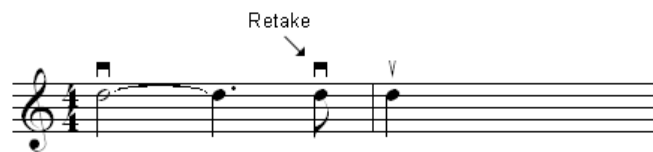

BASICS

Retakes

Retakes do not occur very often. When they do occasionally appear, they are used as often for expressive purposes as for reasons of technical convenience, and create a peculiarly vivid emotional affect.

Suppose you are nearing the end of a down-bow and approaching the point, and you need to tuck in one last, extra stroke at the end of the bow, before beginning back on the up-bow:



There are two ways to do it. You can save bow during the long down-bow, stopping the bow on the string at the end of it, with still enough bow space left to play the quaver.

Or you can use a retake. You do not save bow during the long down-bow. Instead, you continue to the furthest end of the bow and then, at the very last moment, you make a light and very quick up-bow movement back to a place a little lower down the bow from the tip, wherever you need to be to play the extra down-bow quaver.

This has the effect of lengthening the bow by as many centimetres as you retake. Retakes like that are never done at the heel, only at the point. Retaking the bow at the heel, the hair must leave the string entirely.

Making them necessary

This is the secret of how to make retakes work successfully.

- Suppose you are on a down-bow, and getting near to the point. There would be room to do another little down-bow, but you have already decided that instead of ‘tucking in’ another down-bow at the end of the stroke, you are going to do a retake.
- So, although you have stopped short of the point, and you do not actually need to do a retake, you *do* a retake. What happens? The retake is rarely successful. Something always seems to go wrong with it.

Instead, the trick is to make the retake necessary.

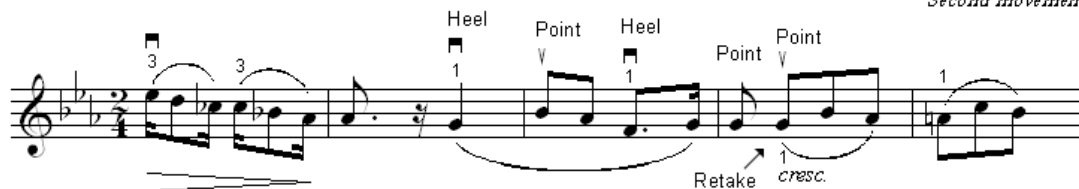
- Suppose again you are on a down-bow, and getting near to the point. You have absolutely committed to doing a retake, so you continue all the way to the actual point.
- Now it is impossible to ‘tuck in’ another down-bow, because you are at the end of the bow. You time it so that you are still travelling in the down-bow direction at the very moment that you need to begin another down-bow somewhat lower down the bow.
- You leave it to the very last moment, and then it is as if you have no choice: your arm seems to know how to float the bow, in a flash of movement, back to a place a little lower down from the point.

If you try to do it, it does not work. But if you leave it so late that there is simply no choice, and leave it to your arm to somehow ‘know’ how to do it, it works perfectly every time.

You can also do retakes round the other way: begin on the up-bow at the point, and then quickly retake and start again at the point:

BASICS

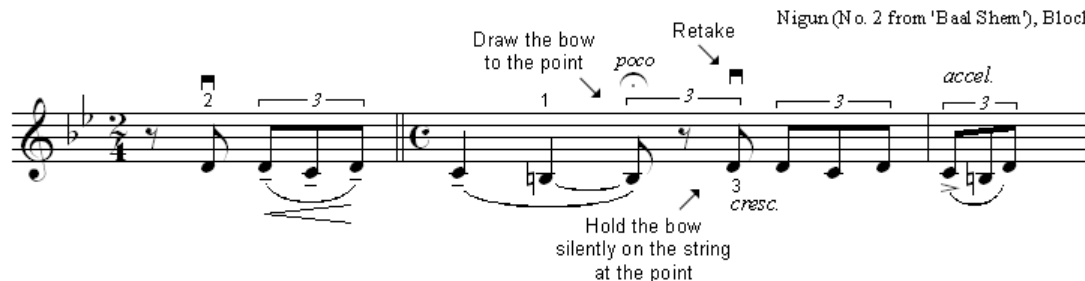
Sonata in G, op. 78, Brahms
Second movement



Sometimes it is effective to do a retake after a rest.

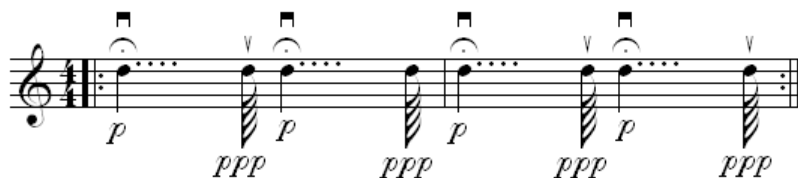
- Here, leave the bow on the string at the end of the paused B, so that it sits stationary at the very end of the bow during the rest. Then, at the last possible instant, retake the bow to play the down-bow D:

Nigun (No. 2 from 'Baal Shem'), Bloch

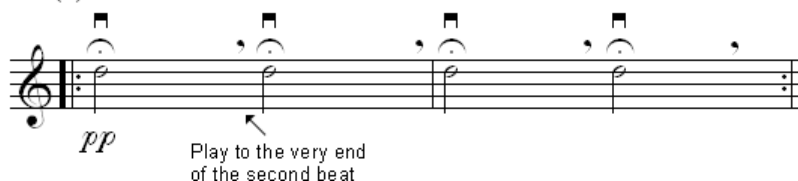


RETAKES EXERCISE

(1) Near the point



(2) Near the point



- Beginning midway between the middle of the bow and the point, pause on a note and play right to the tip. Then, at the very last moment, 'skim' the bow over the surface of the string to play the 64th-note.

Make each down-bow begin at exactly the same place in the bow.

- The same as (1), but now make the coming-back inaudible. Pause until a fraction of a second before you want to play the next stroke; then retake 'all of a sudden', as though the retake requires no time at all in order to occur.

Repeat both stages beginning up-bow at the extreme point.

(1) At the point

(2) At the point

