

Détaché

Simple *détaché*

Simple *détaché* is a smooth and even stroke, often regarded as the foundation of all other bow strokes.

- The bow speed and weight are the same from the beginning of the stroke to the end. (In fact, there is often an infinitesimal slowing and lightening before changing direction, but the feeling and impression of the stroke is one of evenness.)
- The strokes are connected to each other seamlessly, without a break or disturbance in the sound.

Accented *détaché*

Simple *détaché* turns into accented *détaché* when extra bow speed and pressure mark the beginning of the stroke:

- Bow speed: fast–slow. Pressure: heavy–light.
- There is usually no space between the strokes, but there is sometimes space ranging from the tiniest gap to a longer silence.

(Accented *détaché* turns into *martelé* when each stroke begins with a sharp attack: the fast–slow bow speed and heavy–light bow pressure is more extreme, and the silence between the strokes is more obvious.)

Son fils

Son fils is a centuries-old practice method used to build a perfectly controlled, even bow arm. It is a simple way to gain more sensitive control over the bow and the contact of the bow with the string, after which the evenness of the *détaché* will be greatly improved.

- Practise long, sustained whole bows, down-bow and up, each bow stroke lasting forty seconds or more.
- Play quite near the bridge, though not too heavily. It may be impossible to produce a proper, singing tone with such slow bow speed, but nevertheless aim for evenness of speed and weight.
- It is also very good to practise *son fils* with variations of *forte*, *piano*, *crescendo* and *decrescendo*:

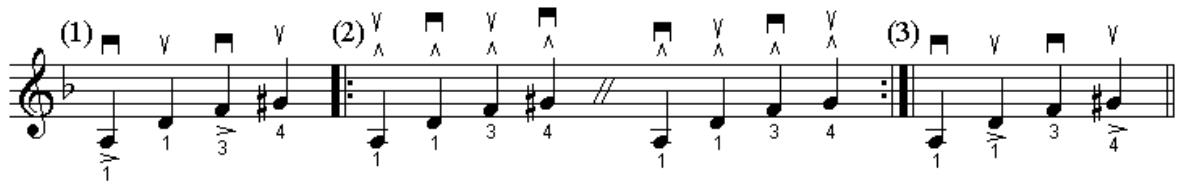
1
Example

Evenness of down-bow and up-bow

One, often-heard problem with *détaché* is that unless you are careful the down-bows may come out sounding louder than the up-bows. Three reasons for this are 1) the bow is heavier nearer the heel and lighter nearer the point, 2) down-bows have a feeling of going with gravity, and up-bows against gravity, and 3) the nearer you play to the heel the more it feels as though your bow hand is above the string, giving more automatic weight than when starting a stroke in the upper half.

- To gain greater evenness practise with reversed (upside-down) bowing, alternating with the correct bowing until both bowings sound identical.

2
Example



- (1) There may be an inadvertent accent on the first and third beats.
- (2) Practise with reversed bowing until it and the correct bowing sound identical.
- (3) As a further practice method, play the correct bowing with an extra accent on the second and fourth beats.

Using enough bow: gradually speeding up

The faster the separate-bow stroke, the less bow is used – just as the faster the vibrato the narrower it becomes, the faster the trill the closer the trilling finger must stay to the string, and so on.

However, one way to develop a broader, fast stroke, is to begin slowly with much bow (or with exaggerated bow length), and then gradually to increase the tempo *while keeping the bow length the same*.

42 Etudes ou caprices, Kreutzer
No. 8, bar 1

3

 Example


- Begin slowly at $\text{♩} = 50$, using half bows. Keeping the bow length the same with every stroke, gradually increase the metronome through 55, 60, 65, 70, until faster than the tempo of the passage.
- Keep the bow solidly and evenly in the string throughout.

Accented détaché

- Build the stroke gradually: begin with simple *détaché*, and gradually develop it into an increasingly accented *détaché*.

4

 Example


This passage may be played in the upper half of the bow with a light, slightly-detached stroke:



- (1) Begin with sustained, even strokes (even speed, even pressure). Join each stroke to the next smoothly, without any break between the strokes.
 - (2) Then add a little accent to the beginning of each stroke (fast–slow, heavy–light), but still with no break between the strokes.
 - (3) Then add the space between the strokes.
- Also practise the stroke on one note, and then apply the same stroke to the passage:

