy" and less musically and technically advanced and are often not on the audition list. At the audition, the jury will ask to hear only the first movement and/or second movement of the concerto with their cadenzas. The pianist hired by the Orchestra will accompany the player and they will have a short rehearsal a few minutes before going on stage. This phase of the audition is usually behind the screen, so the jury will not be able to see the contestant, and thus maintain neutrality while evaluating and judging.
- The second step is playing the orchestral excerpts. The excerpts will be mostly from the symphonic repertoire if the position is for a symphonic orchestra, or from the opera repertoire if the position is for an opera orchestra. Additionally, the excerpts will be a

mixture of first and second violin parts, because the jury would like to hear knowledge of the repertoire. The orchestra members will try to include a variety of excerpts that will show a lot of different aspects of musicianship. The number of excerpts varies from orchestra to orchestra, but it will typically range from 9-15 excerpts. The audition for the second violin principal will have additional excerpts from the most famous solos for the second violin principal, and sometimes even solos for the concertmaster. Martin Wulforst, in his book “The Orchestral Violinist’s Companion” made a list (example 19) of the solos for the second violin principal, which I find very useful.³⁶

MUSIC PASSAGES FOR SECOND VIOLIN PRINCIPAL

<i>Composer</i>	<i>Work</i>
J. S. Bach	<i>Cantata</i> , BWV 51 <i>Christmas Oratorio</i> , BWV 248 <i>The Passion of St:</i> <i>John</i> , BWV 245 9 other movements from cantatas and oratorios
G. Bantock	<i>Fifine Fair</i>
B. Bartok	<i>Divertimento</i> , Sz. 113
L. van Beethoven	<i>Choral Fantasy</i> , Op. 80
A. Berg	<i>Lieder</i> <i>Wozzeck</i> , Op.7
G. Bizet	<i>Carmen</i>
B. Britten	<i>Bridge Variations</i> , Op.10 <i>War Requiem</i> , Op.66, chamber orchestra
C. Debussy	<i>Gigues</i>

³⁶ Martin Wulforst, *The Orchestral Violinist’s Companion* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2012), 544.

E. Elgar	Introduction and Allegro (separate parts), Op.47
K. A. Hartmann	Symphony no.8
J. Haydn	Symphony no.6 – II and IV movement, Hob.I:6 Symphony no.7 – I and V movement, Hob.I:7 Symphony no. 8 – II and IV movement, Hob.I:8 Symphony no. 45 – V movement, Hob.I:45 Symphony no. 55 – Trio (solo ad lib.), Hob.I:55 Symphony no. 96 – II movement, Hob.I:96
P. Hindemith	Sinfonietta Symphonia serena – IV movement
F. Liszt	Faust – II movement, S.108
W. A. Mozart	Serenade K.239 (<i>"Serenata notturna"</i>)
A. Schoenberg	<i>Verklärte</i> , Op.4
R. Strauss	<i>Ein Heldenleben</i> , Op.40 <i>Also sprach Zarathustra</i> , Op.30
I. Stravinsky	<i>Pulcinella</i>
J. Suk	Serenade, III

	movement, Op.6
W. Vaughan	<i>Fantasia</i>
G. Verdi	<i>Rigoletto- act III</i>
W. Walton	Sonata for string orchestra

Example 19. List of the music passages for the second violin principal

- The third step will be playing some of the great romantic violin concertos: Tchaikovsky, Sibelius, Paganini, Beethoven, sometimes Brahms, Mendelssohn, and depending on the country of the audition, some national composer. In Sweden, for example, one of the concertos suggested will always be the Nielsen violin concerto. The jury will ask for the first movement of the concerto with cadenza and this will be accompanied with the pianist.
- The fourth step is mainly optional, and if it exists, it's usually playing chamber music with people from the orchestra or excerpts for sight reading music. For this step only two or three applicants will remain and the jury will try to decide who fits best with the other musicians from the orchestra. In this step, while playing chamber pieces with people from the hiring orchestra, blending in as well as the musical interaction skills that I discussed above, are of the great importance.

The repertoire requested in the steps of the audition process shows how the second violin principal needs to be versatile, able to switch between great virtuosity and lyricism, and skilled at keeping the tempo and dynamic focused in the repertoire. This perfectly illustrates the necessity for the second violin principal to be an exceptional player, leader and even an excellent partner for the first violin section.

Considering the list of excerpts from auditions all around the world, for both symphonic and opera orchestras I was able to create a list (example 20) of the most common second violin's excerpt requests for a job as second violin principal. It is my belief that this list will be useful for all musicians interested in applying for this job, giving them a useful tool for their practice routine, and for understanding the complexity of this role in the orchestral environment.

W. A. Mozart	Overture to <i>The Magic Flute</i> Overture to <i>Marriage of Figaro</i> Symphony No. 39 – IV mvt. Symphony No. 41- II mvt. - IV mvt.
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L. van Beethoven	Symphony No. 3 - IV movement, op. 55 Symphony No. 6 – IV movement, op. 68 Symphony No. 9 - II movement, op. 125
J. Brahms	Brahms: Symphony No. 4 - II movement, op. 94 Brahms Piano Concerto No.1 – III movement, op. 15
J. Schubert	Symphony 4 - IV movement, D.417
R. Strauss	<i>Alpine Symphony</i> - Reh 130-142, op. 64 <i>Der Rosenkavalier</i> , Act II - Reh. 22-24, op.59 <i>Also Sprach Zarathustra</i> - 2nd Violin Principal solos, op.30
S. Rachmaninoff	Symphony No. 2 – II movement, op.27
B. Bartok	Concerto for Orchestra – IV movement, Sz.116
B. Smetana:	Overture from <i>The Bartered Bride</i> , JB 1:100
A. Bruckner	Symphony No. 9 – IV movement, WAB 109
G. Mahler	Symphony No. 5 – II movement Symphony No. 9 – I-II-IV movement
E. Elgar:	<i>Enigma Variations</i> -Variation No. 2, op. 36
I. Stravinsky:	Concerto in D for String Orchestra 1946, I movement <i>Pulcinella Suite</i> , Tarantella – second violin principal’s solo part

Example 20. The list of the most common Second-Violin excerpt requests for the job auditions.

Nevertheless, one should keep in mind that the choice of excerpts changes constantly and is partly determined by popular demand. For example, Mozart’s Symphony No. 41 was a popular choice as an excerpt a decade ago, a few years ago Symphony No. 39 was always on the lists, while these days No. 29 is starting to show up more frequently. If the orchestra had a very difficult piece to play that season, you should expect it on the excerpt list for the audition.

Even though every step in the audition can be as brief as 10-15 minutes per person, there are many skills one can demonstrate in those few minutes to the jury. The intonation needs to be perfect and that is not negotiable. The jury needs to hear, especially in the highly modulatory excerpts, that you can hear the modulations and intone them just right. Also, the playing technique needs to be stable and remarkable, as I mentioned in the chapters above. Rhythm and tempo decisions need to be impeccable. In my experience, choosing the right tempo at the audition is a very difficult task. The applicant should always try to keep his own inner tempo and try to not raise it because of stage

fright which may be experienced at that moment. Find a method to calm your nerves, practice it and use it! There are a lot of books written about this problem, and for a good reason - bad nerves and big cases of stage fright can destroy even the most prepared player. The jury can hear and see when someone is under a lot of tension, and that person will not score well if tension disturbs his playing in some way. Melodic lines in the excerpts, and concertos especially, need to be very delicately led, and need to have a direction and purpose in order to color the harmonies below them. Your coordination with the pianist, while doing everything else, needs to be flawless; if you cannot play in sync with the piano, the chances are, that you will not be able to play with the orchestra either.

Additionally, the dynamic levels need to be very carefully chosen and interpreted. It will also depend, to a great extent, upon the ability of the player to “grab” and properly adjust the sound to the hall in which the audition will be held. *Piano* or *forte* can mean a lot of different things, depending on the excerpt, the hall in which the audition is played, and the number of people with whom it’s played. “The human ear can tolerate up to 120 decibels (dB) before experiencing pain. According to David Butler in his book *The Musician’s Guide to Perception and Cognition* that level is a trillion times louder than a sound at the threshold of hearing. And yet we only have eight basic dynamic markings, from *ppp* to *fff*. I conclude from this that dynamics in music are and will remain flexible, personal and relative.”³⁷ My conclusion is that the personal interpretation of the dynamics, and every piece that the applicant plays needs to be “inside the box”, and standardized. But that box is still big enough to be explored and to be made interesting.

³⁷ Davis, *Becoming an Orchestral Musician*, 109.

7. CONCLUSION

Though listening and observing the individual groups and people during an orchestra concert is an interesting experience, many people still see and listen to the orchestra only as a homogenous unit. The aim of the orchestra is to sound like the one person, but the listeners' task is to challenge themselves and try to understand the processes and hear the effort of each member of the orchestra. My goal has been to underline the importance and to attract the listeners to the role of the second violin principal and the whole second violin section. I wanted the listeners and other musicians, to see them as unique persons and members of the orchestra, not just as the violins. While writing, I have given the reader the tools for a new way of observing one part of the orchestra, a new way of listening to orchestral music and a new way of how to deal with the specific problems that this role has. I have also responded to some old questions that I had about the role of the second violin principal, trying to articulate my experience in words.

I have learned that the position of second violin principal is very important, maybe as equally as the position of concertmaster in an orchestra. Also, I have learned that my technique needs to be different when I am playing as second violin principal, and that the good sense of rhythm and perfect inner tempo are crucial to have. Through the repetition and lots of hours of practicing I have learned that the body language of the second violin principal is a useful tool that every principal needs to possess. During my studies in Sweden I went on auditions, I met various musicians from all over the world and I have learned a lot about orchestral music. While doing so I have discovered how does one become a second violin principal in a professional orchestra and which music pieces are important for this position. While responding to these questions, I have paved the way for the new ones that will need some answers – the process of learning is never finished for any of us. That challenge will forever be there.

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Video recordings

Recording 1. Ana Milanovic performing L. van Beethoven – Symphony No. 3, op. 55 – 4th movement from bar 101 to 109, second violin part.

Recording 2. Ana Milanovic performing L. van Beethoven – Symphony No. 3, op. 55 – 4th movement from bar 268 to 275, second violin part.

Recording 3. Ana Milanovic performing L. van Beethoven – Symphony No. 3, op. 55 – 4th movement from bar 70 to 77, second violin part.

Recording 4. Ana Milanovic performing L. van Beethoven – Symphony No. 3, op. 55 – 4th movement from bar 70 to 77, second violin part.

Recording 5. Ana Milanovic performing L. van Beethoven – Symphony No. 3, op. 55 – 4th movement from bar 1 to 11, second violin part.

Recording 6. Ana Milanovic performing L. van Beethoven – Symphony No. 3, op. 55 – 4th movement from bar 177 to 184, second violin part.

Recording 7. Ana Milanovic performing L. van Beethoven – Symphony No. 3, op. 55 – 4th movement from bar 12 to 27, second violin part.