How to teach Spiccato and Sautillé To the Suzuki Cellists: Planting Seeds and Watching them Grow

(Hand-Outs Attached April 28 - incomplete as of this date)

Notes by Carey Cheney
(Salt Lake City, UT)

I. Welcome and outlining of session's agenda; distribution and explanation of hand-outs; reminding of post-presentation Q & A session

II. Definitions of Bow Strokes

from the *ASTA Dictionary of Bowing Terms*
(3rd Edition, 1987, Barbara G. Jackson, Joel Berman and Kenneth Sarch, Editors)

Definitions of SPICCATO
(quoted from pg. 43-44)

"Spiccato: (Italian) This term has evolved to mean a relatively slow bouncing stroke. Each bounce is produced by an individual percussive impulse. Every degree of crispness is possible in the *spiccato*, ranging form gently brushed to percussively dry. The degrees of crispness increases as the vertical motion of the bow if emphasized; a sweeter, brushed sound results from a flatter arc of bow movement toward the string. *Spiccato* can be played as fast as slow *sautillé*, but above a certain speed, becomes impractical.

Historical Context of use of term *spiccato:*
"from the verb spiccare, which is to say, to separate. This [spiccato] is an Italian word which means … that it is necessary to detach or separate the sounds well from each other (*détacher ou séparer les sons)." Broussard, Dictionnaire de musique, 1703*) Though this is an 18th century definition, the word appears as a musical term as early as the 16th century. It means separation of sounds only and does not describe the means or degree of the separation. It does not have the modern meaning of bouncing the bow until the 19th century, and even as late as 1811, it was still being defined in dictionaries as meaning merely the separation of sounds. "A word denoting that the notes over which it is placed are to be performed in a distinct and pointed manner." (Busby, *A Complete Dictionary of Music*, 1789, edition of 1811). In the later 18th century, there is more emphasis in the definitions on the dryness of the sound.

"*Spiccato* … indicates dry and well-detached sound (*sons secs et bien détachés*). (Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de musique*, 1768).

The early *spiccato* is indicated by dots, by vertical dashes, by the word itself, or is left to the judgment of the performer. When the word is used, it usually appears in slow movements as part of the tempo indication: *Largo molto e spiccato* (Vivaldi RV 290).

"Spiccato (or staccato), is to say that the bow-strokes should be played dryly, without being connected and well detached. This is very often found in the *Largo* and *Adagio* in the *Concerto."* Michel Corrette *L'École d'Orphée*, 1738.

From the ASTA Dictionary of Bowing Terms (3rd ed. 1987)

Definitions of SAUTILLÉ
(quoted from pp. 40-41)

Sautillé (French) A characteristically rapid, bouncing or springing stroke performed in the middle area of the bow. It differs from *spiccato* in that the hand or arm does not percuss the bow on every note in order to produce each bounce, which occurs naturally through the resilience of the bow stick. The *sautillé* is much akin to the rapid *détaché*. But, whereas, in the rapid *détaché*, the forearm is pronate and the bow does not bounce, in the sautillé a degree of supination may be employed to induce the bouncing and hair of the bow will be flat in relation to the string. The usual marking for *sautillé* is a dot.
While *sautillé* can be played as slowly as fast spiccato, below a certain speed it become impractical.

Historical Context of use of term Sautillé:
With bouncing bow. It was first defined in connection with violin bowing by Piani as indicating "equal notes, articulated and a little detached (*notes égales, articulées et un peu detaches)."* Although the first use of this term occyrs in French, Piani was an Italian violinist living in Paris and was very likely using a translation of a term and technique already in existence in Italian violin-playing. This is the earliest use of a term which clearly refers to *separate* bouncing bow strokes, though Jean Rousseau's use of *ricochet* might imply sucha stroke. (Jean Rousseau, *Traité de la Viole*, 1687) Piani marks the notes to be played sautille with dots. They are eighth notnes, and the performance would be ike modern *spiccato* (Piani, *Sonata c violino solo e violoncello col cimbalo, op,1, 1712.*

III. Review of Suzuki Cello School Repertoire Sequence and what is available and sequenced in the pieces, in terms of bowing study

Overview of Suzuki Cello Sequence of Literature
and Origins of Bow Strokes

Bowing Styles (a very cursory look)

Name of Stroke	Origin	Prep.	Reinforced
Up/downbow staccato	*LLA Var.*	*Twinkle*	*Beethoven Minuet (trio section) [3}*
			Popper Gavotte [7]
			Allegro Appasionato [8]
Colle	*Breval Cmaj. I*	*Bk.4*	*Bocch. -Grutzm ConcertoIII [10]*
Wrist String Crossing	*Bach Minuet I Bk.4*		*Goltermann Concerto [5]*
			Tarantella [6]
			Bach Prelude, Allemande [7/8]
			Sammartini Sonata [8]
			Haydn Concerto in C [9]
			Bocchi-Grutz Concerto[10]
Pique	*Goltermann*	*Bk.5*	*Sammartini Sonata [8]*
			Haydn Concerto in C (I) [9]
Doubles/sautille	*Var.D Twinkle*		*Scherzo Webster [3]*
			Van Goens Scherzo [8]
			Haydn Concerto III (9)
Spiccato	*Gossec Gavotte [2]*		*Goltermann Concerto [5]*
			Haydn Concerto [9]

By looking at this chart, there is an obvious need to supplement the activities provided in the Suzuki sequence of pieces with a steady diet of short and effective reinforcing materials/activities from Pre-Twinkle and beyond

Bowing Styles to be Reinforced/Studied in a Supplemental Way
Saltato
Ricochet
Sautille
Down-Bow and Up-Bow Staccato
Colle

IV. General Observations

- Being able to learn how to use the bow with rebounding movements from the hair interacting with the string (whether spiccato or sautille) requires the same kind of flexibility and balance in the body and the bow hold
- Visual Imagery is extremely helpful to the discussion of how flexibility in the bow hand/arm and body is achieved, as the mind must internalize the concept to be able to reproduce it.
- Feeling the vibration of the string as well as hearing the resonance is helpful not only to "on the string" playing but also "off-the-string"

V. Requirements for learning spiccato/sautille and steps to prepare them
(including body balance, freedom of movement from hips, shoulders, head, arms and hands)

Bow Hold requirements
Posture requirements
Focus requirements (listen with your ears and your eyes)
Step by step activities to build more skill

Pitfalls to Learning Spiccato/Sautille
Most problems occur when there is insufficient flexibility or consistency in the bow hold or lack of development of independence and flexibility in the fingers on the bow hold
Clutching Bow hold; slipping thumb

VI. Beginning Exercises:
For Balancing and Co-Ordination

Flutter Fingers
Teeter Totters/Windshield Wipers
Bow Hold Exercises with Pencil

With Bow on the String:

Rock n Roll
Fling the Meatball/Reach for the Chocolate Bar
Beginning String Crossing exercises - separate (start down/start up; start on lower string/start on upper string)
Bow dribbles (beginning ricochet)

Launching the bow - intro. to lifting bow off string, then re-setting on string

**Think of fingers and thumb on bow like this analogy: the thumb acts like the tongue against the teeth (the fingers) during articulation on/off the string*

Novice exercises:

Brush stroke - comes from the prep. of lifting/swinging with arm and dropping with balanced bow hold

Colle - fingers only first with string crossings and no sounds, and after, with short strokes

Brush the Crumbs off your Knee - prep for wrist colle

Detache - continue working on speed and facility of "double" bowing forearm stroke; work with a metronome to establish relaxed, balanced posture and excellent clarity

Bow-Throwing Exercises (related to ricochet, but controlled impact)

Controlled ricochet (like Bunting exercises)

Start with Left-side vs. Right side of string to activate wrist and finger action

Try alternation of strings (crossing from A-D) to activate wrist and finger action

Imagery of oval shape being described by hand during action

Flick Up with the hand or Flick-Down with the hand

Combination of Colle with Fingers only and Wrist

"Shake out the Salt"

Possibilities for Colle in Breval Sonata I

Use of Up-Bow Staccato as a Launching of colle

Helpful Sequence of Events: Spiccato

Start on one string, repeating same pitch; change rhythmic groupings (e.g. regular eighths, triplet eighths, sixteenths etc.)

Gradually move to change pitches slowly, as in repeated pitches in a rhythmic pattern in a scale, or for e.g. Twinkle D

Introduce string crossing perhaps alternating open string with something already practiced (e.g. ascending scale)

As control increases expand the exercises to include changing the pitches as the bow changes direction (e.g. playing Perpetual Motion with single bounces)

VII. Helpful Repertoire to be used in the Development of Spiccato:

Twinkle D
Perpetual Motion
Etude
Gossec Gavotte (excellent for intro stroke - "catch and release" = brush stroke)
Lully Gavotte
Scherzo Webster - can be used as a spiccato exercise after well-learned
Breval Sonata, II Rondo grazioso
Several PD Dotzauer pieces that I will share
Schroeder Foundation Studies Volume I (list all specifically)
Feuilliard Studies (list specifically)
Minsky Etudes (Train Whistle, Sailing Down the River)
Popper Etudes (esp. 1, 6, 11)

VIII. Some Helpful Repertoire to Supplement Experience Developing

Sautille
Various Feilliard studies
Pat Legg - have to look up the exact name of the British books
Elfintanz (I teach this in Book 4)
Squire Humoresque (I teach this in Book 5)
Etude-Caprice (I teach this in Book 6-7)
Popper Hungarian Rhapsody (I teach this in the Bk-8-9 area)

Q & A

PROMPT QUESTIONS: Possible questions to pose to participants :

What was the most helpful thing a teacher ever said or taught to you that helped you achieve great Spiccato/Sautille

What was the process you used to learn? Or the process you use to teach?

What repertoire do you use to supplement experience for your students?

Any other issues regarding strings, lengths of bows, set-up of instrument?

DAVID HOLMES Outline/Notes (as of April 28)
(Minneapolis, MN)

SPICCATO/ SAUTILLE`

Christopher Bunting: Essay on the Craft of 'Cello Playing, Volume 1'. Sangeeta Publications, Cambridge University Press 1982, 2000.

Spiccato, via the ricochet:
Bunting calls his approach to spiccato "unorthodox" since it starts with the ricochet. (pg. 42)
Points to consider before ricochet:

1. The angle of the bow hairs in relation to the string: Bunting thinks a slight tilt is better than flat hair.
2. The angle of the bow bounce to the string: the faster the speed the more acute the angle of the bouncing bow to the string. Example:

faster bow bounce slower bow bounce

3. Drop bow from above the string (10:30 position) and drop down to the string (9:00 position). Throw the bow to the string vigorously to create: Keep the same point of contact.

4. After successfully getting the bow to ricochet with no discernible rhythm add controlled rhythm: e.g. 4 sixteenth notes. Then add down and up bow ricochet and finally connecting the down and up bow ricochet.

Tanya Carey: "Cello Playing is Easy Part 1: Warm-ups". CareyWorks, Inc., distributed by Shar Products, 2007.

Perhaps the most comprehensive exploration of the spiccato/sautille` bow strokes in print (pp. 52-67) Extremely detailed and brimming with helpful ideas. Here are a few of the many points she discusses.

Preparatory motions: “Shake It” (p. 52) gets at the arm motion without the bow by “shaking water off your hand, moving the arm in clockwise and counter clockwise circles, waving bye-bye, and doing same in wrist watch position”.

Ms. Carey teaches two forms of spiccato: the ‘smile arc’

and the clockwise circle with the down bow touching the higher string side and the up bow touching the lower string side. The arc is fro slower spiccato and the clockwise circle is for a faster spiccato. The sautille` is a clockwise flattened oval shape. Eventually, practice going from the two spiccato strokes to the sautille` stroke and back. Ms. Carey points out in bold print that these “bouncy” strokes all use the whole arm.

Other helpful hints from Ms. Carey:
*keep joints free and build endurance by starting with two only notes at time
*get a ti-ki sound with the bow *the whole arm is used in staccato and spiccato strokes
*the sautille` sound comes from the shaking arm with the follow through in the wrist and fingers.
*Sautille is a rebound bowing, as in bouncing a ball, or a door with a spring. The down bow is active and the up bow is passive.

Phyllis Young: Playing the String Game, Shar Products, 1978, ninth edition, 2009.

Pre-spiccato: no. 70: The Trampoline: Student finds the magic spot on bow and drops it onto the string so it bounces straight back up with the tip and frog staying on the same horizontal level.

Spiccato: no. 71: A Real Bouncer: get the swinging motion of the arm with a pencil in the hand, first in the air and then by hitting a table top at the bottom of the arc. Feel like you are outlining the bottom of a plate. Vary the height and speed of the arc motion
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<u>Shinichi Suzuki’s spiccato ideas</u>: I saw a film of Suzuki teaching teachers how to teach spiccato. He utilized down bow and up bow circle bows that land at the balance point and spring up into another circle. Many down bow circles (I call these ‘full moons’) with varying sizes (the bigger the circle the heavier the bow lands and visa versa). After many circles in both directions comes the natural spiccato without the circles. I have had much success with this idea. Less hair landing on the string (more tilt) produces a more brush stroke sound. The flatter the hair the springier the bow becomes and the shorter and bouncier the notes get.

Alicia Randisi-Hooker Outline/Notes (as of April 28)
(Knoxville, TN)

-Spiccato and Sautille –

I. Seed Ideas

A. Key idea is opening the back and chest
B. Arm drops are only the beginning
C. Bow hold and balance – the never-ending challenge
D. Variation C opens the way for Variation D

2. Follow up – How I check the progress

A. Progress is not a straight line, it's an arc. Looking for shapes, contact point, rapid detache, as early as book 1, I am discussing the arc of the bow in some form, even with young ones.
B. Bourree with reference to Var. D. for sautille and as prep for Scherzo, Gossec Gavotte with reference to all staccato early pieces
C. Always circle back. Using Perpetual Motion, Etude and Allegro for spiccato
D. Doubles Perpetual Motion for sautille, in addition to Var. D

3. Favorite Materials

A. Solos for Young Cellists Vol. 2, _Elfintanz by Jenkinson
B. Christopher Bunting, A Portfolio of Cello Exercises, vol. I page 8&9
C. Sevcik 40 Variations

4. Commentary/Ideas

A. I'm careful about Youtube, but I love Paul Katz's idea and Cello Bello. I do like Abigail McHugh-Grifas demonstrations
B. I'm very convinced that these strokes are not successful without a careful assessment of the student's freedom in the trunk/chest/ back. If there is tension there, everything will take longer to develop and have a stilted quality
C. Awareness on the bouncing properties of the bow is essential. Bow hold issues must be addressed before these strokes are successful, so that the natural bounce in the bow is fun, not scary, to control.

Other presenters at this session are SUSAN GAGNON (Toronto, Canada) and NANCY YAMAGATA SCHINDLER (Los Angeles, CA)