

The Care and Feeding of Intermediate String Students

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Handouts, slides, and more available at:
www.OrchestraTeacher.net

Characteristics

- Beginners - First year players
- Intermediate - Typically 2nd and 3rd year players

What happens to students over
the summer?

Challenges

- It's not a “new” instrument/experience
- Students had the same teacher last year
- Generally, student are not the top players in the school
- Classmates are the same (positive & negative)

Beginning of the year

- Instrument maintenance
 - Strings
 - Pegs & fine tuners
 - Bridge & soundpost adjustments
 - Check instrument size
- Time for an instrument quality upgrade?

Skills learned in beginning year

- Body posture and instrument set-up
- Right hand / bowing
- Left hand - proper hand shape, instrument hold/position
- Note reading
- Aural Skills - echoes, basic pitch matching and error recognition
- Class procedures

Book I

- Pizzicato
- Open Strings
- Detache, Scaccato, Hooked, Slurring, Basic String Crossings
- D & A string tetrachords
- Keys of D Major, G Major, C Major
- Quarter notes, eighth notes, half notes, whole notes
- Basic Slurs, Staccato

Finishing the 1st year: Expectations

- Solid posture and instrument set up
- Knowledge of notes/fingerings
- Ability to read music comfortably
- Acceptable tone
- Good intonation

Preparations for the 2nd Year...

- Provide a summer “fun” packet - music to practice!
- Provide opportunities for summer camps or clinics
- Provide online resources for musical activities
 - Music listening
 - Composition tools
 - Music theory tools - [musictheory.net](https://www.musictheory.net)

What is **NEW** for intermediate players?

Review for the developing student

- Need to get the “rust” off
- D major scale & arpeggio
- Slurs
- 3/4 time
- Dynamics
- G major scales & arpeggio
- Staccato
- C major scale & arpeggio
- Changing bow speeds
- Lots of aural training (echoes)
- May have to re-teach some notation

New Left Hand Skills

- New fingerings - Low 1, High 3, Extensions
- New key signatures & time signatures
 - F Major, A major, B-flat Major, E-flat Major
- Refined technique
- Preparations for shifting (harmonics)

New Right Hand Skills

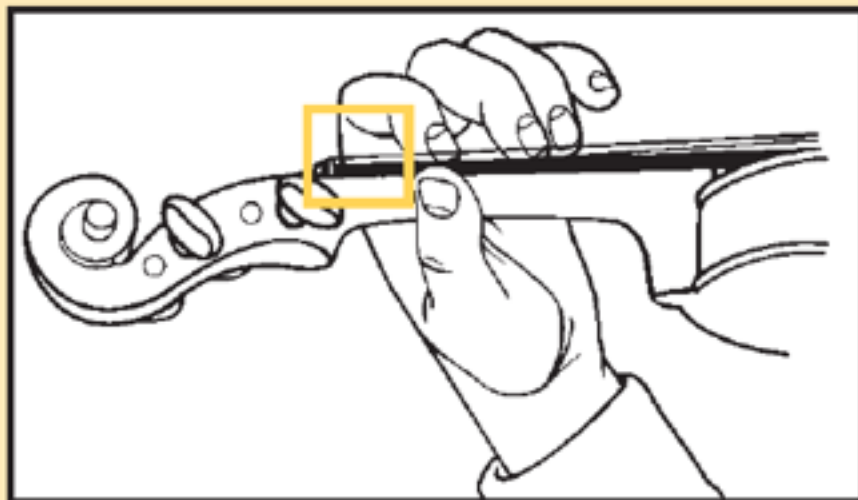
- New rhythms - syncopation and dotted rhythms
- Martele
- Spiccato
- Advanced String Crossings
- Refined slurring
- Better bow control!

Aural Skills

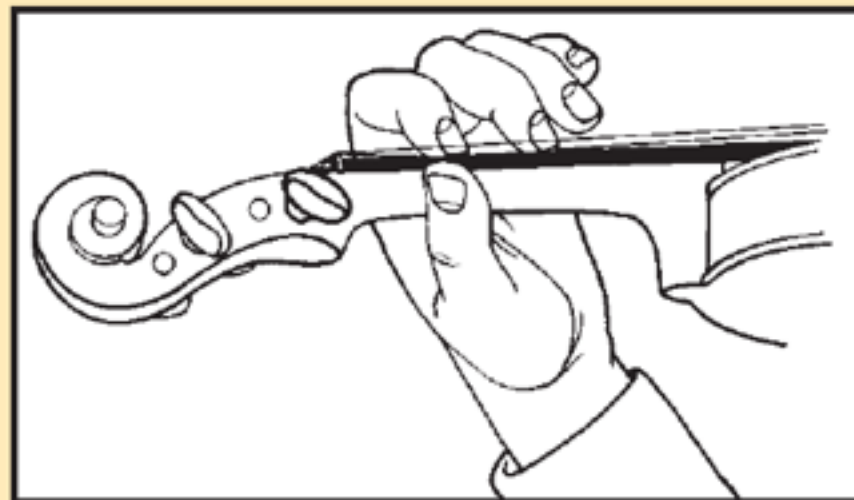
- Advanced echoes (in the new keys)
- Simple melodies (in comfortable keys)
- Listen and match pitch harmonically (not just in unison)
 - Ex: Double stops (tuning vertically)
 - Ex: Placing the 3rd in a triad
 - Ex: Building triads, adjusting notes up or down in that context

Block Fingering

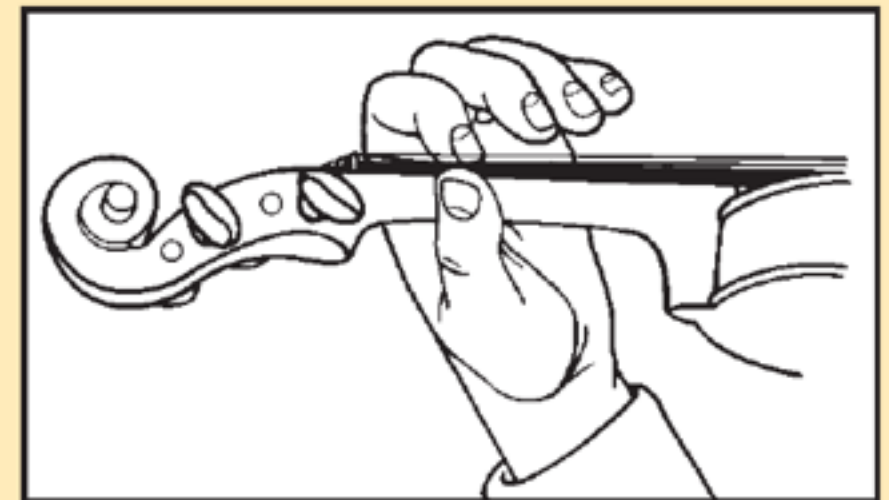
G is played with 3 fingers on the D string.



F# is played with 2 fingers on the D string.



E is played with 1 finger on the D string.



15. WALKING SONG



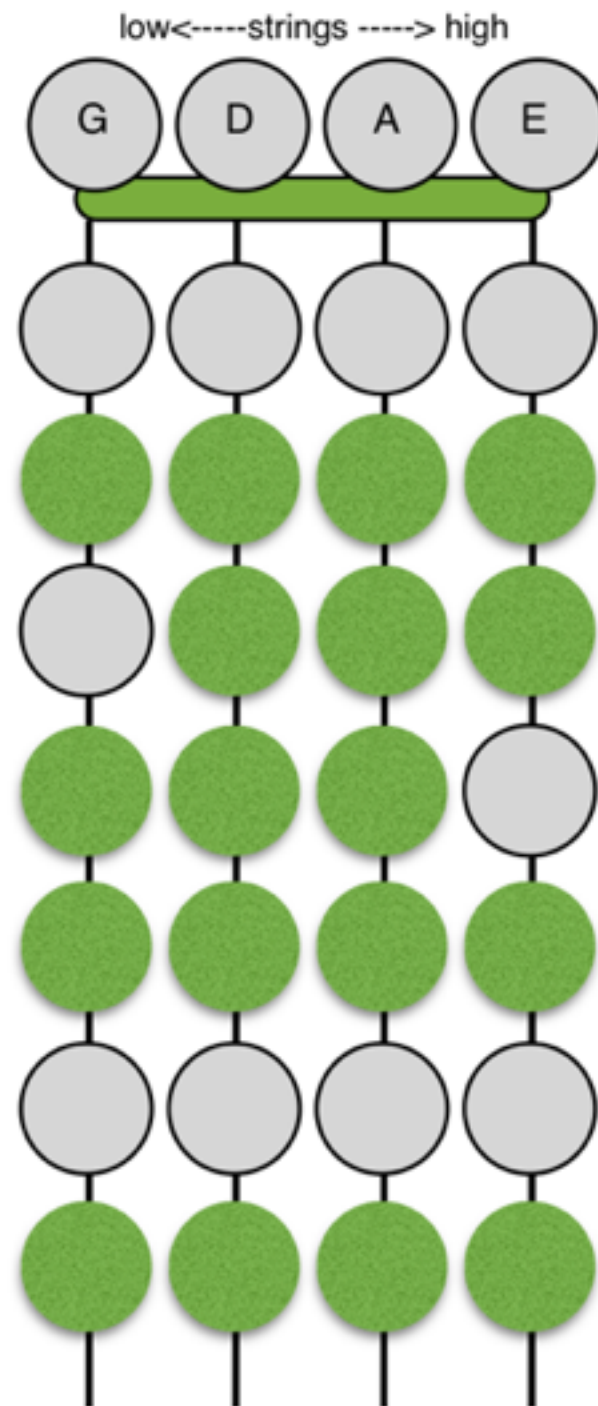
Source: Essential Elements for Strings. © Hal Leonard Corporation. Used with permission.

Independent fingering

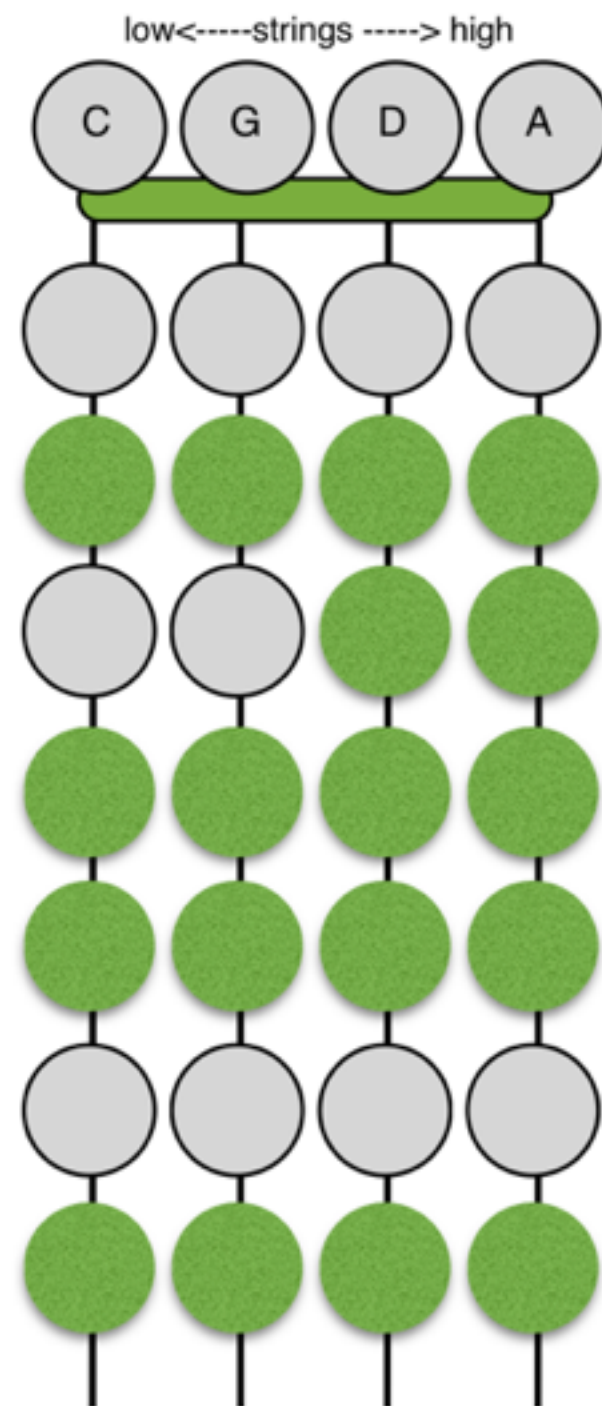
- At the latest, start when you approach the teaching of “low 2”
- Opens up the door for vibrato
- Students will then begin to understand when to use block fingering and when to use independent fingering

Notes learned in Essential Elements Book 1

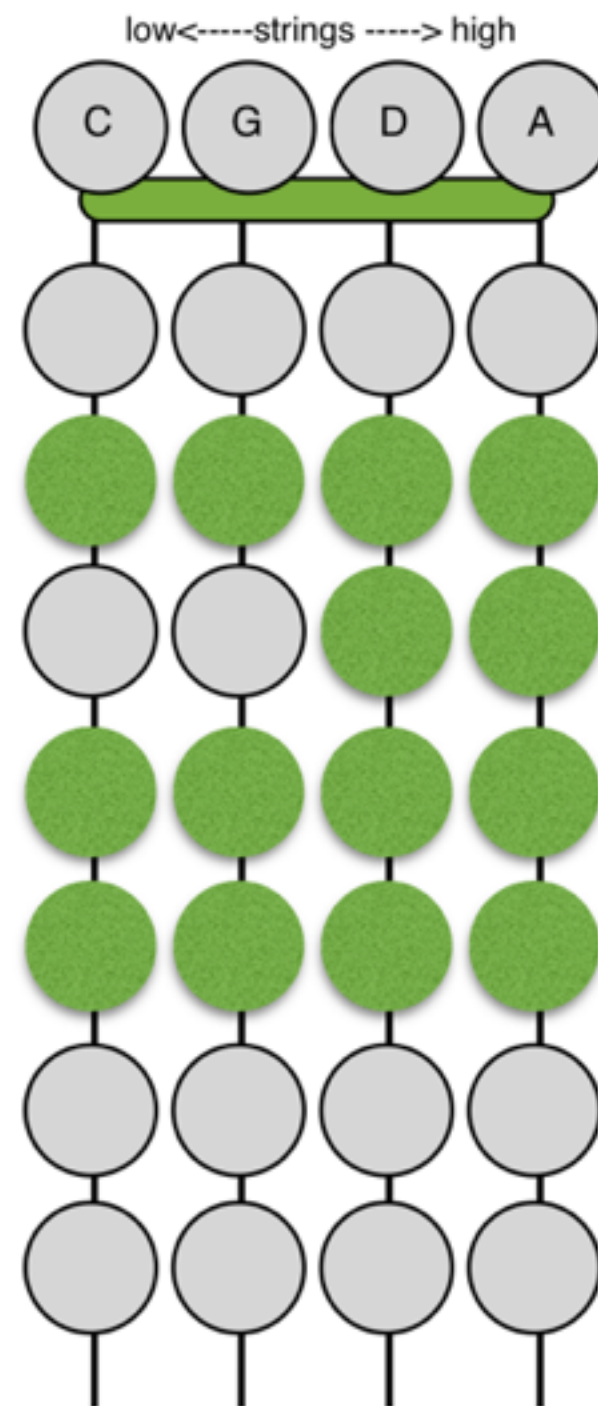
Violin



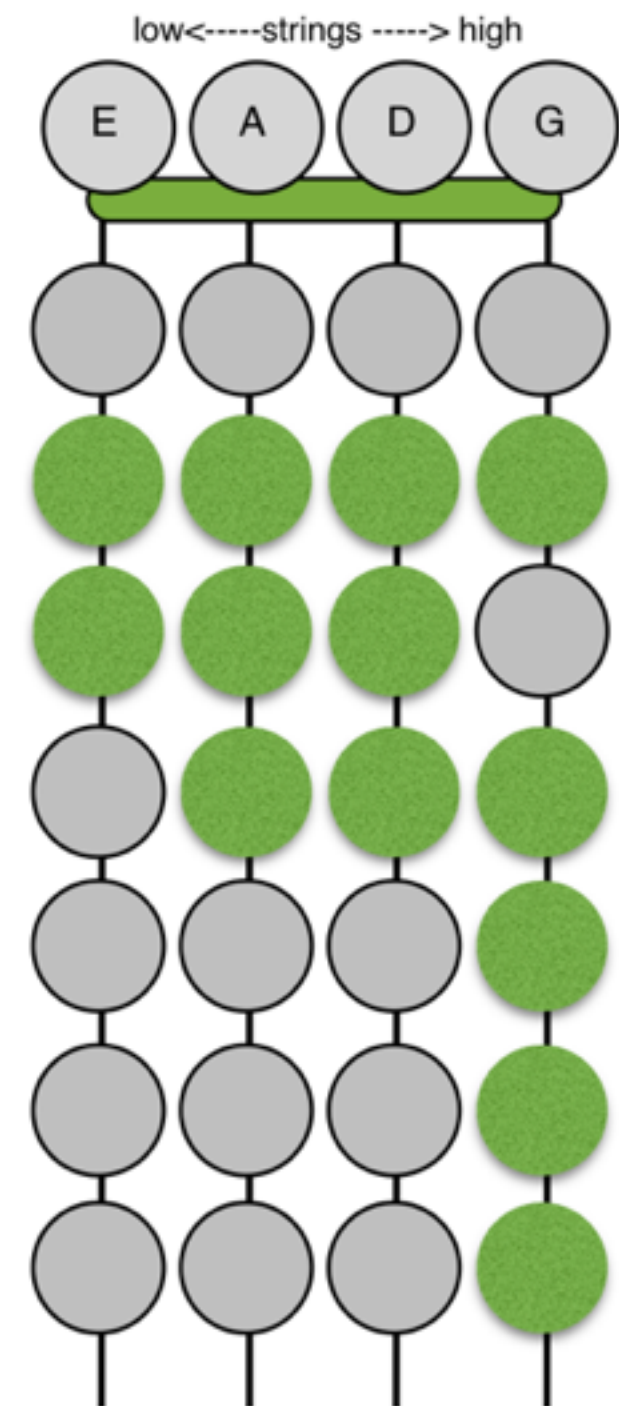
Viola



Cello

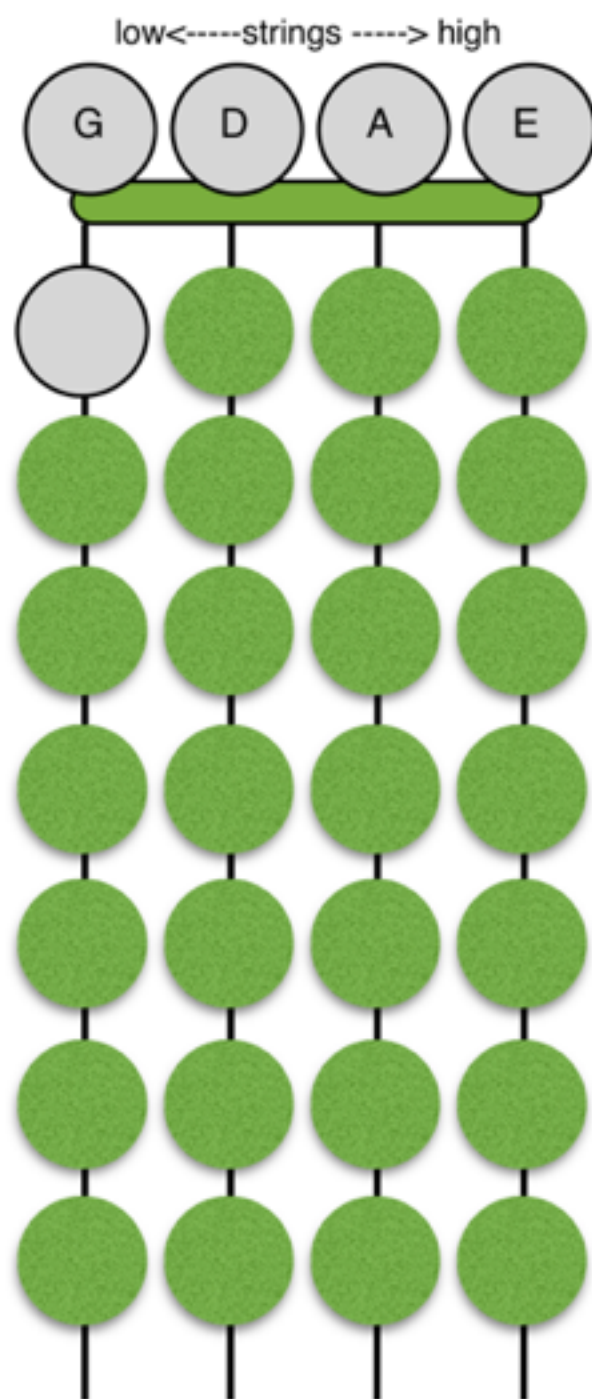


Double Bass

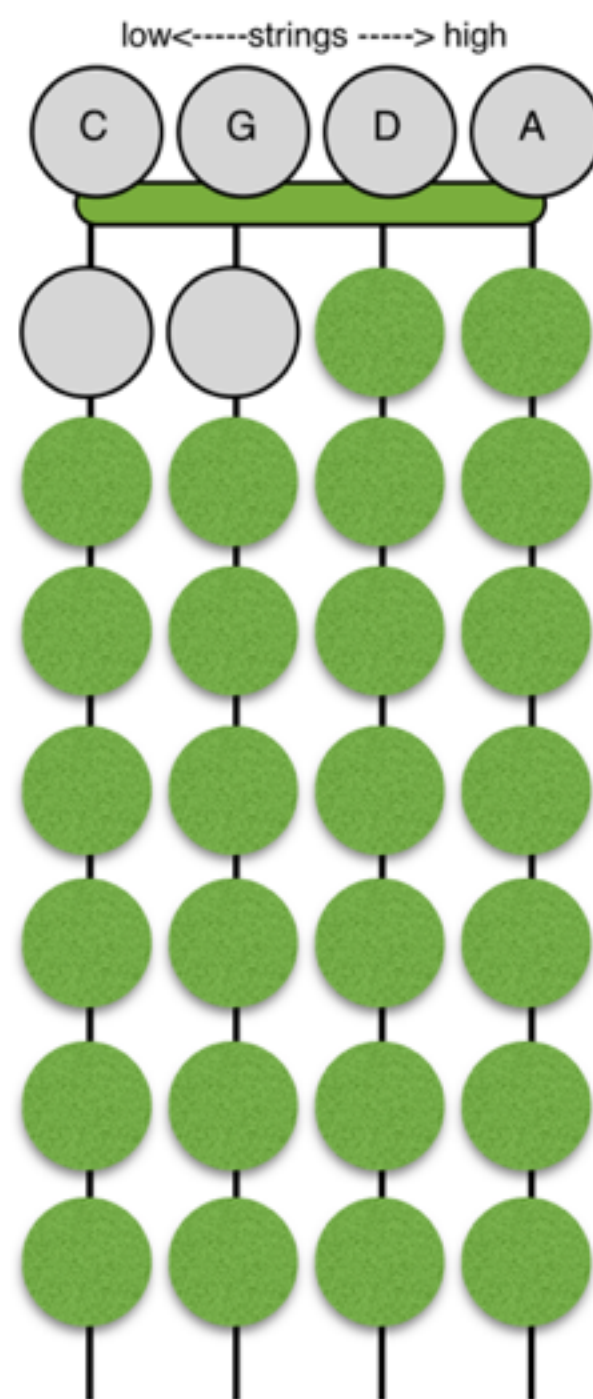


Notes learned in Essential Elements Book 2

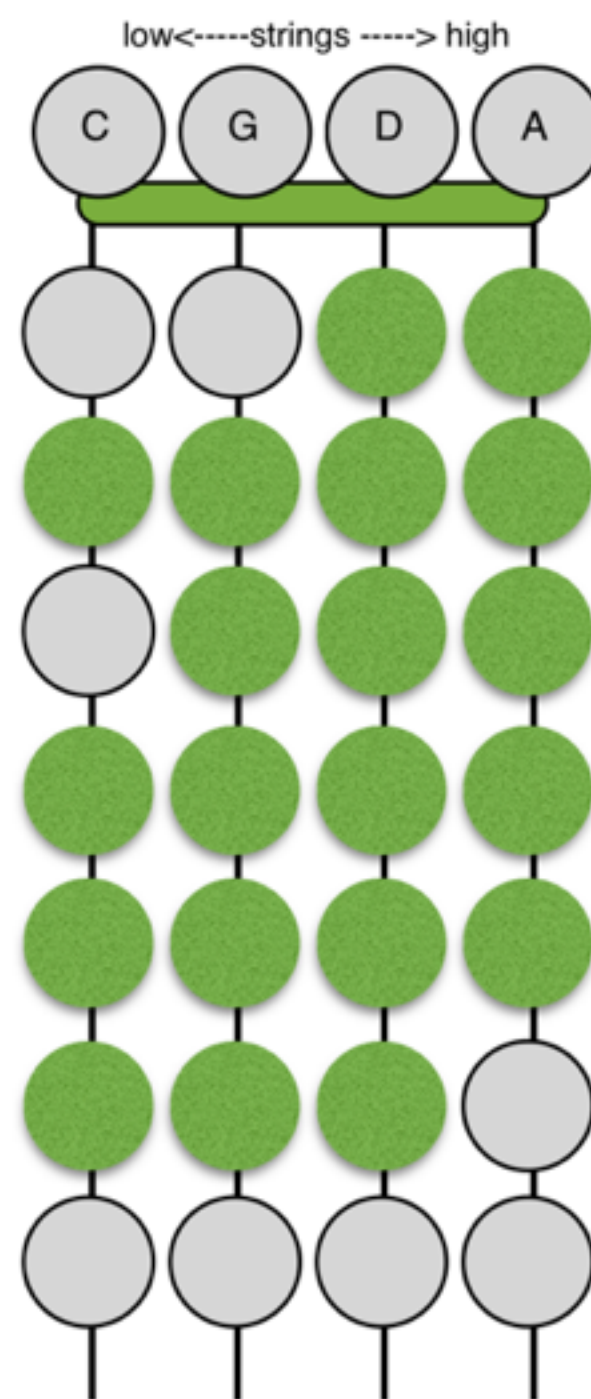
Violin



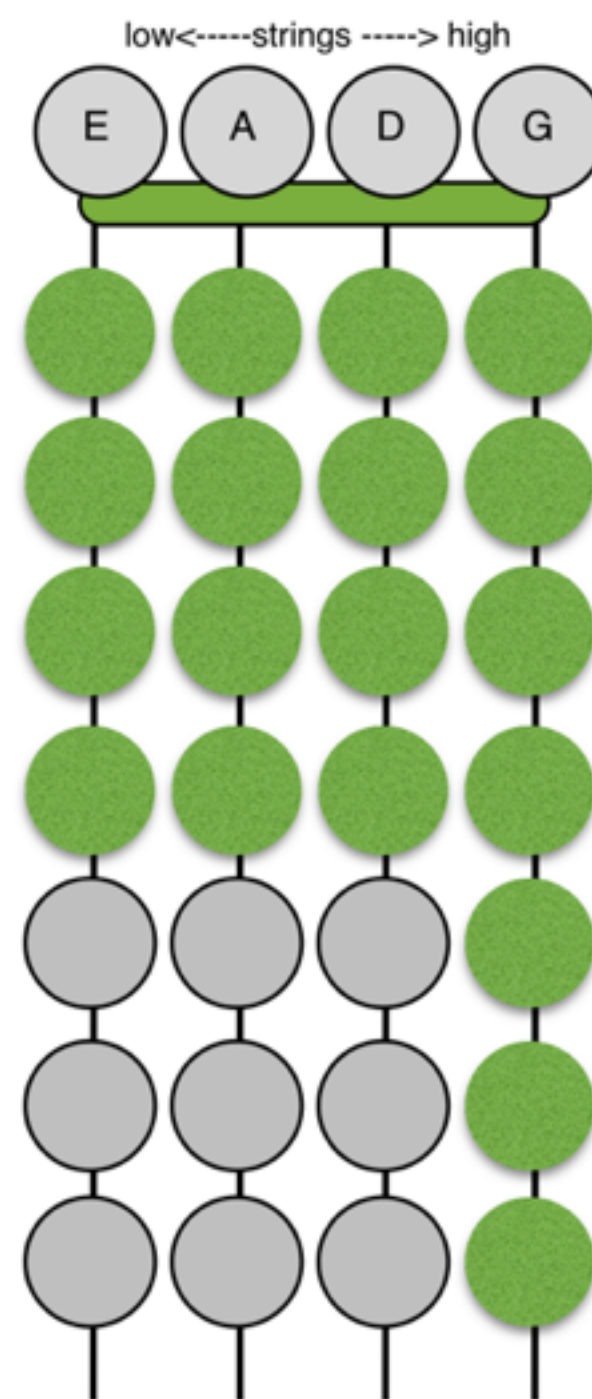
Viola



Cello



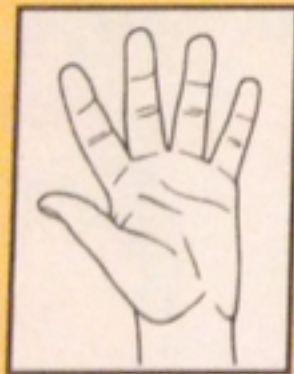
Double Bass



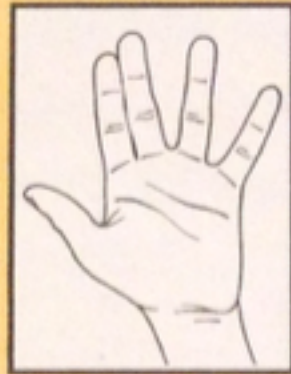
Finger Patterns for Violin/Viola

FINGER PATTERNS

There are four basic finger patterns, which are combinations of whole and half steps. In the "open" hand pattern, a half step occurs between the open string and first finger. The other patterns have half steps between 1–2, 2–3, or 3–4. Notice that some finger patterns include new notes.



open hand



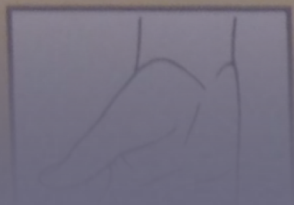
1–2



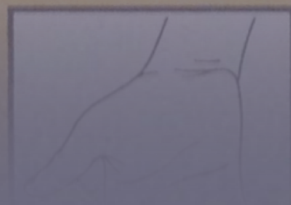
2–3



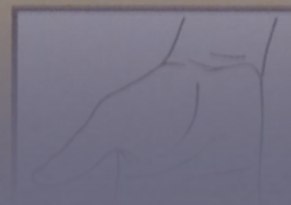
3–4



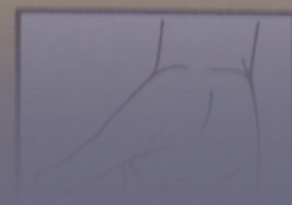
1–2



2–3



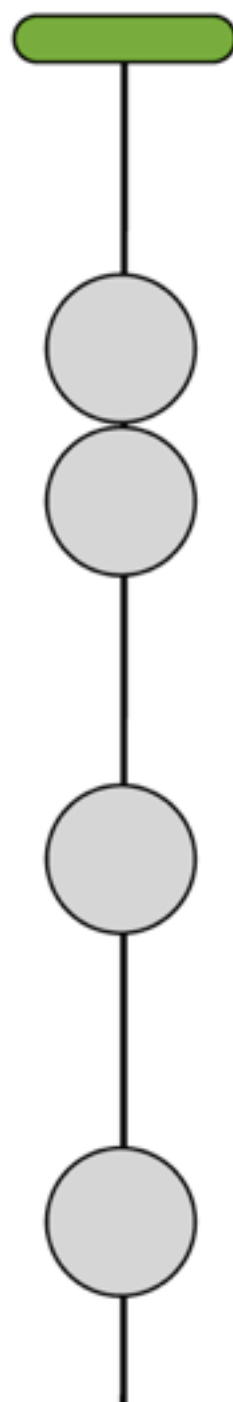
3–4



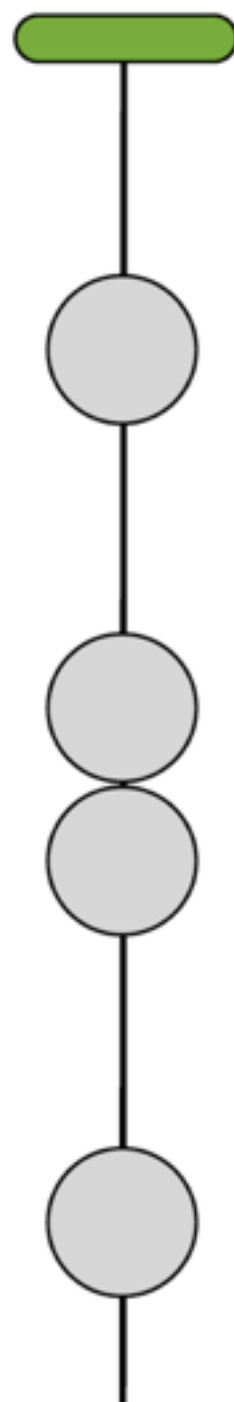
1–2

Violin & Viola Finger Patterns

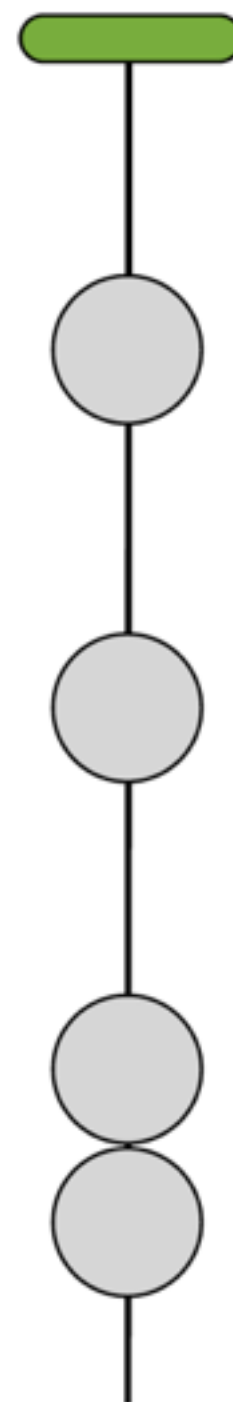
1-2 pattern



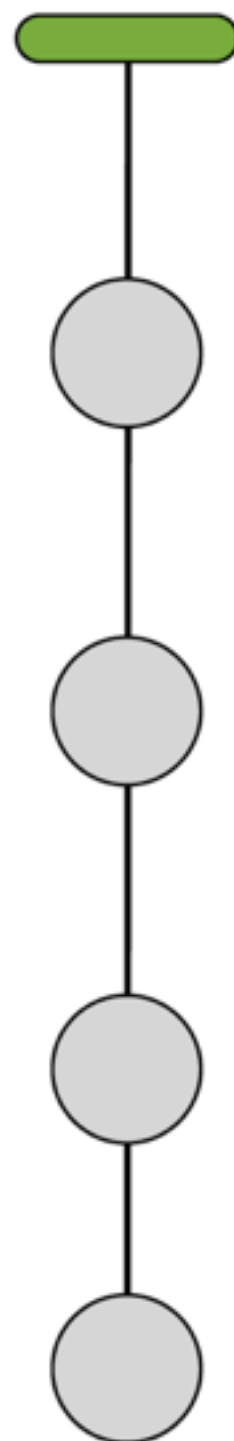
2-3 pattern



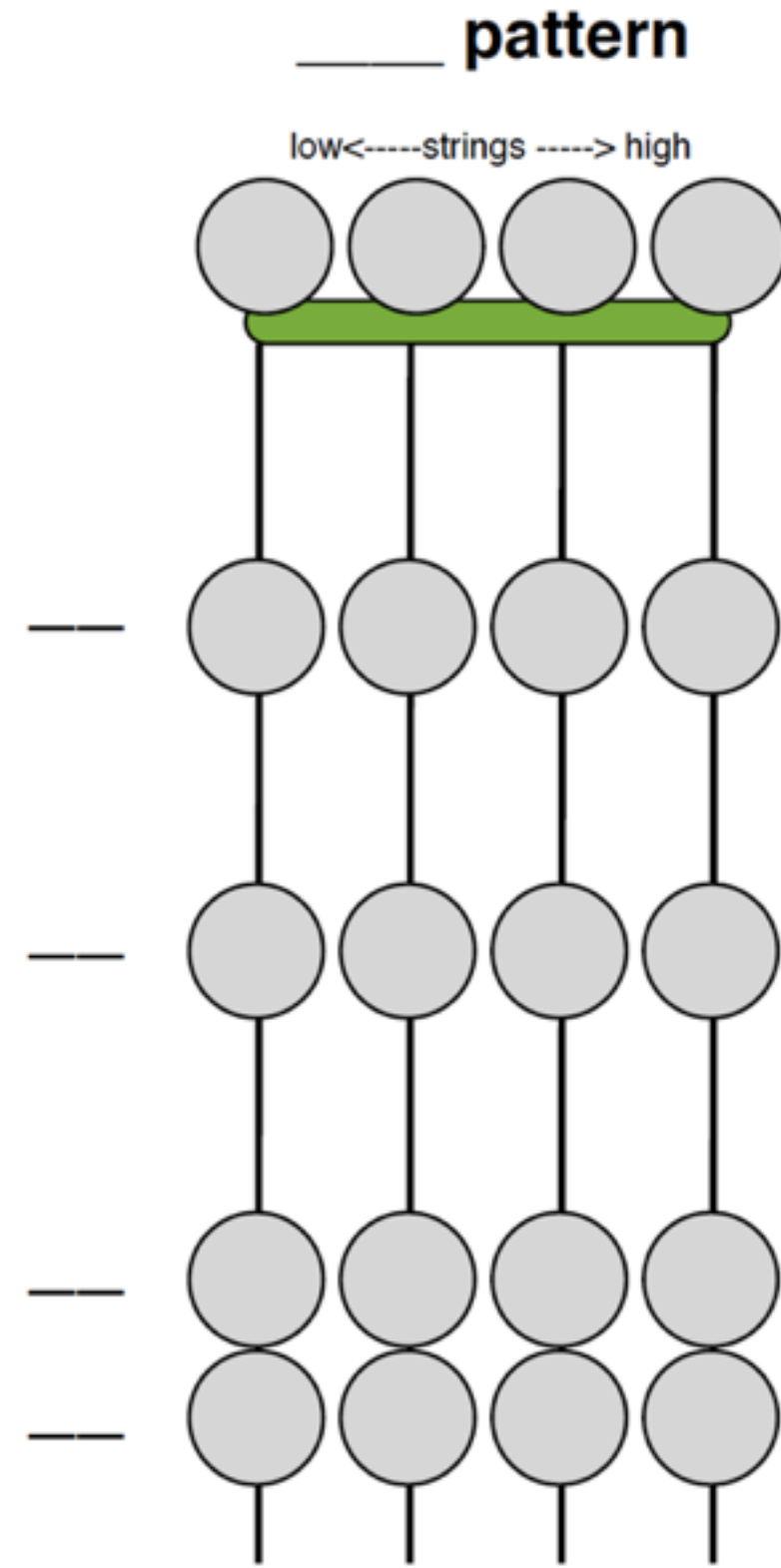
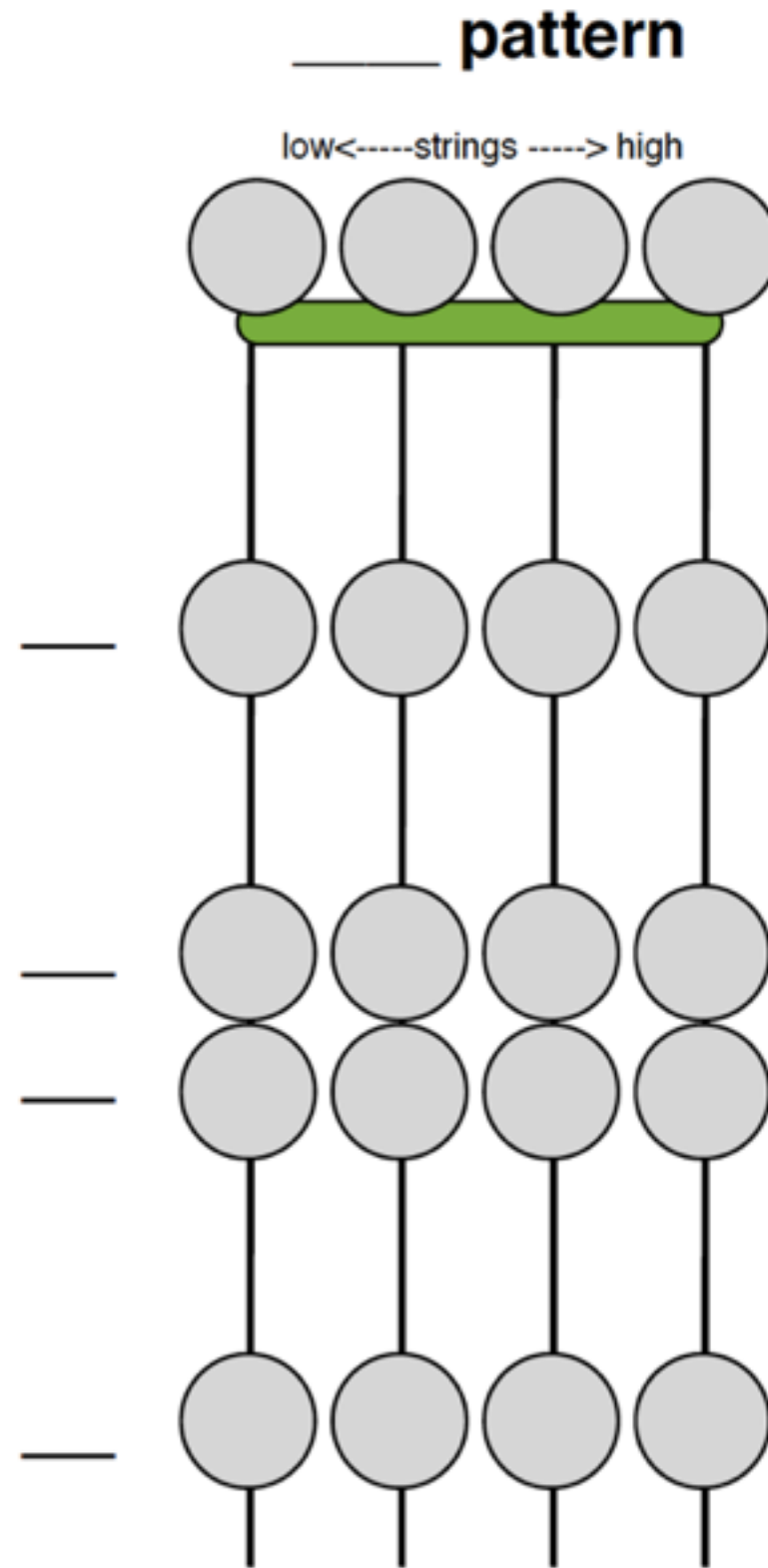
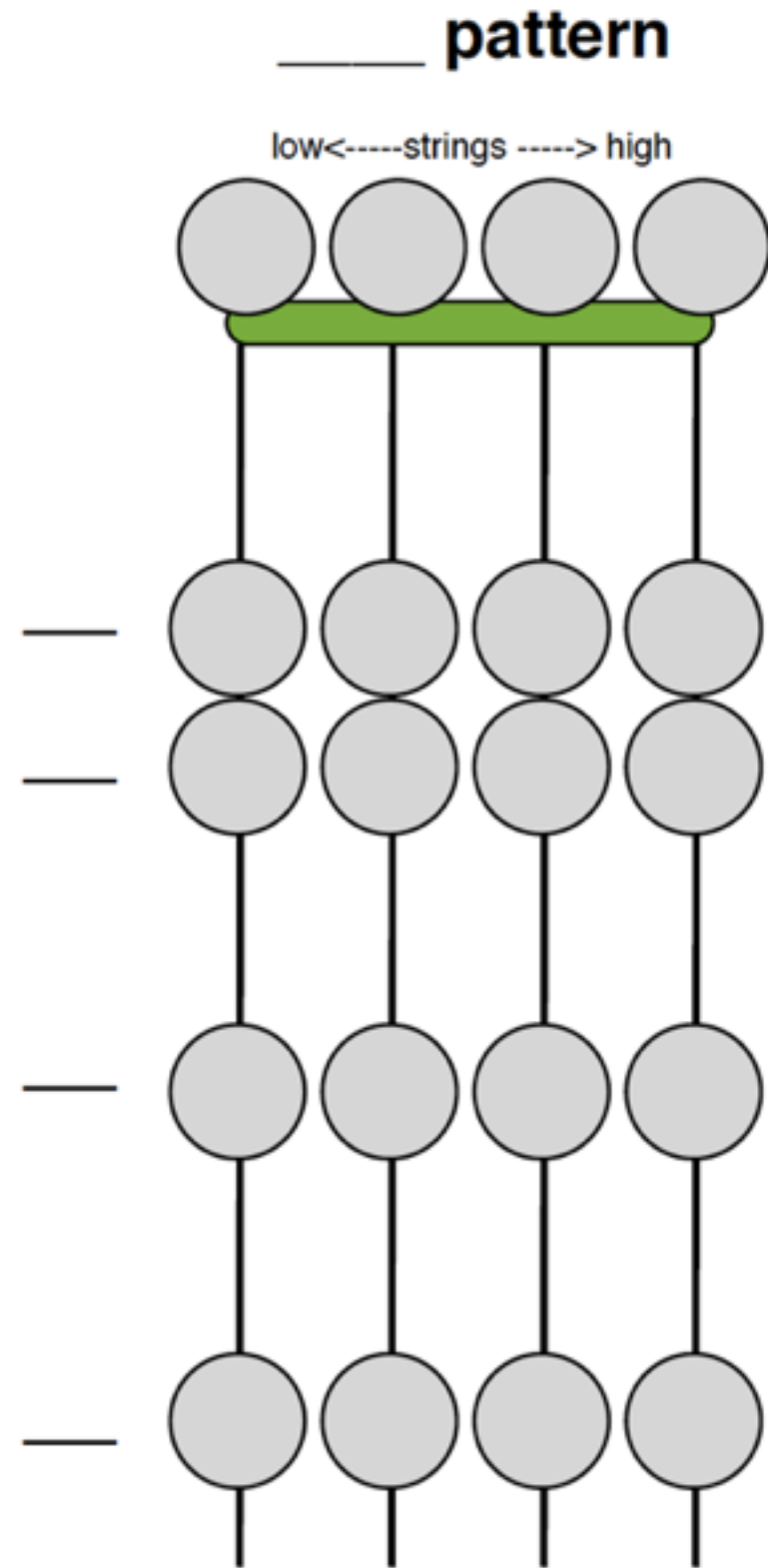
3-4 pattern



open hand



Violin & Viola Finger Patterns



Building Independence

- As a soloist
- As an ensemble player
- *Essential Musicianship for Strings* by Allen, Gillespie & Hayes
 - Beginning Level
 - Intermediate Level

essential Musicianship

teacher's manual

for strings

INTERMEDIATE
ensemble
concepts

Michael Allen

Robert Gillespie

Pamela Tellejohn Hayes



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B♭ Major Rounds

Come, Follow, Follow

John Hilton

Violin

Viola

Cello

Bass

1/2

XI

2

4


1

4

1

4

Violin



2

B \flat Major Arrangements

Partner Song

She'll Be Coming 'Round The Mountain
When The Saints Go Marching In

James M. Black
19th Century Western American

Violin

Viola

Cello

This musical score is for three string instruments: Violin, Viola, and Cello. It is written in B-flat major (two flats) and common time (C). The score is divided into three systems, each with a treble (A) and bass (B) staff. The Violin part uses a treble clef, the Viola part uses an alto clef, and the Cello part uses a bass clef. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some measures containing rests. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4. Bowings are marked with 'V' for up-bow and 'X' for down-bow. The score is arranged in a way that allows for a partner song, with the Violin and Viola parts often playing in unison or harmony, and the Cello part providing a bass line.

Assessments

- Keep assessments geared for student success, attainable goals
- Develop clear rubrics
- Students should not be surprised or stumped about how to successfully complete an assessment
- Consider recorded video and assessments to keep rehearsals moving and avoid students becoming self-conscious about their playing
- Archive assessment videos to create a digital portfolio (examples)

CARMEL HIGH SCHOOL ORCHESTRA PLAYING EXAM RUBRIC

NAME: _____

Exam No. _____

Category	10pts	9.9 - 9pts	8.9 - 8pts	7.9 - 7pts	6.9 - 6pts	5.9 - 5pts	4 - 1pts
Rhythm and Pulse	Exceptional and rarely given. Performed all passage with perfect rhythmic execution and with solid and clear rhythmic (pulse) 'direction' and drive/'groove'	Excellent. One or two MINOR rhythmic errors. Almost exceptional, but is unconvincing of rhythmic direction/drive/'groove'	Good. One of two moderate rhythmic errors and/or two minor instances where students get off with the metronome.	Average. 3-4 moderate/major rhythmic errors, or 1 entire passage (or almost entire) where playing is not together with the metronome/pulse.	Passing. Several (4-6) rhythmic errors throughout. Or 2 passages where playing is not together with the metronome/pulse.	Unsatisfactory/Failing. Numerous rhythmic errors throughout. 3 passages (or half of the excerpts) not matching with the metronome/pulse.	Unacceptable. Almost total lack of rhythm, no passages matching with the metronome/pulse.
Rhy/Puls Score							
Musicality	Exceptional and rarely given. All excerpts are performed at excellent level and in addition evoke an emotional reaction.	Excellent. Performed all excerpts with appropriate phrasing, all dynamics, articulation, and proper style. All elements are executed convincingly.	Good. Performed most excerpts with appropriate phrasing, observed all dynamics, articulation, and proper style. All elements are executed somewhat convincingly.	Average. Only few evidences of phrasing, dynamics, articulation, and little demonstration of proper style.	Passing. Demonstrates only few instances of only few concepts (phrasing, dynamics, articulation, style).	Unsatisfactory/Failing. Only one or two instances of musical expression of any kind.	Unacceptable. No evidence of musicianship.
Musicality Score							
Technique, bowings, and notes.	Exceptional and rarely given. Performed all passages with perfect clarity and accuracy.	Excellent. One of two MINOR instances of questionable clarity and accuracy, including bowings and notes.	Good. One or two moderate technical errors and/or one brief major technical error, including bowings, clarity, and note accuracy.	Average. 3-4 moderate/major errors, or 1 entire passage (or almost entire) where playing is severely hindered due to clarity and accuracy, including bowings and note accuracy.	Passing. Several (4-6) technical errors throughout, or 2 passages (or half of excerpts) where playing is severely hindered due to clarity and accuracy.	Unsatisfactory/Failing. Numerous technical errors throughout. 3 passages (or over half of excerpts) severely hindered due to technical issues (fluency, bowing, notes, etc.)	Unacceptable. Almost total lack of clarity and accuracy.
Technique Score							
Intonation	Exceptional and rarely given. Performed every single note perfectly in tune.	Excellent. One or two intonation issues throughout the entire exam.	Good. 3-4 intonation issues throughout entire exam.	Average. 4 or more intonation issues throughout entire exam, or 1-2 excerpts severely hindered due to intonation issues.	Passing. 2-3 entire excerpts hindered due to intonation issues.	Unsatisfactory/Failing. Numerous intonation issues throughout the entire exam.	Unacceptable. Total lack of pitch center throughout all passages.
Intonation Score							
Tone Quality	Exceptional and rarely given. Plays with resonant and full sound. Vibrato is nuanced/expressionist, and bow appropriately to produce tone.	Excellent. Plays most of the time with resonant and full sound or not too harsh. Vibrato is nice, appropriate, and controlled. Uses the bow appropriately.	Good. Couple of instances where entire excerpts are weak or too harsh. Couple of excerpts lack vibrato. One or two instances where bow usage for tone (if appropriate) is lacking.	Average. Half of the excerpts where almost entire excerpts are played with weak sound (when not appropriate), or lack vibrato. 3-4 instances where bow usage for tone production is lacking.	Passing. Some evidence of good tone and vibrato, but mostly lacking. Bow usage for quality tone is mostly not considered by the performer.	Unsatisfactory/Failing. Almost all excerpts lack a sense of tone, resonance, and almost no vibrato.	Unacceptable. Total lack of tone, resonance, and vibrato. Bow usage is totally ignored for tone production.
Tone Score							
Directions and Prep	<u>Exceptional and should be given often!</u> Followed all directions and demonstrates strong evidence of preparation.	Excellent. Strong evidence of preparation, but minor case and directions not followed.	Good. Strong evidence of preparation, and/or couple of minor cases of directions not followed.	Average. Good evidence of preparation, and/or one major issue of directions not followed.	Passing. Some evidence of preparation, and/or one or two major issues of direction not followed. <u>HIGHEST POINT POSSIBLE IF HANDED IN LATE.</u>	Unsatisfactory/Failing. Only followed one/two directions.	Unacceptable. No regard for directions.
Direction Score							

Comments:

Final Score: _____/60

CARMEL HIGH SCHOOL CONCERT ORCHESTRA

PLAYING EXAM RUBRIC

Name & Instrument _____

Exam No. _____

	5pts	4pts	3pts	2pt
Rhythm	Performed all passage with perfect rhythm and stays constant with the metronome	Performed passages with 1-2 rhythmic problems or issues of staying with the metronome	Performed with multiple rhythmic problems or issues of staying with metronome	Performed with several rhythmic problems or major problems with metronome
Notes	Performed all passages with all of the correct notes	Performed with 1-2 note issues	Performed with multiple note issues	Performed with several note issues
Technique/Clarity	Performs with good technique, fluency and clarity	1-2 issues of technique, clarity, or fluency	Multiple issues of technique, clarity, or fluency	Several issues of technique, clarity, or fluency
Intonation	Almost perfect intonation throughout all passages	1-2 intonation issues throughout the exam	Multiple issues of intonation throughout the exam	Several issues of intonation throughout the exam
Dynamics and Articulation	Observed almost all dynamics and articulation markings	1-2 missed dynamics and articulation markings	Multiple missed dynamics and articulations	Several missed dynamics and articulations
Musicianship & Style	Plays with correct style and good phrasing	Few inconsistencies in style and few missed musical opportunities	Multiple inconsistencies in style and multiple missed musical opportunities	Several inconsistencies in style and several missed musical opportunities
Tone/Bow Control & Vibrato	Plays with great tone and vibrato through the exam	Few instances of weak or harsh tone and plays mostly with vibrato	Multiple instances of weak or harsh tone and sometimes plays with vibrato	Several Few instances of weak or harsh tone and generally doesn't play with vibrato
Directions	Followed all directions perfectly	1-2 problems with test directions	Multiple problems with test directions	Several problems with test directions OR considered 'late'

Total Score: _____ / 40

Playing Test

Name _____

Date _____

<u>Skill</u>	<u>Points Possible</u>	<u>Points Earned</u>
Playing Position	5	_____
Correct Notes	20	_____
Rhythm and Tempo	5	_____
Bowing	20	_____
Phrasing, Style, and Dynamics	10	_____
Tone Quality	15	_____
Intonation	25	_____

Comments: _____

Scale Test

Name _____

Date _____

<u>Skill</u>	<u>Points Possible</u>	<u>Points Earned</u>
Right Hand		
Elbow Position	5	_____
Bow Hand Shape	5	_____
Bow Parallel	10	_____
Quality of Sound	20	_____
Left Hand		
Body and Instrument Position	5	_____
Elbow Position and Hand Shape	5	_____
Correct Notes	20	_____
Intonation	30	_____

Comments: _____

Vibrato Test

Name _____

Date _____

<u>Skill</u>	<u>Points Possible</u>	<u>Points Earned</u>
General Vibrato Motion	20	_____
Vibrato Sound		
Width of Vibrato	10	_____
Speed of Vibrato	10	_____
Evenness of Vibrato	10	_____
Pitch Remains in Tune	10	_____
Overall Vibrato Sound	25	_____

Comments: _____

Finding “newness”

- Must show excitement & promote the learning of new technical skills
- Challenge students: “When you increase your technical skills you can play more exciting sheet music”
- Positive reinforcement - LOTS of it!!
- Get parents more involved
- Regularly practice sight-reading

Keeping Students Motivated

- Intrinsic
 - Sound of the instrument
 - Family tradition of music making
 - Developing their personal voice
- Extrinsic

Extrinsic Motivators

- Encourage private lessons
- Foster social practice sessions (“Pizzicato & pizza party”)
- Mix it up by altering seating or even the orientation of the room/sections
- Integrate technology - even a simple drum beat can make a difference!
- Develop student leadership to help run class/warm-ups

Extrinsic Motivators (cont.)

- Foster playing tunes by rote (learn the latest tune on the radio!)
- Allow students to compose (soundtracks, etc.)
- Improvise!!
- Use alternative music styles like fiddle, jazz, pop (Electric instruments?)
- Assemble chamber music groups to play at events & concerts
- Bring in guest conductors and artists

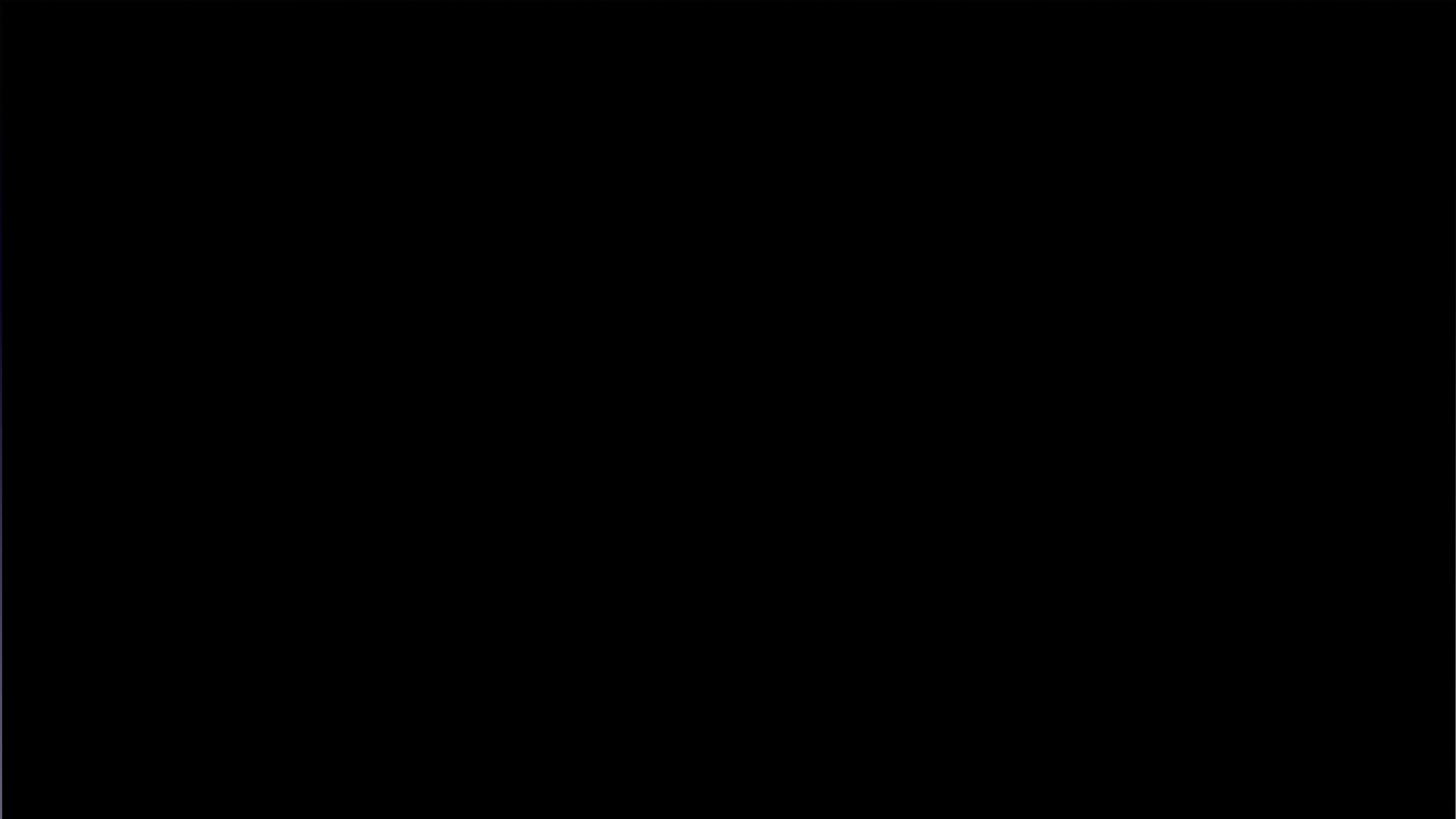
Orchestra Exchange via Skype

Hilliard Heritage Middle School
Orchestra (Hilliard, Ohio)

and

Hunters Creek Middle School
(Orlando, Florida)





“ORCHESTRA EXCHANGE”

Hunters Creek MS Orchestra / Hilliard Heritage MS Cadet Orchestra

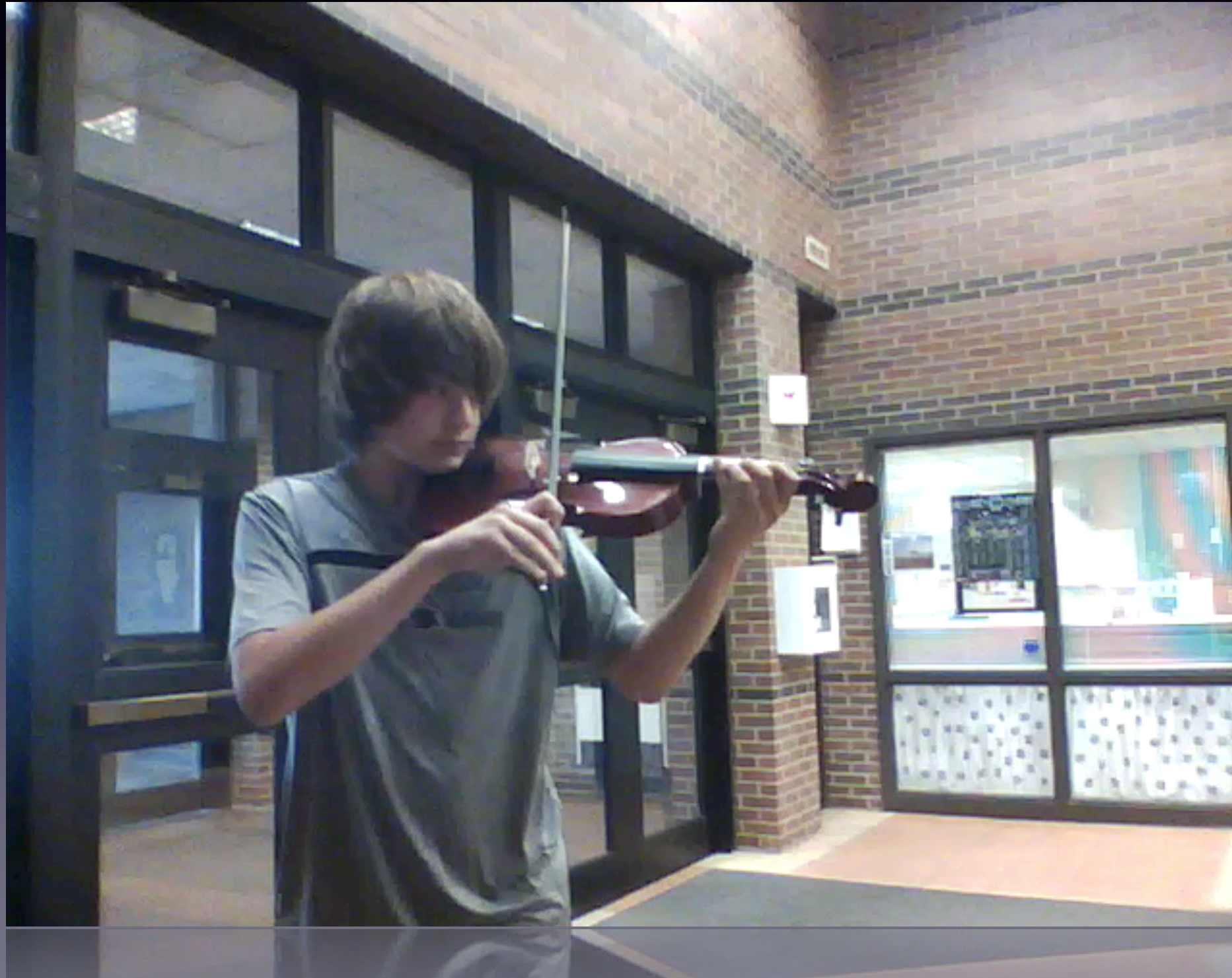
If a student wants to drop...

- Find out the REAL reasons (musical, social, etc.)
- Point out and showcase the student's strengths to others
- Consider an instrument conversion (violin to bass, etc.)
- What solutions have worked for you?

Switching Instruments...



Switching Instruments...



Switching Instruments...



Switching Instruments...



To summarize...

- Understand the needs of intermediate players
- Pay extra special attention
- Foster their musical and technical growth
- Keep it fresh and fun!

Motivating with music!

- Program great music across ALL genres
 - Orchestral
 - Solo

Sample Orchestral Repertoire

- Soul Bossa Nova
- Uptown Funk
- Firebird Finale-Festival Edition
- Green Onions
- Nimrod arr. Conley
- C-Jam Blues arr. Longfield
- Danza Final-Young Edition arr. Longfield

Sample Solo Repertoire

Instrumental Solos Collection

Bravo! Series

Violin

- Popular songs v. 2
- Classical Favourites, v. 27
- Chart Hits for Beginners, v. 51

Viola

- Viola Songs: Swinging Romantic
- Latin Tunes for Viola
- Berkley Practice Method

Cello

- Jazz Duets
- Hot Cello
- The Piano Guys - Wonders
- 2Cellos
- Playalong Symphonic Tune

Bass

- Easy Pop Melodies for Bass
- Berkley Practice Method
- A Guide to Jazz Improvisation

Special thanks to...



Contact Us!

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David Eccles: deccles@vandercook.edu

Slides and more available at:

www.OrchestraTeacher.net