Susan Gagnon

Developing Spiccato

- Good Bow hold balance is needed. Finger taps help develop this.
- The ability to move from the arm as a whole needs to be developed. This starts with the martelé stroke in the 8th notes of the Twinkle variations, particularly with variation B.
- The "brush stroke" is an important stroke leading to spiccato. It can be started in pieces like Gossec Gavotte and Lully Gavotte with the concept of "plucking the string with the bow".
- To do a good spiccato cellists must be able to "suspend" their relaxed arm weight just above the string. It is helpful if they can really feel their relaxed arm weight "in" the string first.
- The spiccato stroke works best with flat hair at the balance point of the bow. With a well-balanced bow hold students can easily enough drop the bow onto the string with the arm from a suspended weight position in down and up bow arcs. To increase the speed of the stroke the arcs need to decrease in both width and height.

Route to Sautillé

- The Sautillé stroke grows from the "detaché" stroke, a forearm stroke, but also needs the fingers to play a more active role, and for the bow hold and bow arm to be truly relaxed.
- Good basic posture is important in the development of a relaxed bow hold/bow arm.
- The Detaché stroke can be begun in the pre-twinkle stage with learning the feeling of the motion of opening the forearm independently, by rubbing the right hand over the left arm or the inside of the right thigh.
- Variation D can be taught from the beginning as a "forearm" stroke.
- The Detaché stroke can be refined throughout book one and especially with Perpetual Motion and Etude.
- To help relax the bow hold, work on leading the bow from the arm rather than the hand ("the dog wags the tail, the tail doesn't wag the dog").
- The fingers need to be activated through collé and other finger flexibility exercises.
- The sautillé stroke needs to be worked using material that is easy for the left hand, starting with one or two notes and then using review and/or already memorized material at faster tempi. The bow should start really 'in' the string using the detaché stroke and then by lightening the arm weight and adding clockwise (or even counterclockwise) circles with the hand/fingers the bow stick will start to bounce while the hair stays on the string. The tip and the screw will both describe circles. The hair needs to be flat and the sound should guide the performer.
- "Chunk" practice is helpful to allow the bow arm to relax between segments and gradually develop endurance of the stroke.
- Additional repertoire using the detaché and then sautillé stroke is important as this stroke really uses muscles that are not used much in our other repertoire.

Supplementary Materials:

- L.R. Feuilliard Daily Exercises 5th Parte
- Carl Schroeder Op. 31 #16