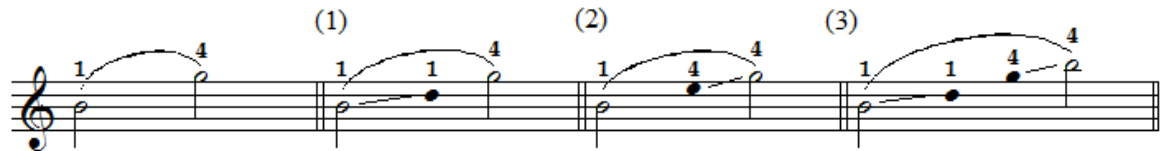

BASICS

Adding notes to shifts

The standard way to practise shifting is to insert intermediate notes with which to measure the overall distance accurately:



- (1) Shifting up on the old finger and then dropping the new finger ('Classical' or 'Beginning' shift).
- (2) Shifting up to the new finger, gauging the distance from the note the finger would have played in the old position ('Romantic' or 'End' shift).
- (3) Beginning to move on the old finger and continuing with the new ('Combination' shift).

Taking this age-old approach further, an interesting way to increase accuracy and security is to insert extra intermediate notes, or guide notes for the guide notes, using semitones.

Slow arrival-speed

Let's begin with Romantic shifts, since an essential feature of these is 'slow-arrival speed'. What this means is that the shifting finger moves quickly to a place just below the arrival note, and then continues on slowly until it reaches it. How far below the arrival note you aim is unquantifiable and partly depends on the musical passage. Sometimes you might shift to a place a whole tone lower and then go more slowly into the note, sometimes you may almost reach the arrival note itself before slowing down. But the one essential thing is that you do not go above the arrival note and then come back down into it.

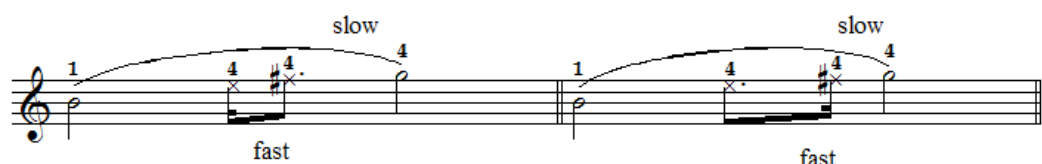
So a perfect way to train this, so that the slowing-down becomes a habit, is to make an exercise out of aiming for the note one semitone below the arrival note:



- (1) The way to practise this is first to play the slow-arrival note normally; (2) then 'ghost' the note – the left finger barely stopping the string, the bow barely moving and as light as possible; (3) then play simply from one note to the next, feeling the same fast-slow speed pattern in the shift:



Interestingly, although the dotted rhythm is there to encourage a fast-slow speed-pattern in the shift, the opposite rhythm also seems to work equally well. Here is the original shift (no. 2 at the top of the page) shown both ways:



BASICS

Classical and Combination shifts

Adding semitones as extra guide-notes to Classical shifts, you could do the following:

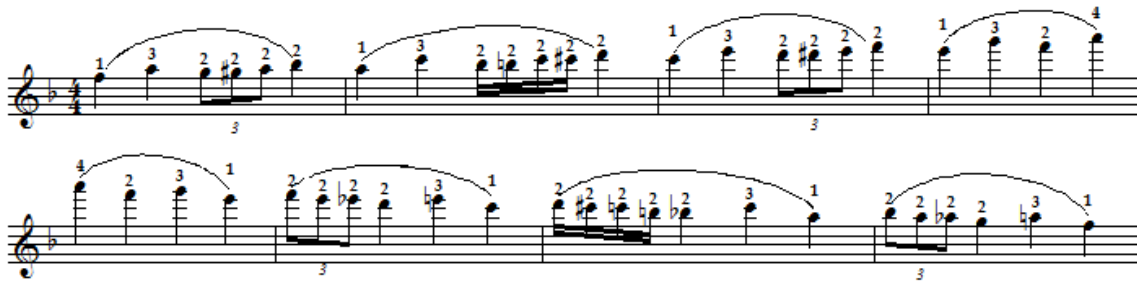


There are many possibilities when this is applied to Combination shifts because the semitones depend on how you choose to divide the shift up. You could do the following:



Broken thirds

This practice method produces an extraordinary new sense of control of the speed of the shift, making it easy to gauge each shift exactly:



Exchange shifts

It is a very interesting exercise to practise Exchange shifts in the same way. Here is the standard arpeggio sequence used by Sevcik and then Flesch:



Use semitones to fill in the entire gap between the notes of the shift:



Afterwards, when you play normally again, you will find an extraordinary new feeling of control through the whole sequence.