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## Musical Analysis Structure and Violin Playing Technique in Suzuki Violin Book

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**Abstract:** This article aims to describe and provide an overview of the analysis of the musical structure and violin playing techniques contained in the works in Suzuki Violin Book Volume 1. The research contained in this article uses a qualitative method with a systematic content analysis approach, objectivity, and generalization. The works analyzed in this research are "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star", "Lightly Row", and "Song of the Wind". The results show that the three works are simple works that are appropriate as teaching materials for educators in teaching students who are just learning violin instruments. This is evidenced by violin playing that only uses the A string and E string with 1, 2, 3, and 0 (open string). The works are composed of intervals that make the melody movement dominated by stepping movements rather than jumping. In addition, the techniques that appear in these works are simple techniques such as up-bow, down-bow, tenuto, and staccato, and a little complicated for beginners is syncopation. So, the three works are the right works to learn for beginners.

**Keywords:** analysis, musical structure, violin playing techniques

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Music is a gift created by God to be present as one of the fields of art. According to Destiana (2016), music is a language, a form of communication with emotions and messages between music creators and the listeners contained in it. Music creators pour their ideas, feelings, and messages through the music they create. This means that there is a meaning contained in the creation of a piece of music to convey something to the listeners. Music is a necessity that is almost always needed by everyone. Without realizing it, we enjoy music in almost every situation in our daily environment (Hidayatullah, 2016, pp. 1–2), with feelings that arise because of the relationship between music and emotions (Syumaisi et al., 2021).

This is evident, wherever we go there will always be a connection with music. When shopping at the mall, you will hear music playing, and when you stop at a red light sometimes street buskers are playing a piece of music, when hanging out at a cafe there are even those who specifically perform a live music performance. Another thing, music is also one of the disciplines in the science of art contained in cultural arts subjects in schools and there are also music schools. Music contains norms and values related to education as well as being part of the learning process such as responsibility and discipline. This is because the function of music learning has a big role and benefits for human life (Riyadi & Yensharti, 2022). At the university level, there are study programs or majors in music and music education.

Learning in music studies or music education programs will certainly involve learning from music experts (Bennett & Bridgstock, 2015). One of the courses contained in the music arts or music



education curriculum is a major instrument practice course. Major instrument practice courses are courses in which instruments that are the expertise of music students are studied and are usually chosen at the beginning of the lecture before taking the course contract. This practice is in line with Halam's statement in D'Amato et al. (2020) that music players become experts based on systematic and methodical training planning. There are many instruments usually such as brass and woodwinds, string section, and combo section. One of them is a violin instrument found in the string section.

Learning violin instruments in major instrument practice courses is identical to reading sheet music or work material according to their respective levels. In general, in the music education study program, there are 4 (four) levels of major instrument courses. One of the readings and references for learning violin at level one usually uses the Suzuki Violin Book Volume 1. The book is presented and used to provide a basic stimulus regarding violin playing to level 1 students so that they can play simple works with simple playing techniques while learning to read sheet music easily. Su (2023) pointed out that the presence of the Suzuki method as a popular material to be taught to children is based on innovative teaching and using the mother tongue approach and the teaching philosophy of "every child can speak" with the intention of "every child can play the violin".

In the Suzuki Violin Book Volume 1, there are 16 simple works from various composers, as well as some works in which there are developments in rhythmic pattern variations, introduction to tonalization, and exercises for 4-finger fingering. This of course has a certain purpose and certainly, the purpose leads to learning the violin to make it easier, more effective, and more efficient for beginners.

## 2. METHODS

This research uses descriptive qualitative research methods because research variables are objects that do not need to use measurements and statistical processes (Moleong, 2018), qualitative research data collected are data in the form of words, images, and not numbers. This research aims to describe the form and structure of the music in the works contained in the Suzuki Violin Book Volume 1. Based on Borgdorff's (2012) point of view, this research falls into music research that focuses on the study of texts such as writing, music notation, and audio recordings (Hidayatullah, 2022). In analyzing the form and structure of music, researchers use various methods in the data collection process including observation, documentation, and interviews with experts. In this method, the research subjects are "Twinkle-twinkle Little Star", "Lightly Row", "Song of the Wind", "Go Tell Aunt Rhody", and "O Come Little Children" in Suzuki Violin Book Volume 1.

The data analysis technique performed by the author uses three components, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Mezmir, 2020). The research data obtained through data collection techniques are in the form of sheet music. The next step was to draw conclusions and verify the data. Researchers describe the results of the analysis.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*

According to Cryer (2009, pp. 83–85) the lyrics of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" were first written as a rhyme by Jane Taylor. It was published under the title "The Star" in *Rhymes for Nursery* by Jane and Ann Taylor (her sister) in London with English lyrics in 1806 (Opie, 1997, pp. 397–398). It was later sung to the melody of the French song "Ah! vous dir' ai-je, maman". In Suzuki Violin Book Volume 1, "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" is written into 5 violin themes, namely Theme, Variation A, Variation B, Variation C, and Variation D.



**Figure 1.** Transcription from the theme of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" (Author, 2023)

"Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" in Suzuki Violin Book Volume 1 is written in 16 measures with key signature 3# or A major and uses common time (c). According to (Kraemer, 2019) Common Time is another way of noting and referring to the 4/4 time signature, which indicates that there are four quarter note beats in each measure and is usually written with a semicircular symbol in the shape of the letter "c". This piece uses quarter notes and half notes. The pitch range used in this piece is A to F#. There are intervals P1 (prime perfect), P5 (quint perfect), M2 (second major), m7 (sept minor), M7 (sept major), and P4 (quart perfect). According to the interval, the melodic journey is more like stepping than jumping.

Violin playing techniques using articulation techniques, namely: (1) Down-bow or moving the bow downward (On Music Dictionary, 2016a). (2) Up bow or pulling the bow from the top tip (tip) to the bottom tip (frog) which means it is the opposite of down-bow (On Music Dictionary, 2016b). (3) *tenu to* denoted as a horizontal bar and adjacent to a note, is a direction for the player to hold or sustain a note for its full length (Randel, 1986, p. 840). (4) *staccato* which is a technique of playing a note marked by a note with a shortened duration (Apel, 1969, p. 708).

In addition to the Theme of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" there are several other variations contained in the Suzuki Violin Book Volume 1, namely, Variation A, Variation B, Variation C, and Variation D. In terms of key signature, time signature, interval, fingering, and number of beats, they still look the same, but there are some differences that characterize each variation.

Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star  
Variation A



Figure 2. Transcription from Variation A  
(Author, 2023)

In Variation A of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" there is a difference in the form of notation writing that uses sixteen notes and eight notes and this certainly changes the rhythm to characterize Variation A which is written in the form of rhythm patterns as follows:



Figure 3. Transcription from Variation A Rhythm Patterns  
(Author, 2023)

The rhythm pattern is different from the Theme of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" which uses quarter notes and half notes. The use of sixteen-note and eight-note notations in Variation A of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" is intended to train bowing or friction in violin playing quickly in using sixteen notes and eight notes coupled with the use of staccato articulation techniques on eight notes it is very training bowing for beginners who are learning the violin.

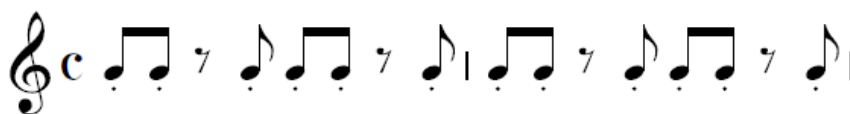
Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star  
Variation B



Figure 4. Transcription from Variation B  
(Author, 2023)

Furthermore, Variation B of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" shows an increase in the level of difficulty, this is shown by all notations using eighth notes and there is a staccato technique on all notes. In addition, there is also a rest sign or rest sign with a duration of eight notes. There is a new technique that appears compared to the previous variation which is syncopation which is a rhythmic

variation, played together to create a piece of music, making part or all of the notes off the beat (Hoffman, 1997).



**Figure 5.** Transcription from Variation B rhythm patterns  
(Author, 2023)

It is clear from the picture above that there is a difference in the rhythm pattern used in Variation B of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" compared to the rhythm pattern used in the previous variation. This shows that there is new learning for students to be able to practice bowing by using *staccato* and syncopation techniques.

#### Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star Variation C



**Figure 6.** Transcription from Variation C  
(Author, 2023)

The fourth variation, Variation C of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" also has different rhythmic patterns. However, this variation is also dominated by the use of the same eight notes and sixteen notes as Variation A.



**Figure 7.** Transcription from Variation C rhythm patterns  
(Author, 2023)

The rhythmic pattern above shows the character of Variation C of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" where the use of eight notes and sixteen notes dominates in this work. In addition, there is a *staccato* technique played on eight notes. This is also an increase in the level of difficulty in violin playing so students must practice the previous variations to get to this stage of playing.

### Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star Variation D



**Figure 8.** Transcription from Variation D  
(Author, 2023)

The last variation is Variation D of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star". All the notes in this variation use sixteen notes. It may look easy but in reality, it is a challenge for beginners who are learning the violin. The rhythm pattern in this variation is different from the rhythm pattern in the previous variations.



**Figure 9.** Transcription from Variation D rhythm patterns  
(Author, 2023)

The rhythmic patterns that appear in this variation all use ten-note notations without any *staccato* or syncopation techniques as in the previous variation. It may look easy, but in reality, students who play this variation must be patient in bowing to produce a good tone in playing this work.

### Lightly Row

"Lightly Row" was written by Wright, Wm. C., in 1874 published by Dye & Saunders, Oneonta, monographic and currently included in the Library of Congress Music for the Nation repository: American Sheet Music, ca. 1870 to 1885. "Lightly Row" is one of the pieces that appear in the violin lessons in the Suzuki Violin Book Volume 1 after "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star".

### Lightly Row



**Figure 10.** Transcription from Lightly Row  
(Author, 2023)

In the Suzuki Violin Book Volume 1, "Lightly Row" consists of 16 measures played in moderato tempo using the key signature 3# or A major, and using cut common time. Cut common time is another writing of 2/2 which is also known as *alla breve* (Allysia, 2018). The notation used in this piece is a quarter note and a half note. The

dynamics that appear in this work are *mf* or *Mezzo-forte* which means the sound is produced rather loud (Microsoft Academic, 2021).

The piece "Lightly Row" is composed of the intervals M6 (sixth major), P1 (perfect prime), M2 (second major), m2 (second minor), m7 (seventh minor), M3 (third major), and m3 (third minor). Based on these intervals, it can be seen that the melodic movement is balanced between jumping and stepping. The first two bars of the melodic movement are jumping, the next two bars continue with a stepping movement, and so on. This means that the learners are directed to be able to balance the melodic playing by jumping and stepping.

The use of fingering in violin playing in this work also uses 1, 2, 3, and open string (0). The violin playing techniques found in this "Lightly Row" work are down-bow and up-bow techniques. There is something different that appears in this work, namely the use of the up-bow technique on the down-beat played at beat 5. This means that it trains students to do up-bow on down-beat in a rhythm. Below is the rhythm pattern of "Lightly Row".



**Figure 11.** Transcription from Lightly Row rhythm patterns (Author, 2023)

### Song of the Wind

"Song of the Wind" is the third piece in the Suzuki Violin Book Volume 1 in key signature 3# or A major, time signature 2/4, and tempo Allegretto (Suzuki, 2007). This piece is not an original violin composition, but Shinichi Suzuki's arrangement of the German folk song "Fuchs, du hast die Gans gestohlen" to which the words were added by Ernst Anschütz in the *Musikalisches Schulgesangbuch*.

#### Song of the Wind



**Figure 12.** Transcription from Song of the Wind (Author, 2023)

"Song of the Wind" is a 14-beat piece that uses eight notes and quarter notes. There is an end repeat bar line in the final measure which indicates that the piece is repeated from the beginning when played. The pitch range in this piece starts from note A to note A octave.

"Song of the Wind" is composed of intervals M2 (second major), m2 (second minor), P1 (prime perfect), m6 (sixth minor), P5 (perfect fifth), M6 (sixth major), m7 (seventh minor), M7 (seventh major), M3 (third major), m3 (third minor). Based on these intervals, it can be seen that the melodic movement that occurs in this work is not much different from the work "Lightly Row" which is balanced between jumping and stepping movements. However, there is one difficulty that did not appear in the previous work and is found in this

work, namely the pitch shift from D to A, which both use the 3-string, but there is a string shift from the A string to the E string.

This is a challenge for students who learn the violin because this work does not seem to have many techniques used but the implied message for violin learning in this work is to move the tone with the same finger but to a different string. Here's a picture of the rhythm pattern of "Song of the Wind".



**Figure 13.** Transcription from *Song of the Wind* rhythm patterns (Author, 2023)

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Suzuki Violin Book 1 features simple pieces for learners who are new to the violin. Some of them included in this writing is "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star", "Lightly Row", and "Song of the Wind". These three works both use the key signature 3# or A major by only using the melody found on the A string and E string. The works are dominated by the use of half notes, quarter notes, and eighth notes. The intervals that make up the composition of these works are simple intervals with melodic movements that are dominated by stepping movements rather than jumping.

The fingerings used in these works only use fingerings 1, 2, 3, and 0 (open string) without the use of finger 4 which means that it is appropriate to be learned by students who are just starting to learn violin. In addition, the playing techniques used in these works are not too many and are basic techniques in violin playing including up-bow, down-bow, *tenuto*, *staccato*, and what is quite complicated as a start to learning the violin is the syncopation technique. So, it can be concluded, that the three works included in the Suzuki Violin Book Volume 1 are the right works to be used as violin learning materials for students and the book is the right textbook as a teaching medium for music educators.

#### AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

Lanang Riyadi: Conceptual, Analysis, Transcription, Writing and Editing.

Yensharti: Guidance and Review.

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