

J. F. Mazas No. 8

MAIN DIFFICULTIES: Bow distribution
OTHER DIFFICULTIES: Shifting, expressive sound
SIMILAR ETUDES: None

Bow distribution constitutes a big part of the bow technique. In fact, most of the success of cantabile passages is due to the ability of understanding how the bow should move. Mazas wrote many phrasing crescendos and diminuendos, which help us understand the bow distribution. I believe this etude is designed to use the whole bow throughout.

For the four sixteen notes pick up, at the beginning and similar, we need a rather fast and light bow. Notice that there is an accent on the first sixteen. This is an expressive accent, and it should just add nuance to the music and not stick out of the texture. Moving the bow rather fast at the beginning, with some help of the vibrato, should do it. The sixteen notes rests should be understood as "breaths." This should be played as if we had two quarters under a slur with portato markings. So, make sure the dotted eights are long enough. You should use about a third of the bow for the first one and the rest for the second. Same bow distribution applies for the up-bow, making sure we have our crescendo, so you might need less bow for the first note and more for the second. As we make all of this a nice phrasing with the bow, the left hand vibrato has to support also. When cresc. the vibrato should get faster and vice versa.

Make sure you use the guide notes for the shifts. As you work on a smooth, light, and slow shifts, try to make its sound part of the expressive quality of the etude.

For the second half of the etude try to maintain the legato as much as possible. You will need rather slow bow changes, and then little by little you can start speeding up the bow hearing carefully that the sound does not change. Again try to use the whole bow and keep your guide notes for the shifts. Here you have a very good opportunity to practice a continuous vibrato. To do so try to have the next finger down before you lift the one you are playing.

This is a truly beautiful etude and all the technical advise should serve to make it so.