

- Follow the Ševčík examples by downloading from IMSLP
[https://imslp.org/wiki/40_Variations%2C_Op.3_\(Ševč%C3%ADk%2C_Otakar\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/40_Variations%2C_Op.3_(Ševč%C3%ADk%2C_Otakar))
- MSE concert with Dindin and Dandan
<https://www.mse.org.au/concerts/benchmark-concert/>
- Table of Examples, with links
https://fintanmurphy.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/FM_AUSTA_210426.pdf
- Online PD with Frances Gall 'How to use VBT+' Tuesday 25th May, 7.30pm
<https://www.trybooking.com/BQXUM>

Ševčík Variations - Developing Expressive Bowing for Mozart

The musical line

As teachers we need to think about how we develop musical sensitivity in our students. We need to find the balance between:

- Leading the student,
 - 'Teaching' them to understand the fundamentals of musical engagement, and.
- Allowing students to find their own way,
 - Observing the student, allowing them to make their own 'mistakes' and discover different approaches to ones that we may have thought of. If we observe, we will also challenge students with questions

We need both approaches and when we teach students ways of approaching musical engagement, it is best to teach them the musical patterns that they can later use to underpin their performance.

- Where possible, the patterns are best learnt on studies rather than repertoire.
- Ševčík variations are:
 - Wonderfully short
 - Each variation is musically crafted to give a condensed approach to teaching the basics of musical shape
 - They include many of the common phrasing structures of the classical style

Developing an overall understanding of musical character

A dance is a dance.

A title needs to be digested!

Mozart: Sonata in E minor, K 304, opening of 2nd movt

Ševčík: Var. 9 – Sicilienne - <https://sevcikvariations.com/variation-9/>
Var. 26 – A march - <https://sevcikvariations.com/variation-26/>

Often we need to look further than just the title to find the character or mood.

Mozart: Concerto in D, K.218, opening of 1st movt
Sonata in Bb, K.454, opening of Largo

Ševčík: Var. 24 - The musical character needs to be clear from the beginning
Var. 17 - The unusual bowing style of the slapped-up bow and the energy of the sautillé is highly charactered! - <https://sevcikvariations.com/variation-17/>

Developing our understanding of the A,B,C or short, short, long phrase structure

This phrasing pattern occurs constantly in Baroque and classical music

(Bach Sonatas & Partitas: E major Prelude, the B minor Corrente, the D minor Sarabande, the C major Largo)

Ševčík: **Var. 9** - The whole variation is a good example of 2 bars, 2 bars, 4 bars phrasing structure See bars 1-2, 2-4, 5-8 and then again 9-10, 11-12, 13-16

Var. 2 - A longer version but a similar pattern, 4 bars, 4 bars, 8 bars

Mozart: **Sonata in E minor, K.304, 1st movt**, bars 8-12, 1 bar+1 bar+2 bars

Concerto in A, K. 219, 1st movt, bar 81 on

Sonata in G, K.301, 2nd movt, bars 75-90, 4 bars+4 bars+8 bars

Momentum and breath in musical structure, that is when to move forward and when to take time

Momentum is integral to some of the Ševčík variations

Ševčík: **Var. 1**, bars 1-4, 2-8, 9-16

Var. 24, bars 9-16, descending 2-bar phrases and the 4th 2-bar phrase is the same length but moves through the 2nd bar

Mozart: **Concerto in A, K.219, 2nd movt**, bars 23-36

The right arm

Ševčík's 40 variations are particularly appropriate for helping us learn to control the lifted strokes such as:

- Spiccato,
- Standing spiccato
- Strokes with off-string feel such as sautillé
- Rebound strokes such as down-bow retakes
- Mixed bowings, such as legato strokes followed by lifted strokes, 2 notes slurred followed by 2 notes separate and so on.
- Bow division

These strokes are relevant for all styles of playing but particularly important for classical style.

Collé

Collé is an implied stroke in the repertoire, an aspect of an effective stroke or part of a stroke rather than a stand-alone stroke.

<https://sevcikvariations.com/colle-stroke/>

Collé can be used as to develop:

- Bowing health
 - An adaptable bow hold
 - Stable control of the bow in the air
- An aspect of the spiccato stroke
- A preparatory movement for repeated up or down-bows.

Down-bow retakes

Mozart: Concerto in G, K.216, opening of the 1st movt
Sonata in Bb sonata, K.454, 1st movt, bar 26

Ševčík was exacting in indicating with a comma where he wants the player to lift the bow

Ševčík: Var. 19

Var. 18

Collé and rebound:

Var. 4

Var. 1, collé stroke and flexibility at the heel

<https://sevcikvariations.com/variation-1/>

Spiccato

Spiccato has a range of skills to be covered:

- Control of character and dynamic (length and height of spiccato)
- String crossing
- Fast tempos while maintaining the individual action for every stroke
- Placing the bow from on and off the string

Teaching point for spiccato:

- <https://sevcikvariations.com/free-ringing-spiccato/>

Mozart: Concerto in G, 1st movt, bar 44

Sonata in Bb, K.454, 1st movt, bar 15

Ševčík: Var. 2

Start down-bow, or start up-bow, you need to control the bow at a steady tempo.

Spiccato passages in Mozart can become more complex due to the amount and style of string crossing

Mozart: Sonata in E minor, K.304, 1st movt, bar 36

Ševčík: Var.13, <https://sevcikvariations.com/variation-13/>

In Mozart we also vary the height and length of spiccato and mix it with ‘in the string’ strokes

Mozart: Concerto in D, K.218, opening of 1st and 3rd movts

Brush stroke/sautillé

Mozart: Concerto in Bb, K.207, 1st movt, bar 78

- triplet rhythm, so every second beat starts on an up bow
- complicated string crossing patterns
- practice the triplet rhythm and string-cross pattern on an open string

Ševčík: Var. 22, <https://sevcikvariations.com/variation-22/>

Var. 34, <https://sevcikvariations.com/variation-34/>

Mozart: Concerto in D, K.218, bar 74, string crossing and brush stroke

Ševčík: There are no examples of Mozart’s one bow per note but build from:

Var. 16 - For gradual string crossing

Var. 17 - For faster string crossing (every 2 notes)

Mixed Bowings

Changing between on-string and off-string strokes

Mozart: Sonata in Bb, K.454, 3rd movt, bar 50- On the string, off the string

Ševčík: Var.19
Var.28
Var.28, <https://sevcikvariations.com/variation-28/>

Mozart: Concerto in A, K.219 bar 74, bar 84 - a whole variety of bow nuance needed

- Start on or off the string?
- When to lift and when to get the bow back on the string?
- Bow needs to be close to string
- Control of spiccato stroke

Ševčík: Ševčík is very specific about where to lift the bow
Var. 8, opening
Var.11, bar 9
Var.18, - Difference between bars 1 and 2 - use a little collé to get the bow off the string

2 slurred, 2 separate

Mozart: Concerto in A, K.219, 1st movt, bar 49 on - Keep bow roughly in the middle and stable

Ševčík: Var. 10 - Saving bow on the slurs

String cross pattern of 2x2 notes slurred followed by complex string crossing

Mozart: Concerto in A, K.219, 1st movt, bar 98 on

Ševčík: Var. 34, variant no 2
- Slurs across the strings, firstly down and then up
- Practice 2 slurred, one separate, starting up and down-bow
- Practice variant 2

Planning technical impulse, rebound strokes with Spiccato, the semiquavers start on and the spiccato gradually lifts

Mozart: Concerto in G, K.216, 1st movt, bar 64

Ševčík: Var. 15, <https://sevcikvariations.com/variation-15/>

Bow division

Basic skills include:

- Ability to move bow fast and slow
 - Whole bow martelé
- Freedom of upper arm (active elbow, and responsive hand and fingers) to lift the bow and also to reduce friction on the up-bow while increasing it on the down-bow, to make convincing phrases while using unequal bow division

Mozart: **Sonata in E minor, K.304, 2nd movt**, bar 53

- Simple challenge of repeated 4 notes slurred against 2 notes separate, with a need to start roughly in the same part of the bow at the beginning of each slur
- When lifting the bow, the ability to land cleanly

Ševčík: **Var. 14** - Uneven bow division and changes in dynamic
<https://sevcikvariations.com/variation-14/>

Mozart: **Concerto in A, K.219**, Bar 118 - 3 notes slurred one note separate
Bar 63 - 3 beats on a down-bow followed by one on an up-bow - Bow lift and smooth landing

Ševčík: **Var. 18**, bars 7 and 8 - Observe bow division markings for lower half, middle, upper half and back
Var. 26, <https://sevcikvariations.com/variation-26/>

Conclusion:

The Ševčík Variations are concise, musically satisfying and present challenges for technical development in a structured manner. Detailed study of them is of great benefit and infinitely better to be obsessive on a simple Ševčík Variation than on a major work in the repertoire!