**REVIEWS OF SŁAWOMIR TOMASIK’S VIOLINIST’S COMPASS**

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I thoroughly enjoyed Sławomir Tomasik’s book *The Violinist’s Compass*. I immediately told all my students to read it and when they did I noticed that their playing improved. I too began to practice the exercises and this solved some of my problems. *The Violinist’s Compass* is written with great panache. You can see that the author loves music and particularly the violin. I highly recommend this book to everybody because I too love music and the book is now one of my best friends.

**Kaja Danczowska**  
Outstanding violin virtuoso of world renown  
Professor at the Cracow Academy of Music

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Professor Sławomir Tomasik’s book *The Violinist’s Compass* is an extremely valuable methodological text devoted to the fundamentals of violin playing. It identifies and thoroughly explains the most important problems which beginners confront when learning to play the violin. When discussing mobility and fingering, correct thinking, correct apparatus and the closely related elements of articulation, Mr Sławomir Tomasik not only proposes analysis, evaluation and corrective guidelines (prescriptions and prohibitions), he also reflects very wisely and philosophically on students’ physical and emotional capacities. He proposes his own approach to primary school teachers’ daily struggles with their students in simple, understandable and down-to-earth language. He suggests his own solutions to difficult problems, his own exercises, technical studies and detailed guidelines to develop awareness and stimulate the imagination. This book: teaches; encourages reflection, the search for and construction of one’s own solutions, composition and combination of exercises; motivates reflection on one’s own methods of work and their outcomes; stimulates awareness of the problems involved in elementary teaching of the violin; gives numerous examples which help to develop the imagination and conceptualises the mastery of the violin as something intimate, personal and achievable. Teachers will be particularly pleased with the “Ditone strategic plan of student development thanks to which “the pupil who has had six years of primary music school instruction will be able to play Niccolo Paganini’s caprices”. The author creates an atmosphere of candid, direct reflection on how to teach the violin, how to make difficult things easy and how to encourage the practice of easy things to motivate students to work patiently every day.

In *The Violinist’s Compass* Mr Sławomir Tomasik has proposed a tested, specific and effective method of teaching the violin. When he says that “the world of sounds is a garden and our pedagogical calling is the titanic work of the musical gardener” he really feeds our imagination.

**Helena Ostapowicz**  
Violinist, organiser of methodological courses, highly valued elementary school teacher,  
member of the European String Teacher Association
Sławomir Tomasik’s book *The Violinist’s Compass* is highly recommendable. The author studied with the very best professors of the violin and is a fully competent continuer of their pedagogical thinking which he develops and interprets very individually. The author’s vast experience as a violin soloist and a teacher who is not only capable of profound analysis and synthesis but is also endowed with great sensitivity and an unconventional imagination have yielded a work of unsurpassed value on the Polish (and soon perhaps not only Polish) market. The information he provides is reliable, conveyed using adequate comparisons and examples and none of the problems he discusses should cause any doubt. The author’s illustrative choice of words contains many references to everyday activities and many terms which stimulate the imagination. I think it is very important that Sławomir Tomasik shows how to lead the student towards “independent” problem solving and how to develop his or her own exercises. This is particularly valuable for the younger student. Sławomir Tomasik is a wonderful methodologist and although many of the problems he discusses may seem obvious to us, music teachers, he reformulates them anew and often helps us to see familiar problems in a new, inspiring light. Each of the presented problems is accompanied by a specific suggestion concerning its solution.

I would like to mention another asset of this book. The entire system of solutions to technical problems is based on continual references to every element of the music and is completely subservient to the music.

I highly recommend this book to all violin teachers and I believe that it should be available in every music school library.

Magdalena Szczepanowska
Professor of the violin, Fryderyk Chopin Music Academy, Warsaw

Each chapter of *The Violin Compass* and the presented ideas concerning logical and effective methods of practice, analysis of the music in terms of its technical and imaginative problems, is an extremely valuable stimulant for pedagogical inventiveness focused on the consistent consolidation of the correct instruments of performance which every violinist should master. If these instruments operate properly the violinist will be able to meet the challenge of every work of music. The author’s selection of words with which to discuss sound phenomena and violin technique is very original and contributes to the feeling of freshness and enjoyment we have when we read it, akin to the childish joy we all experience when we relate to the violin. This is definitely a wise book in its approach to the art of the violin and the more general mystery of the human intellect. The personal touch in the author’s narrative which provides the canvas for the information he wants to convey gives us moments of reflection and comparison of such significance that the intention behind the information can also be absorbed correctly.

I recommend this book to every violinist and I believe that nobody who studies it will overlook its merits and that every reader will use it proportionately to his or her pedagogical commitment.

Tadeusz Gadzina
Outstanding Polish virtuoso
Head violinist of the legendary Wilanów Quartet
Professor of the violin at the Fryderyk Chopin Academy of Music in Warsaw