A close look at the first movement of the Dvorák cello concerto
An analysis of the most demanding excerpts

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ABSTRACT

Key words: Dvorák, Cello, Concerto, Orchestra, Solo part, Difficult passages, Technical demands, Technique, Improvement, Performances.

This thesis aims to identify and address the most technically demanding passages of the first movement of Dvorák's cello concerto. Within the second part, I shall focus on analyzing the performances of five famous cellists, examining their way of playing and the ideas that they present. In the last part, I discuss audio samples of myself, in which I have tried to incorporate the results of the previous sections in my own way of playing these excerpts. Finally, I summarize the conclusions that I have drawn from this process, in order to use them in future research.
I. Introduction

Together with Schumann's cello concerto in A minor Op. 129, Dvorák's cello concerto in B minor Op. 104 always has been one of the most played concertos by the cellists; it's often required in the second round of professional orchestra auditions and they currently can be found on any page of orchestral jobs for cellists as a requirement. That's why, since the beginning I had the subject of my thesis clear. I was going to write about the Dvorák cello concerto. I've never played this romantic concerto and as it is one of the most important pieces in the cello repertoire I thought it would be interesting to do research about it. Not only would I learn more about the concerto as a result of this process, but I would also increase my tools for interpreting the work. For this reason I decided to limit the work of this thesis even more because the Dvorák cello concerto is a big piece; so consequently I decided I will only work only on the first movement, which is the most played in the professional orchestra auditions.

Moreover, I wanted not only to focus on the context of the piece and on analyzing performances that some cellists have done, but also to go deeper into the music and take all the important things out. This gives you information about the difficulties or technical demands that each excerpt needs in its correct interpretation, and it also helps you to find a better way to improve these excerpts.

In order to create a guide of how to prepare the difficulties in this first movement of Dvorák's cello concerto through this process of improvement, this thesis will aim to answer the following research questions:

What are the technical demands in the difficult spots in Dvorák's cello concerto?
How can I improve my playing doing a comparison between famous cellists?
What could I learn from them, to apply their technique to my way of playing?

About the method and material used, I will begin this research by analyzing some useful information found either in the preface of my Dvorák concerto score\(^1\), CD booklets that write about Dvorák and the book by Jan Smaczny about Dvorák's cello concerto in order to know more about the context of the chosen piece to situate us.

\(^1\) Preface by Klaus Döge (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2001), 2-3
After outlining the context of the concerto I will focus on the technical demands that can be found within different solo parts from Dvorák cello concerto. I will start by summarizing the technical demands observed in each passage from the first movement. After have been selected them, I can continue analyzing how famous cellists perform them.

To end, I will pick the ideas and way of playing throughout all the performances I liked the most or just the ones I find more useful to my technique and way of approaching to the piece and I will incorporate them in my playing.
II. Context of Dvorák cello concerto

Without going into many details, Dvorák's background is the following. His full name is Antonín Leopold Dvorák; he was born in 1841 and died in 1904; he was a Czech composer, one of the first recognized ones worldwide. As his predecessor Smetana, Dvorák was an example of a nationalist composer from the Romantic-era. Dvorák typically used rhythms and folk music from his native Bohemia.\(^2\)

Dvorák began writing a cello concerto in A major when he was 24 but he was not satisfied with the music and with the choice of solo instrument because he thought the cello was suited better to orchestral and chamber music. This is why he discarded his sketch right away.

In the early 1890s when he was in New York working as a principal of a conservatory he got inspired by the cellists Victor Herbert (principal cello in the New York Philharmonic), Alwin Schroeder (soloist from the Boston orchestra), and the Bohemian cellist Hanus Wihan who clearly demonstrated the expressive possibilities of the instrument.

At that time Dvorák began the composition of the concerto (on 8 November 1894), but it wasn't until the eighth sketch when he finally succeeded with the concerto. He first did a sketch about 50 bars of the beginning of the first movement in D minor but then he decided change it to B minor, its current tonality. He then wrote the whole first movement in one go and, instead of continuing composing, he just put it aside in order to do the orchestration and elaborate the very opening. After this, he wrote the second movement of the concerto, inspired by the melody “Lasst mich allein in meinen Träumen gehn”, the favorite song of his sister-in-law who was incurably ill. Most of the quotes that Dvorák introduced were probably triggered by her early death in March 1895. Dvorák started the sketch of the third movement, and he completed the concerto on 9 February 1895. The piece itself doesn't contain folkloric elements from the United States like some other pieces, and although he was in that moment in the US, he clearly expresses his Bohemian essences from the Czech Republic in the concerto.

Two months later he completed the third movement, he returned to Bohemia where the piece was subjected to several revisions and reworkings. His cellist and friend mentioned above, Hanus Wihan suggested some improvements that were incorporated into the piece.¹

Thus, the Violoncello Concerto in B Minor Op. 104 was the last work that Antonín Dvořák composed during his stay in America and it was also the composer's last work in the concerto genre. The concerto was premiered in London on March 19, 1896, with Leo Stern as soloist and Dvořák himself conducting. Dvořák was very popular in London at the time. Without doubt this concerto became the most famous piece compared to the concertos he composed for piano (1875) or violin (1879/80).¹

¹ Preface by Klaus Döge (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2001), 2-3
III. General technical demands

To provide a general idea about what a technical demand could be, I will quote the most common ones that will appear in this thesis, in order to understand better the terminology these explanations are taken from the master’s thesis *Exerting the excerpts. A comparative study between orchestral cello excerpts and technical etudes* by Carys James (7).

*Spiccato* is the technique of bouncing the bow around the balance point to create a light off-the-string effect. This is a one-note-per-bow technique. It is created by physical movements of the right arm of the player.

*String Crossings* refers to the change of the bow across different strings. Detached string crossings refers to this technique when there is one note per bow. Legato string crossings means there is a slur over the string crossing so there is more than one note per bow.

*Left Hand Dexterity* is the ability to have strength and speed in the left hand. It can be the exact motion of picking up and putting down notes without any changes in pitch, and the ability to move in exact rhythm at high speeds.

*Left Hand Anticipation* is the technique of playing one note whilst anticipating the next. This can be the preparation of position changes or for the crossing of strings. In the crossing of strings in a legato line, left hand anticipation is used thus although only one note is heard, the left hand is holding down more than one note.

*High position shifting* refers to the left hand position changes above seventh position. These are all in thumb position therefore they are not numbered.

In the following analysis, references to technical demands (including those described above) will accompany musical excerpts from the concerto.
3. 1 Selection of excerpts in Dvorák cello concerto.

Analysis of audio recordings

Throughout the first movement of Dvorák's cello concerto we encounter many important solo parts, some are more expressive, another more technical, etc. To avoid analyzing all these solo parts in Dvorák's cello concerto, I have selected ten difficult passages, which are to my taste the most demanding ones. By breaking it down in this way, I can really work to improve these passages, which will result in a better performance. They will be presented in the following pages with their principal technical demands. In this way we will be able to see what the main difficulties are and how to approach them.

As the entire recapitulation, bars 267-319, is almost the same as the second part of the exposition, bars 139-192, but written in the minor relative and main tonality of the piece in B minor, I think it's more worthwhile to focus on the other parts of the movement.

In this initial phase of my research, I will provide the first recording of each excerpt and I will not only analyze the score but also the audio file, regarding where and which are the flaws, problems and difficult circumstances that could be improved later on. These audio recordings were recorded a few weeks after I began learning the piece for the first time. My discussion of these ten excerpts follows in the next section:

**Exposition**

- **Excerpt No.1: Bars 110-120** – Technical demands: *spiccato*, left hand dexterity, left hand anticipation, string crossings, bow distribution and dynamic control.
Comment about the audio file 1.wav: Quarter notes could be longer (fp) in contrast with sixteenth notes. *Spiccato* quite nice, but it could be even more *piano*. I can not tell the difference between the hairpins. And the second time the high note is not really in tune due to a lack of anticipation of the left hand. There is a gap between the last note of bar 119 and the first note of the next bar.

- Excerpt No. 2: Bar 126 - Technical demands: shifting, left hand dexterity, left hand anticipation and intonation.

![Excerpt No. 2: Bar 126](image)

Comment about the audio file 2.wav: Not in tune, sixteenth notes too long and not really precise.

- Excerpt No. 3: Bar upbeat 140 to 156 - Technical demands: legato in the string crossings, continuous vibrato, bow distribution, dynamics control, left hand extension and anticipation, and intonation.

![Excerpt No. 3: Bar upbeat 140 to 156](image)

Comment about the audio file 3.wav: Tempo too fast, it does not have the indicated character of *dolce e molto sostenuto*. Phrases are not really clear. For example, the second bar of this melody is conclusive although later the phrase continues, but in the sample, it does not sound like a resting place like it is supposed to be.
Intonation in the high register is not really good, the part from the G clef onwards is not in tune, especially the fourth between F# and B, and B and E. And *animato* could be clearer.

- Excerpt No. 4: Bars 158-165 - Technical demands: *spiccato*, high position shifting, string crossings, bow distribution, intonation and left hand anticipation.

Comment about the audio file 4.wav: Intonation is quite good, but the left hand between bars 161 and 162 should be legato, reaching the D. I should not jump between shifts but also follow with the finger on the fingerboard without leaving it. I should try using a smoother bow action when doing string crossings (raising and lowering the elbow without abrupt movements), to enable the lower notes to sound. *Spiccato* could be more precise.
Development

- Excerpt No. 5: Bars 240-256 - Technical demands: dynamics control, intonation and legato in the string crossings.

Comment about the audio file 5.wav: Despite of the high register, this excerpt is already in tune. Due to strings crossing, it is missing some bow legato between bars. Also, the quality of sound in the hairpin is not really nice, so it could help being more precise with the right hand. Apart from that, as one can hear, the dynamics increase before it is indicated, one bar after the $p$ it already becomes $mf$. It is better to keep the $p$ until 4 bars before $ff$ where it says poco a poco crescendo.
• Excerpt No. 6: Bars 257-263 - Technical demands: intonation, legato in the string crossings, shifting in low and high positions such as thirds and sixths, left hand anticipation and dexterity.

“Ossia” is a musical term for an alternative passage which can be played instead of the original passage.³

I do not have any information about who wrote the “ossia” passages, but years of listening to this concerto in live performance and on recordings, have familiarized me with the “ossia” part here.

In this case I decided to play the ossia part playing double stops only on the first note of each group of semiquavers and repeating the following note as the upper note of the double stop. For example the first bar of the ossia would be like this:

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http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/search?q=ossia&searchBln=Search&isQuickSearch=true
From bar 261, instead of playing the ossia line I decided to change and play the original part, the upper line.

Comment about the audio file 6.wav: It is quite in tune but I could improve the intonation of the first two bars. In the other hand, it is still quite slow, with more practice it could arrive at a higher tempo.

• Excerpt No. 7: Bars 264-267 - Technical demands: shifting, octaves intonation in low and high register, bow distribution and left hand dexterity.

Comment about the audio file 7.wav: In general, the high note of the octave has a tendency to be sharp, that means that it should be thought previously flat. On the other hand, the chromatic scale sounds weak because some support points are missing for example the first note in bar 265 and the first interval in 266. And inside the octave chain, there should be also some weight points subdividing the octave chain in groups of six, four or three. In this case, the weights would go to the first E octave, then A#, then E natural, then G natural and the first note of the last bar, as shown in the following example:
Coda

- Excerpt No. 8: Bars 327 and 328 - Technical demands: shifting, intonation, octaves intonation in the high register, and left hand dexterity.

From this excerpt I chose to play the original part (upper line), but due to the difficulty of the passage I thought it was better to simplify it at the beginning and start practicing only the skeleton. This means to play only the octaves in eighth notes leaving out all the ornaments (triplets). And this is how I play it in the audio recording.

Comment about the audio file 8.wav: The octaves are quite in tune but I would say the first bar is way more out of tune than the second one. In a general comment, the third finger (upper note of the octaves) is getting lower and lower. This is the case at the 3rd, 6th, 7th and 8th octaves of the first bar; they are not in tune because the 3rd finger is slightly flat.

- Excerpt No. 9: Bars 332-335 - Technical demands: *spiccato*, shifting sevenths, sixths, fifths and fourths, intonation, left hand dexterity.
Comment about the audio file 9.wav: There are some unnecessary accents, basically in the first semiquaver of each group, that could be avoided. Regarding the intonation in the high register, there are two spots that can be improved, the last group of semiquavers in bar 334 and in bar 335 the last interval. A good left hand anticipation definitely would help to bring this excerpt to the next level. And the last thing is the tempo, this is practice-tempo but in the end it should be sped up.

- Excerpt No. 10: Bars 338-342 - Technical demands: octaves intonation, shifting, bow distribution and left hand dexterity.

Here I have played the original part as well (upper line).

Comment about the audio file 10.wav: In general, all the minor sixths could be more in tune. On the other hand, although in bar 339 one can hear a sudden change of bowing at in the last sixth, this interval should be connected to the trill, like it is written in the music with a slur; right now there is a gap between both notes that could be avoided. Also the recording lacks some direction in the trills towards the last bar and maybe a better bow distribution to have a slow bow in the last quarter note in order to have more length for the last note which is the last note of the 1st movement.
IV. Comparing different cellist's performances

In order to get broader knowledge of the selected excerpts, I have made a comparison between some of the great cellists that have performed this concerto and analyzed how different the versions could be between them.

According to Smaczny there existed more than sixty recordings of the piece in 1999, I decided to choose five of the most well-known cellists because of their re-known and the fact that their versions of the piece are setting a high standard. The five cellists chosen to do this comparison are Mstislav Rostropovich, Jacqueline du Pré, Yo-Yo Ma, Gautier Capuçon and Truls Mørk.

Below, I will present a detailed comparative analysis of the first five excerpts from the same ten excerpts described above as an example. For a clearer interpretation, I have created a table per excerpt, where the differences and similarities between the five interpretations can be seen and easily compared.

Exposition

- Excerpt No.1:

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mstislav Rostropovich</th>
<th>Jacqueline du Pré</th>
<th>Yo-Yo Ma</th>
<th>Gautier Capuçon</th>
<th>Truls Mørk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>fp</strong> with long bow and semiquavers on the string, not jumped</td>
<td>Like Rostropovich</td>
<td><strong>fp</strong> with long bow and semiquavers half on the string/ half off</td>
<td><strong>fp</strong> with long bow and semiquavers</td>
<td><strong>fp</strong> little bow and semiquavers on the string</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everything forte</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Spiccato</em> using less bow</td>
<td><em>Spiccato</em>, normal length</td>
<td>Everything forte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bar 114 subito piano</strong></td>
<td>Doesn’t do much piano</td>
<td>Like Rostropovich</td>
<td>Bar 113 subito piano and in 114 he does the semiquavers longer, half on the string/ half off</td>
<td>Like Rostropovich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bar 117 doesn’t do any <strong>glissando</strong> towards the highest note but stays longer in the 2nd C natural</strong></td>
<td>Bars 115 and 117 does a <strong>glissando</strong> and a fat accent towards the highest note, C natural</td>
<td>Just plays through without <strong>glissandi</strong> or accents</td>
<td>Plays without <strong>glissando</strong> but he spends a little more bow in all the 2nd C natural</td>
<td>Doesn’t do glissando but does <strong>portato</strong> between last three notes in bars 115 and 117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Doesn’t do much to mark in the changes of harmony in bar 118</strong></td>
<td>Marks the change of harmony in bar 118 spending more bow on the D#</td>
<td>No markings of changing harmony</td>
<td>Like Yo-Yo Ma</td>
<td>Like du Pré</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Between bars 119 and 120 no <strong>glissando</strong>, clean change</strong></td>
<td>Like Rostropovich</td>
<td>Plays G-F#-E on the second string without any <strong>glissando</strong></td>
<td>Like Rostropovich</td>
<td>Like Rostropovich</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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8 “드보르작 - 첼로 협주곡 / 가우송” Orchestre de Paris, Paavo Järvi and Gautier Capuçon. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MrireYVKNKb4&list=PLw9jLX1N5kFJ2kqQ1hG4fEhpINbO](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MrireYVKNKb4&list=PLw9jLX1N5kFJ2kqQ1hG4fEhpINbO)

Excerpt No. 2:

Mstislav Rostropovich
Jacqueline du Pré
Yo-Yo Ma
Gautier Capuçon
Truls Mørk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plays a tempo</th>
<th>Faster than Rostropovich, precipitated and not really in tune</th>
<th>Plays a tempo</th>
<th>Plays a tempo</th>
<th>Like Rostropovich</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diminuendo on the second note of each slur and anticipates the change of fingering with the help of lifting the elbow before playing the last group of semiquavers</td>
<td>Diminuendo on the second note of each slur but doesn’t really anticipate the change</td>
<td>It is actually not possible to see the change because of the video-recording</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excerpt No. 3:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mstislav</th>
<th>Jacqueline du Pré</th>
<th>Yo-Yo Ma</th>
<th>Gautier Capuçon</th>
<th>Truls Mørk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In general, fast</td>
<td>Like Rostropovich</td>
<td>Slow vibrato,</td>
<td>Like Rostropovich</td>
<td>He is between</td>
<td>fast vibrato and a warm wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vibrato and a</td>
<td>but in a</td>
<td>plays in a</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rostropovich</td>
<td>sound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>warm wide sound</td>
<td>passionate way</td>
<td>passive way, in</td>
<td></td>
<td>and Yo-Yo Ma</td>
<td>doing a lot of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the distance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>glissandi</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good <em>legato</em></td>
<td>Plays an A</td>
<td>Like Rostropovich</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between the first string</td>
<td>open string, so she doesn't</td>
<td></td>
<td>Like Rostropovich and plays</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crossings of the first</td>
<td>doesn't have to cross</td>
<td></td>
<td>the first note much longer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>notes A-F#</td>
<td>the string</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar 143 maintains E#</td>
<td>Maintains E#</td>
<td>Like du Pré</td>
<td>Like du Pré</td>
<td>Like Rostropovich</td>
<td>longer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>longer</td>
<td>less than Rostropovich</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar 146 does a</td>
<td>Not too much</td>
<td>Doesn't do</td>
<td>Like du Pré</td>
<td>Like du Pré</td>
<td><em>ritardando</em> in the triplet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ritardando</em></td>
<td><em>ritardando</em></td>
<td><em>ritardando</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upbeat to bar 148</td>
<td>Like Rostropovich</td>
<td>Maintains the</td>
<td>Like du Pré</td>
<td>Like Yo-Yo Ma</td>
<td><em>pp</em>, another color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in <em>pp</em>, another color</td>
<td></td>
<td>same <em>pp</em> color</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both times, in bar</td>
<td>Bars 150-151 plays G-F#-E in</td>
<td>Like du Pré</td>
<td>Like du Pré</td>
<td>Like du Pré</td>
<td>150 and 152 plays on the first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150 and 152 plays on</td>
<td>bars 150-151 on the second</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>string</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the first string</td>
<td>string, but changes and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>plays on the first string</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Animato</em> in bar 154 is</td>
<td>Does a little bit</td>
<td>Like du Pré</td>
<td>Really pushing forward in the</td>
<td>Like Yo-Yo Ma</td>
<td>not really clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not really clear</td>
<td>of <em>animato</em></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>animato</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20
Excerpt No. 4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mstislav Rostropovich</th>
<th>Jacqueline du Pré</th>
<th>Yo-Yo Ma</th>
<th>Gautier Capuçon</th>
<th>Truls Mørk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Spiccato</em>, out of the string but very clear in all the notes</td>
<td>Like Rostropovich</td>
<td>More on the string but little bow</td>
<td>Crispy <em>spiccato</em>, out of the string but with pressure</td>
<td>Like Yo-Yo Ma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gives a little emphasis to the first note of each group of 6 notes, but gives even more emphasis to B, F#, B, F#, D, A natural (marked above with a circle in the music)</td>
<td>Gives a little emphasis to the first note of each group of 6 notes</td>
<td>Like du Pré</td>
<td>Like du Pré</td>
<td>Like du Pré</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mstislav Rostropovich</td>
<td>Jacqueline du Pré</td>
<td>Yo-Yo Ma</td>
<td>Gautier Capuçon</td>
<td>Truls Mørk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From bar 165 does a gradual <em>ritardando</em> on the string and with <em>portato</em>, separating every single note.</td>
<td>Does a gradual <em>ritardando</em> but is everything <em>spiccato</em>, off the string</td>
<td>Almost no <em>ritardando</em> and is playing on the string</td>
<td>Almost no <em>ritardando</em> and <em>spiccato</em> except the last three notes that are on the string</td>
<td>Almost no <em>ritardando</em> and on the string, <em>portato</em> the last 3 notes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Development

- Excerpt No. 5:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mstislav Rostropovich</th>
<th>Jacqueline du Pré</th>
<th>Yo-Yo Ma</th>
<th>Gautier Capuçon</th>
<th>Truls Mørk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Starts at the tip of the bow <em>flautando</em> and goes <em>poco a poco animato</em></td>
<td>Like Rostropovich</td>
<td>Like Rostropovich</td>
<td>Starts at the tip of the bow <em>flautando</em> and goes <em>molto poco a poco animato in pp</em></td>
<td>Like Rostropovich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Marks last note of the bar 245 and first one of 246 and 8\textsuperscript{th} and 9\textsuperscript{th} note of the same bar to emphasize the change of harmony</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar 247: takes time and does a little bit of <em>ritenuto</em></td>
<td>Bar 247: she does <em>ritenuto</em> between the 11\textsuperscript{th} and 12\textsuperscript{th} notes and between the 14\textsuperscript{th} and 15\textsuperscript{th} to leave the last two semiquavers as an upbeat to the next bar</td>
<td>Like Rostropovich and does more <em>diminuendo</em> at the end of the bar</td>
<td>Already in <em>mf</em>, almost no <em>ritenuto</em> and quasi no <em>diminuendo</em></td>
<td>Straight tempo until the 10\textsuperscript{th} note of the bar where he maintains the F# longer with a light <em>glissando</em> towards the E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar 248 retakes again the <em>tempo</em> doing <em>accelerando</em> while increases the dynamics to <em>ff</em> and the length of the bow towards the frog</td>
<td>Like Rostropovich</td>
<td>Like Rostropovich</td>
<td>Bar 248 continues with the same <em>tempo</em> that he had previously and does <em>accelerando</em> and <em>crescendo</em> from <em>mf</em></td>
<td>Already in <em>mf</em>, does <em>accelerando</em> while he increases the dynamics to <em>ff</em> and the length of the bow, but stays in the middle part of the bow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Bar 256 takes another totally faster <em>tempo</em></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
V. Final phase. Improved samples

When listening to the audio recordings it is easy to realize that the excerpts selected are quite demanding and that they sometimes could not been played with the best possible accuracy. The final samples are examples of improvement, potential passages that in the future with a lot of practice and technique could be brought to the highest level. Then I am going to analyze each one of them and I am going to see what has improved in comparison to the first set of recordings.

Excerpt No. 1, 1_final.wav: As in my first recording the semiquavers where very short and off the string, this time I tried to incorporate Rostropovich's technique to play everything with more contact and on the string. Also one can notice that the fp are played with a longer bowing and bars 115 and 117 are more in tempo and in tune. In general that there are more contrasts in dynamics, more range between the forte from the beginning and the subito piano that almost all the five cellists do in bar 114 and that I tried in 0.09'. I incorporated also the change of harmony in bar 118 that du Pré was doing that can be noticed in 0.17', which I think was interesting to mark, and this time all the position changes are clean without glissando.

Excerpt No. 2, 2_final.wav: In this audio recording you can hear that all the changes are much cleaner than before because of the left hand anticipation. Also I tried to incorporate Rostropovich's trick of playing softer the second note of each slur in order to be faster in the left hand changes and it really did a difference helping me.

Excerpt No. 3, 3_final.wav: I tried to apply Rostropovich's good legato between the first string crossings from A to F# and now the connection is much better in 0.00'-0-02'; I also incorporated the ritardando in the triplet in bar 146 heard in 0.27' and 0.28', the upbeat to bar 148 in pp that before was too present, now is much better, it has another color. About the animato I wanted it like Yo-Yo Ma more gradual but in this recording is not improved yet, hopefully with more practice it goes better.

Excerpt No. 4, 4_final.wav: This excerpt is one of the trickiest because of the spiccato. Even in this recording it is not well played yet because it's not clean and the intonation is not precise yet; it would need more practice and time to achieve this cleanness. Even
though it has a faster tempo, I tried to incorporate the crisp sound of Capuçon and the emphasis to B, F#, B, F#, D, A natural notes that Rostropovich did and in bar 165 the gradual *ritardando* on the string with *portato*, separating every single note in 0.16' and 0.17'.

Excerpt No. 5, 5_final.wav: In comparison with the first recording, now the sound is more *flautato*, not that present as in the first recording; the up and down bowings are more connected and the string crossings are smoother. I also took du Pré's idea about the changes of harmony in bar 245 and 246. In addition I mixed du Pré's and Mørk's ways of playing in bar 247 doing a glissando on the 10th note of the bar and playing the last two semiquavers as an upbeat of the next bar that can be heard in 0.23' and 0.24'. In terms of movement, this example could have a flowing direction, it seems like in the first recording was more moving forward and now in this final sample is static with no direction.
VI. Conclusion

Along this master thesis I went through the context of Dvorák cello concerto, I discovered more about where, when and how he composed it and I realized how it changed the cello figure for Dvorák. In the beginning, he only used the cello for chamber music pieces but later on, when he met these famous cellists, Victor Herbert and Hanus Wihan, he got influenced by them. He started to compose really demanding pieces showing the expressive possibilities of the instrument and as a result, he composed this cello concerto.

Lately I quoted a Master Thesis from Carys James, an old student of Högskolan för scen och musik, where I took the idea about the object of the study, in this case some of the technical demands mentioned in her thesis. And afterward I analyzed them in several difficult excerpts extracted from different passages of the solo part through this Dvorák cello concerto. Some examples of technical demands are *spiccato*, string crossings, left hand dexterity, left hand anticipation and high position shifting.

In this first phase I recorded myself playing the selected excerpts, I analyzed these audio files and I wrote down all the concerns that were appearing in my mind as well as things that I could improve for the next time.

After this process I started to do a comparison in tables between five different performances of cellists like Rostropovich, Yo-Yo Ma, du Pré, Capuçon and Mørk. Actually I realized that their ideas and way of playing are not very far from each other. Dvorák cello concerto has become a really standardized piece and at the end some details are the ones that make the difference between the performances.

It helped me a lot this comparison to see clearly what were the changes that these cellists introduced and what I could use to improve my playing of the selected excerpts for the subsequent new recordings. In most of the cases Rostropovich's way of playing influenced other cellists, but in the other hand I liked more the ideas of the other cellists; for example: harmonic details introduced by du Pré in bars 118 and 245-246, or just the delicacy of Mørk.
This cello concerto has been really useful to learn it, not only because of the fact that is a piece in the cello repertoire that every cellist should know but also because of the way that I have approached it. It has been a really challenging work because each excerpt had its own difficulties and they were quite demanding. In the final audio files one can see that they have been improved in some aspects (as mentioned in the previous chapter), but they sometimes could not been played with the best possible accuracy. Then, here it would be the next step for a future research, taking again the things that have not been improved yet, practice them more, include more passages of the first movement and do the same work with the other movements of the concerto. Hopefully with more time and practice this concerto can be brought to the highest level.
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CD's


Theses
