Chromatic glissando

Speed of glissando

Violin Concerto no. 1 in D, op. 6, Paganini
First movement, bar 233

The first step is to find the correct speed of the glissando: play an ordinary, smooth glissando without individual semitones.

Play strictly in time, sliding so that you pass – without stopping – the first note of each group of four exactly on each beat. In this example count: 3 - 4 - 1 - 2 - 3 (the first '3' being the A♯ which is the third note of the run).
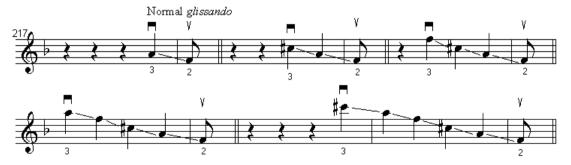

Building the run in groups

Violin Concerto no. 2 in D minor, op. 22, Wieniawski
First movement bar 207

Example

Having found the speed of the slide, the next step is to slide in stages – still without the individual semitones – working from the bottom up:

Also work in stages from the top down, stopping exactly in tune on the first note of each last beat:
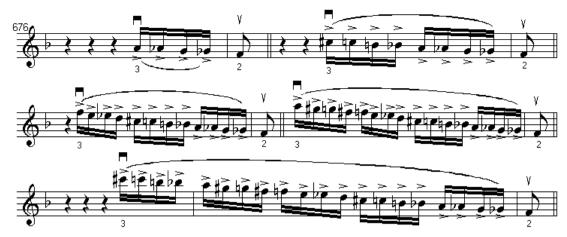
Then play the individual semitones, again working in stages from the bottom up:

Also start at the top and work down in stages, always arriving exactly in tune on the first note of each beat:

Sometimes the groups may work better in groups of three:

Violin Concerto in D, op. 35, Tchaikovsky
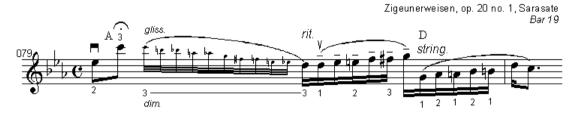*First movement cadenza*

3

Example

Another way to establish the groups is to practise with accents:

Use an ordinary fingering as a model

Each note in a chromatic glissando should sound as clear as in a fingered chromatic run. Use an ordinary chromatic fingering as a model, to highlight any blurring in the glissando.

Zigeunerweisen, op. 20 no. 1, Sarasate
Bar 19

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Example

Alternate the following until they sound identical:

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Next month's BASICS explores bow division