

Timing shifts

“One of the commonest faults found in shifting is that of shortening the note preceding the move.” – Ivan Galamian, *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching*, Prentice-Hall, Inc, New York 1962.

However, if the note before the shift is played completely full-value there is no time to shift without arriving late. In other words, if the note before the shift is played right to the end of the note, and yet you want the shifting finger to arrive on its note exactly on time, there is no time left to shift and the shifted-to note must begin too late.

Therefore the short moment that it takes to make a shift does need to be stolen from the note before the shift. The amount of time stolen simply needs to be so little that the listener would never know the note was a fraction shorter than it should have been.

- Practising by exaggeration, shorten the note before the shift and shift too early. In the examples below, first play strictly in time at a slow tempo, and gradually speed up to near performance tempo.

Example 1

Autumn (The Four Seasons), op. 8 no. 3, Vivaldi
First movement, bar 39

Practise:

Example 2

Romanze in F, op. 50, Beethoven
Bar 77

Written out in longer time values for the sake of clarity:

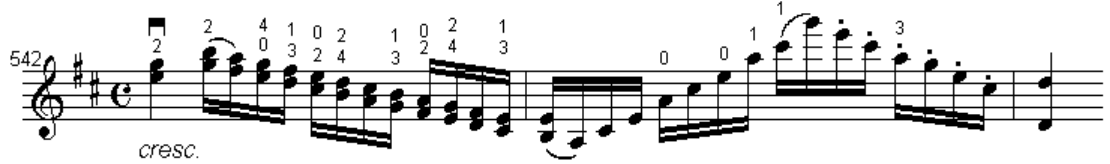
Example 3

Violin Concerto in E minor, op. 64, Mendelssohn
First movement, bar 174

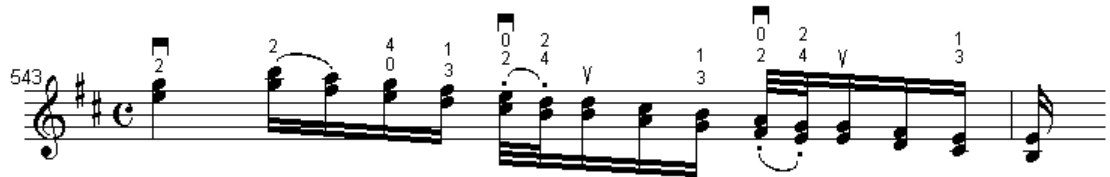


Example 4

Violin Concerto no. 1 in D, op. 6, Paganini
First movement, bar 112



In this example the fingers may be late crossing over to the D-A strings and then to the G-D strings. Place them early as follows:



- Play the demisemiquavers *ricochet*.
- Arrive exactly in time at the semiquaver that follows the *ricochet*.

Miss out the note before the shift

Miss out the note before the shift to feel the exact moment, within the tempo and rhythmic pulse, when the shifting finger must arrive on its note.

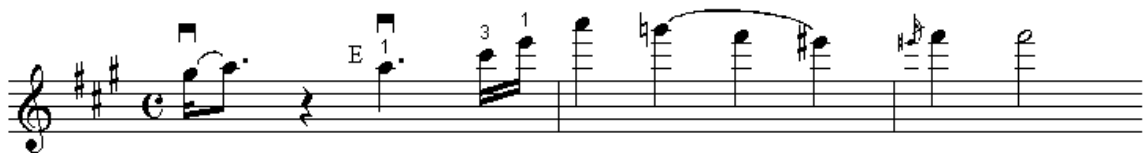
Example 1

Romanze in F, op. 50, Beethoven
Bar 2

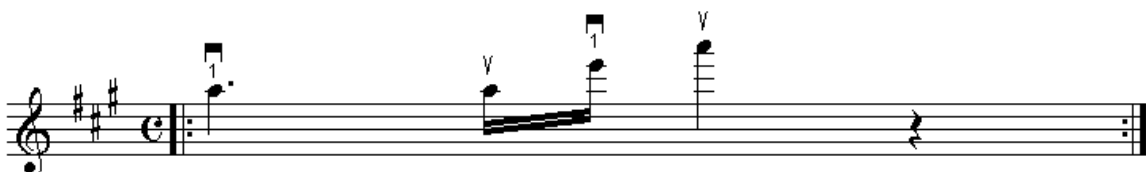


Example 2

Violin Concerto no. 5 in A, K219, Mozart
First movement, bar 66



Miss out the third finger and practise strictly in time as follows:



Next month's BASICS looks at how to build a perfect chromatic glissando.