

D. Alard Op. 10, No. 4

MAIN DIFFICULTIES: String crossings

OTHER DIFFICULTIES: Bow strokes

SIMILAR ETUDES: Dont: Op. 38, No. 23, Campagnoli: No. 1,
Hofmann: Op. 25, No. 74

The wrist should be used for the majority of the string crossings in this etude. Most of them are only between two strings. The bow-arm elbow should be positioned so that allows the wrist to move easily and freely between these two strings. This place is at the lower elbow string, in this etude that will be the E string, then reaching to the A string mostly with the wrist. The elbow should not move along with the bow for each string crossing. Keep in mind that the movement of the elbow should be very small. We could think of it as the originator of the wrist movement but not what does the movement itself.

A good exercise to get the hang of the wrist movement is to rest the elbow against a corner in the wall while practicing the string-crossings, forcing the elbow to stay still and allowing the wrist to do all the work. This is just a helpful exercise to get a “feel” of the movement. The exact resulting movement of this exercise is not what we want to achieve, but it is extremely helpful to get the wrist going. The elbow should accompany the wrist when the string crossing pattern changes to other two different strings or when the string crossings have an arpeggio pattern across three strings.

Another aspect to consider is that most of the string crossings are up-bow. This fact makes the string crossings harder because the bow is slower and weaker compared when they are down-bow. The accents on the last sixteen-notes of each group (up-bow) should not result into shortening them. The sound should stay legato trough the etude (when played *Détaché*.) Using a slightly longer bow for the accented note (faster bow) and adding some vibrato will do the trick.

The left-hand fingers have to be on the string before the bow arrives. Notice that some fingers have to stay down for a whole measure at times. As a rule of thumb: Leave the fingers down if you do not need to lift them to play other notes. On the other hand, be careful not to tight the left hand by pressing too hard the fingers that are already down.

Overall use a small amount of bow. Remember that any kind of string crossings uses more bow, so we have to compensate. Think of making the string-crossings as small as possible. Besides, the smallest the movement the easiest it is to control. I find helpful to think that no matter how fast I play this etude, the bow is “sticky” and moves slowly (*Détaché*.) As always, try to incorporate the numerous dynamic markings as soon as possible.