

K. Bohmer No.55

MAIN DIFFICULTIES: Intonation
OTHER DIFFICULTIES: String crossing, bow strokes
SIMILAR ETUDES: Blumenstengel Op. 24, No. 5, Böhmer Op. 54,
No. 69, Dont Op. 38, No. 9

Most of the learning in this etude will come from understanding that all major or minor keys sound the same, no matter how many sharps or flats they have in the key signature. The only thing that changes is the tone and color of each key. In violin language: The whole and half-steps are in the same place than any major or minor scale, no matter which key. This etude is in D-flat major, just a half step below our very familiar D major with two sharps. This means that all the whole and half steps are in the between the same fingers, just a half step below. Keeping this in mind should help to understand the key and fingerings. It should sound as D major but just half step down.

I believe that it could be beneficial to even try a couple times to play the etude in D major, ignoring the original key signature, to get our ear familiar with the sound of the etude and intervals. All the interval qualities (major, minor, augmented and diminish) are going to remain the same when we start playing the etude in its original key.

Keeping the left-hand fingers down as long as possible, whether the same finger repeats or not, will help to teach the left hand the shape of the intervals and the intonation will become more consistent. Every time there is a string crossing try to create a double stop between these two notes to check the intonation as well as the shape of the left hand. In many ways we could say that this etude is not in first position, but in half position! This is the biggest position of all. Make sure your left-hand fingers lift enough and with impulse once leaving the string and try not to press down too hard. Half position, being so close to the scroll of the violin, makes lifting the fingers extra hard.

This etude is a good vehicle to improve many bow patterns and strokes at the same time as we get over the fear of playing with too many flats!