

Inspire, retain, and empower intermediate string students

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Lassiter High School, Cobb County School District



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www.orchestrateacher.net

Characteristics

- Beginners - First year players
- Intermediate - Typically 2nd and 3rd year players
- Advanced - 4th and 5th year players

What happens to our 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)
- Children are particularly socially and academically vulnerable during their middle years.

Some reasons students quit music

- Students and parents not prioritizing music enough over other subjects or activities
- Kids not viewing orchestra music as “cool” or socially relevant
- Students not willing to put the time/energy toward home practice
- Lack of academic and musical confidence in a student
- Students can't see their progress

Beginning of the year

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



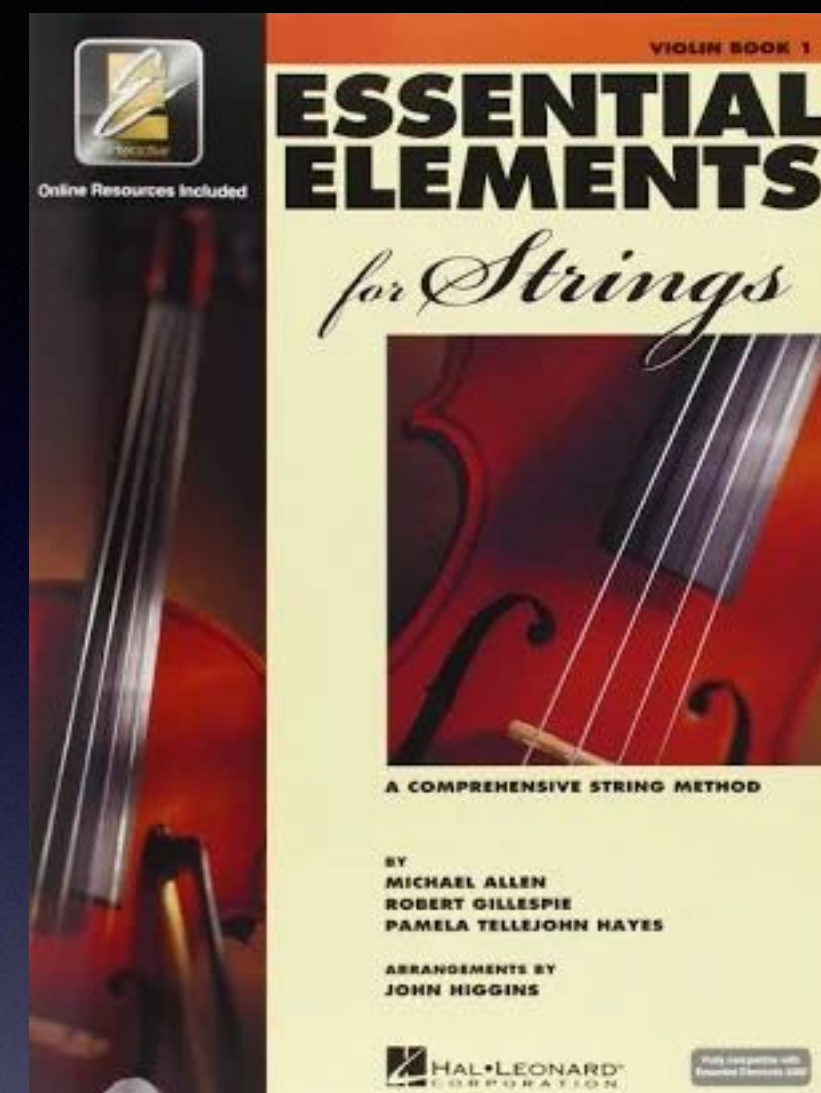
Skills learned in beginning year

- Body posture and instrument set-up
- Essential technical skills
 - Right hand / bowing & left hand
- Note reading
- Class procedures



Book 1

- Pizzicato
- Open Strings
- D & A string tetrachords
- D Major, G Major, C Major
- Quarter notes, eighth notes, half notes, whole notes
- 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

Laux's List of Orchestra Priorities

1. Technique

2. Tone

3. Intonation

4. Rhythm & Ensemble

5. Musicianship

I. Technique

- Posture
- Instrument Position
- Left hand position
- Bow hold

2. Tone

- Producing a characteristic tone
- “WASP2”

3. Intonation

- Listen
- Match
- Adjust

4. Rhythm & Ensemble

- Watch
- Breathe
- Move
- Count
 - Subdivide

5. Musicianship

- Articulation
- Dynamics
- Phrasing

What is NEW for intermediate players?

www.orchestrateacher.net

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Starting the 2nd year: Review

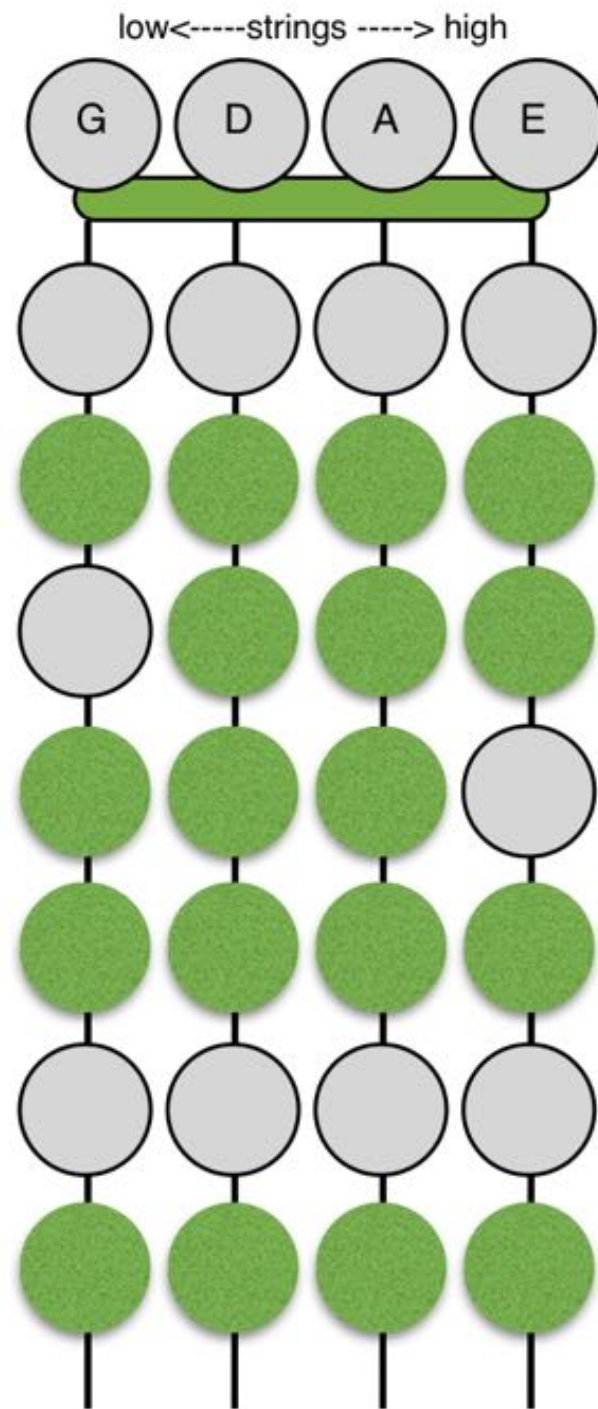
- Gets the “rust” off
- D major scale & arpeggio
- Slurs
- 3/4 time
- Dynamics
- G major scales & arpeggio
- Staccato
- C major scale & arpeggio
- Changing bow speeds
- Lots of aural training (echoes)
- May have to re-teach notation

New technical skills

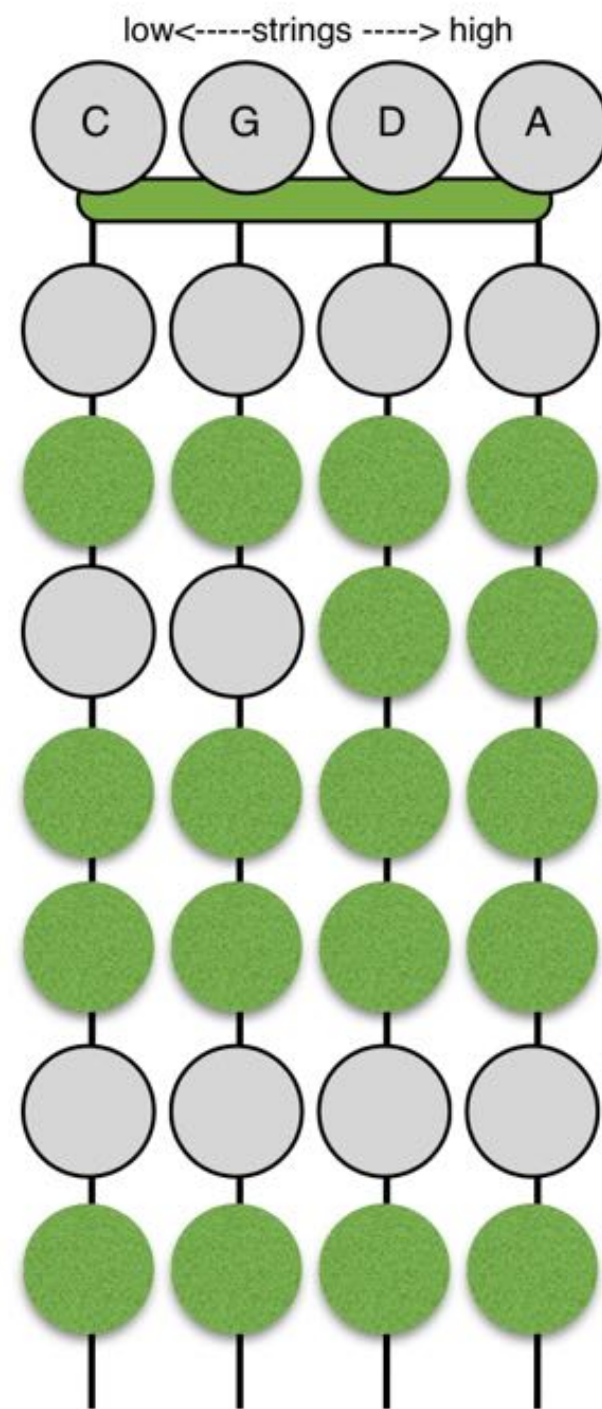
- New fingerings - Low 1, High 3, Extensions
- New key signatures & time signatures
- Lots of new rhythms including syncopation and dotted rhythms
- Refined technique
- Preparations for shifting (harmonics)

Notes learned in Essential Elements Book 1

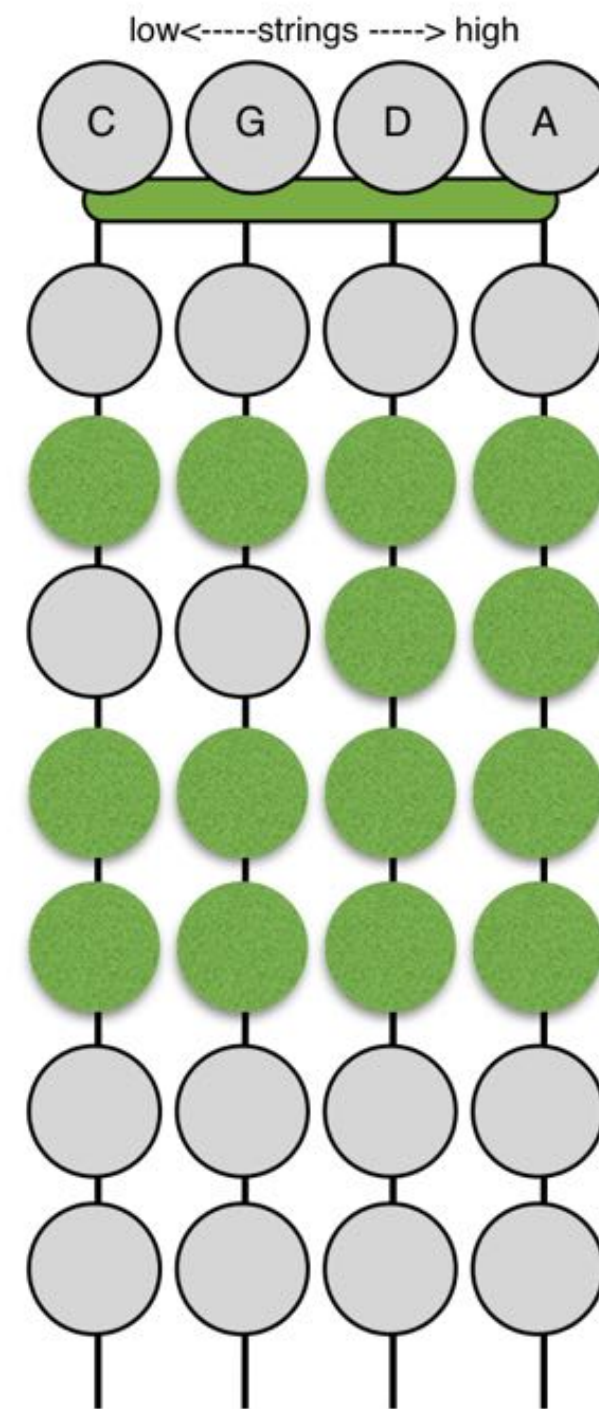
Violin



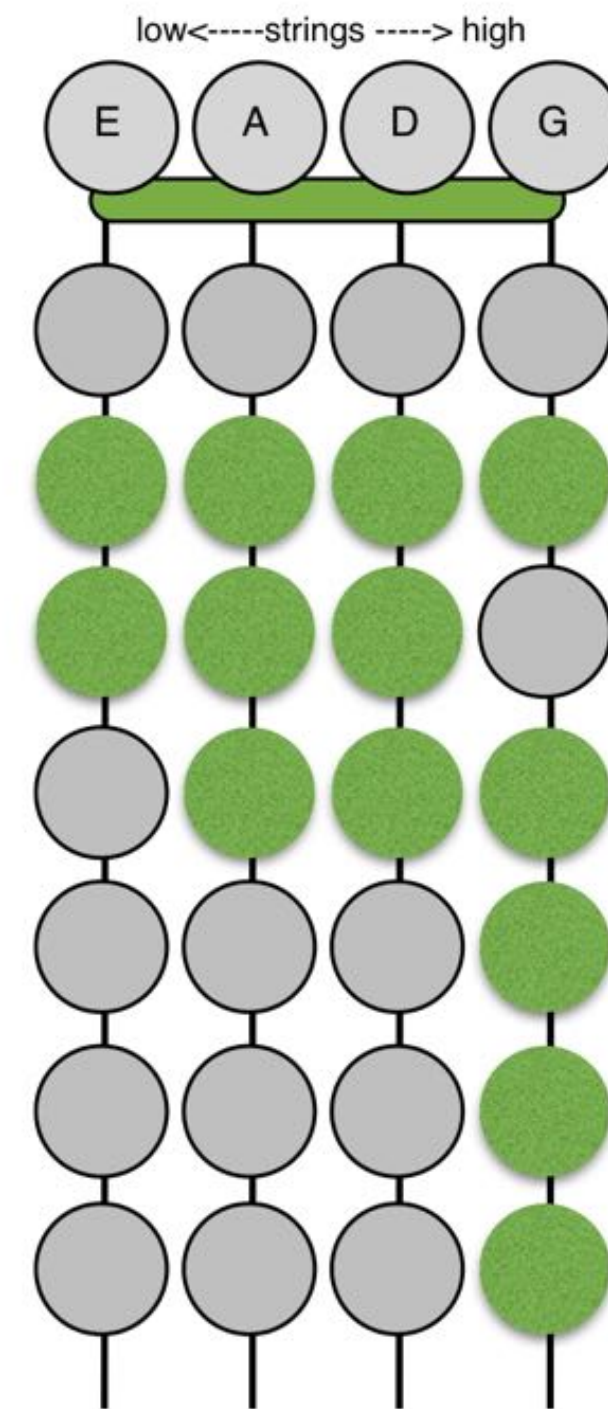
Viola



Cello

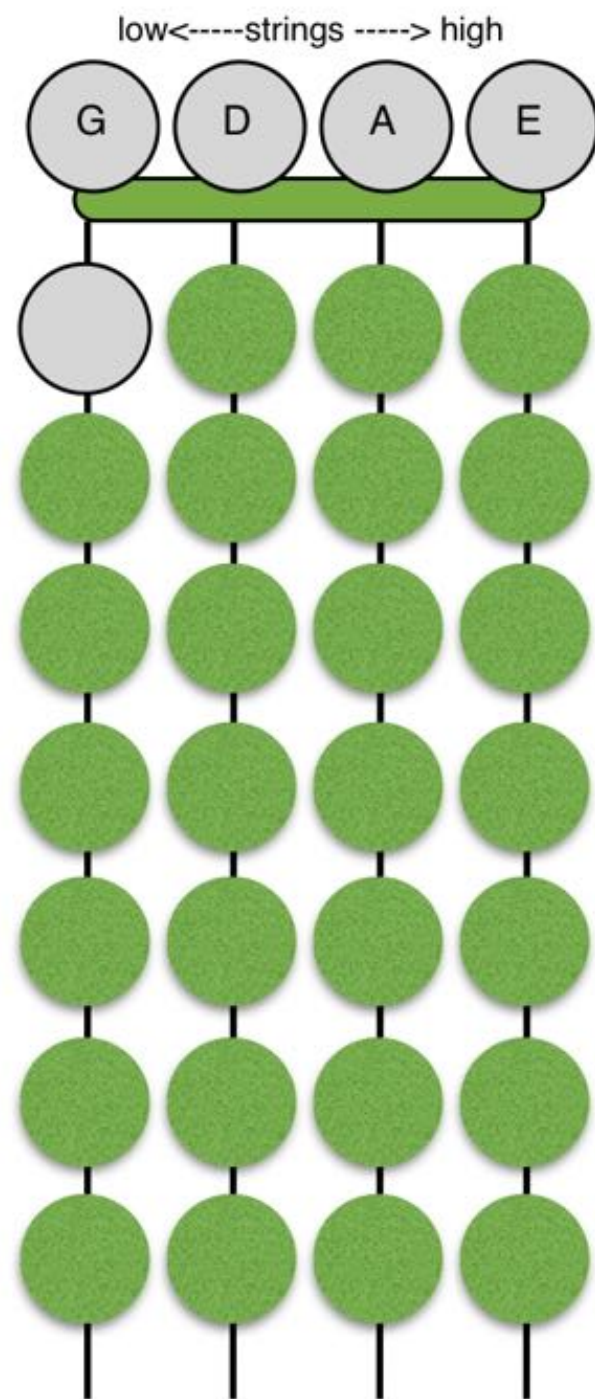


Double Bass

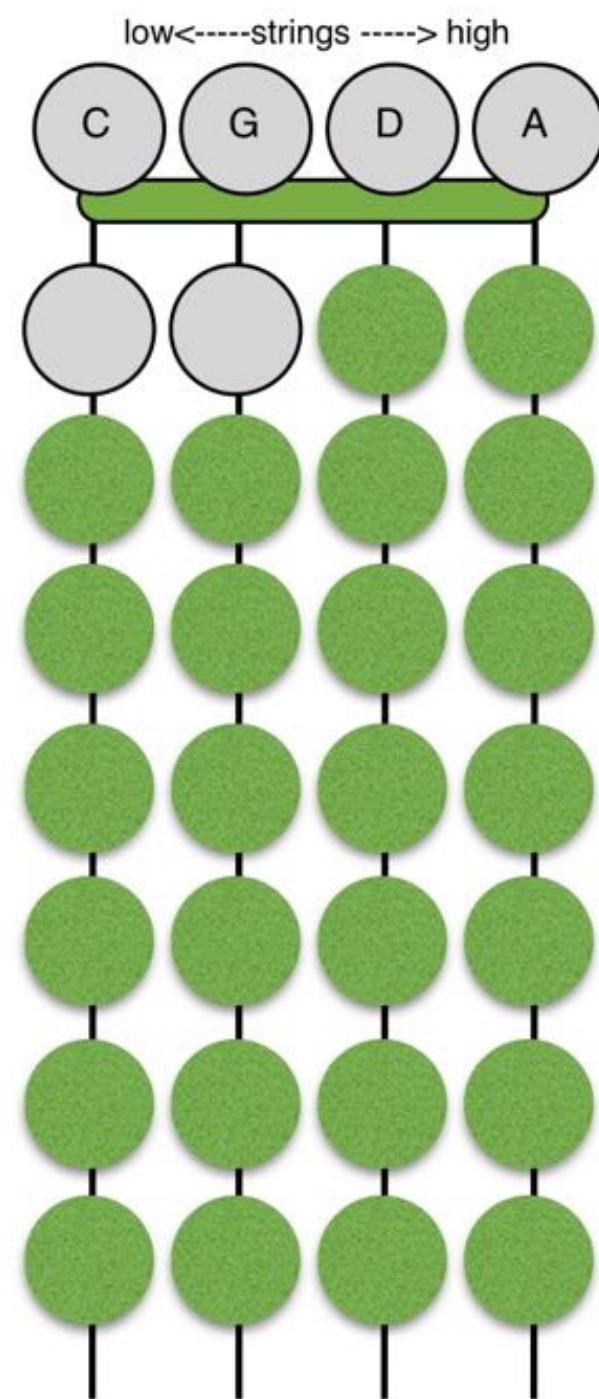


Notes learned in Essential Elements Book 2

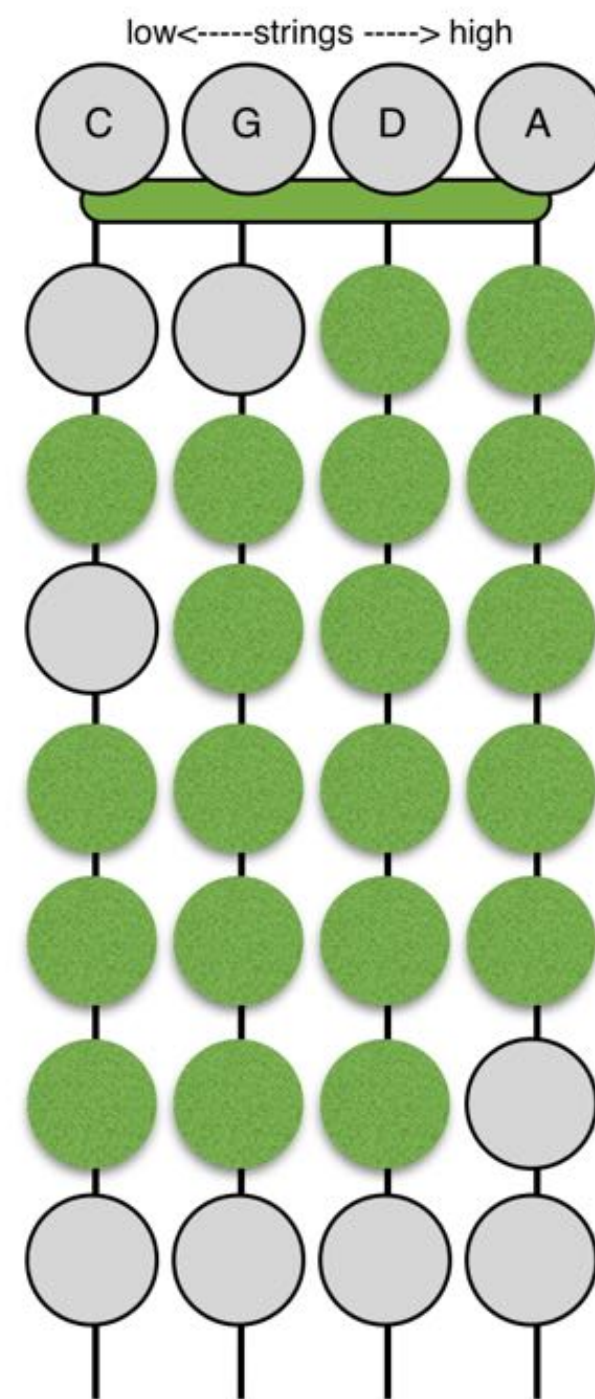
Violin



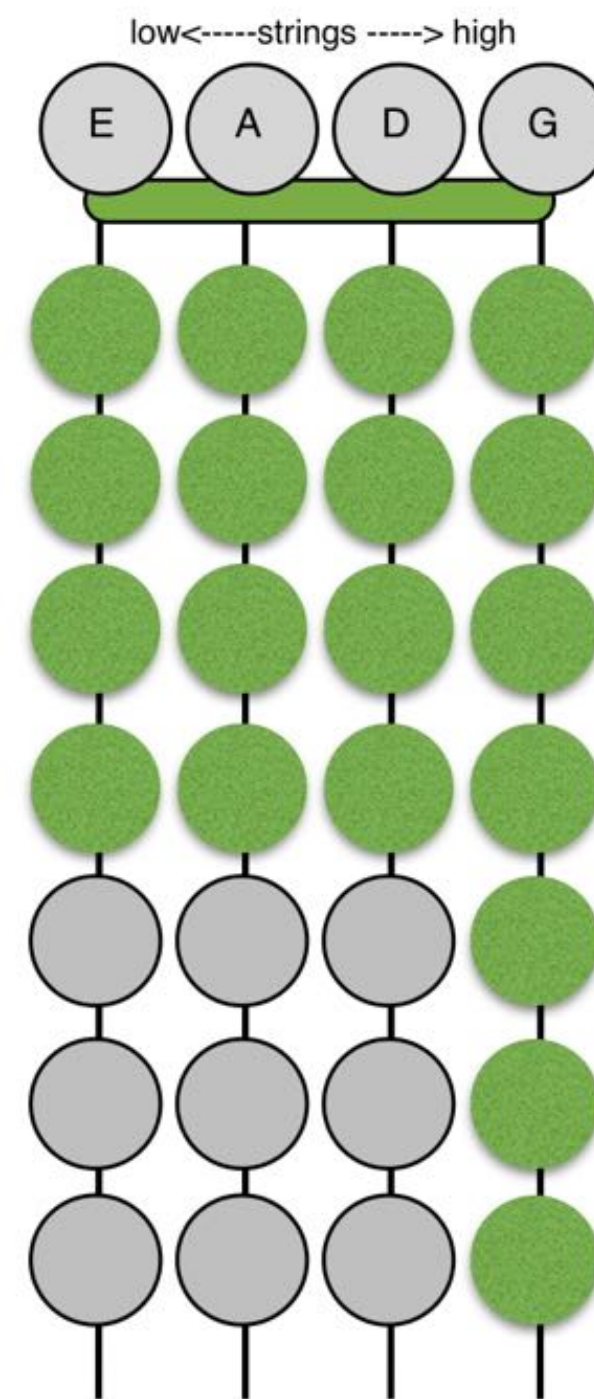
Viola



Cello



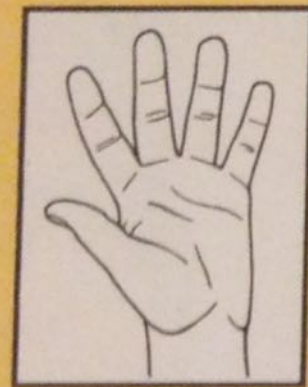
Double Bass



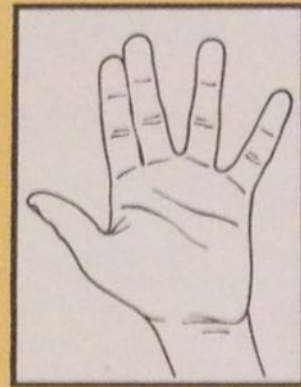
Finger Patterns for Violin/Viola

FINGER PATTERNS

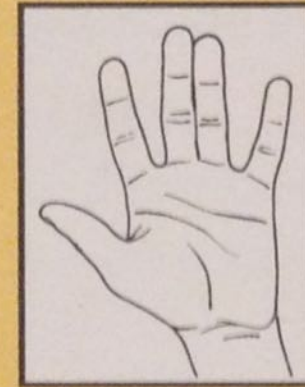
There are four basic finger patterns, which are combinations of whole and half steps. In the "open" hand pattern, a half step occurs between the open string and first finger. The other patterns have half steps between 1-2, 2-3, or 3-4. Notice that some finger patterns include new notes.



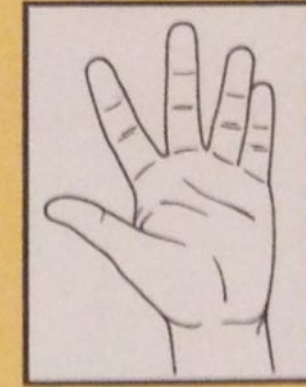
open hand



1-2



2-3



3-4

Color Coded Finger Patterns for Violin/Viola

1-2



2-3



3-4



open

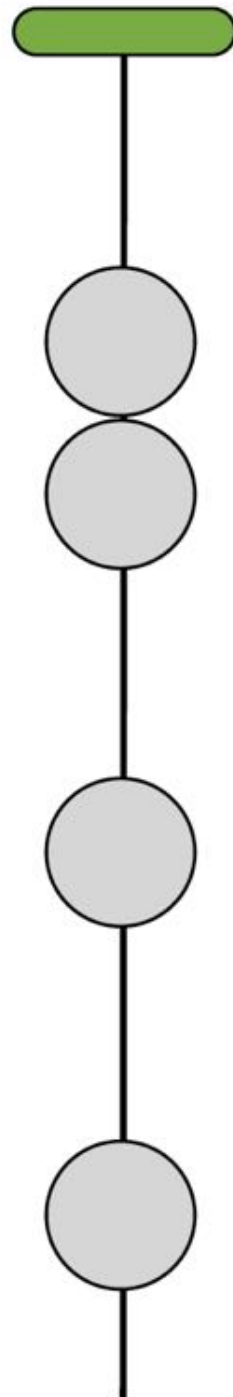


spock

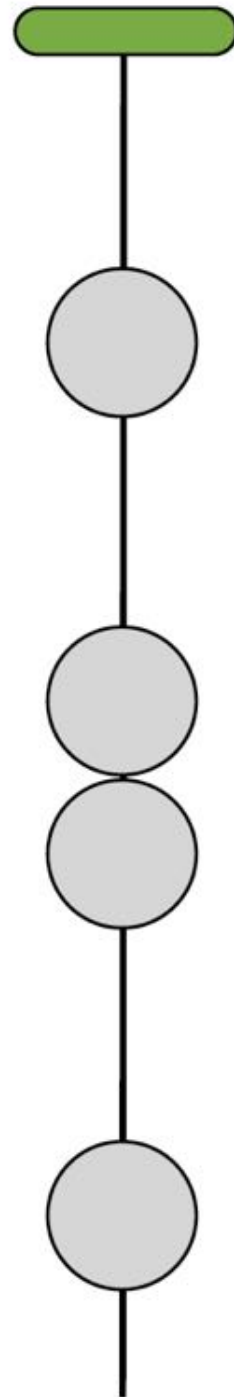


Violin & Viola Finger Patterns

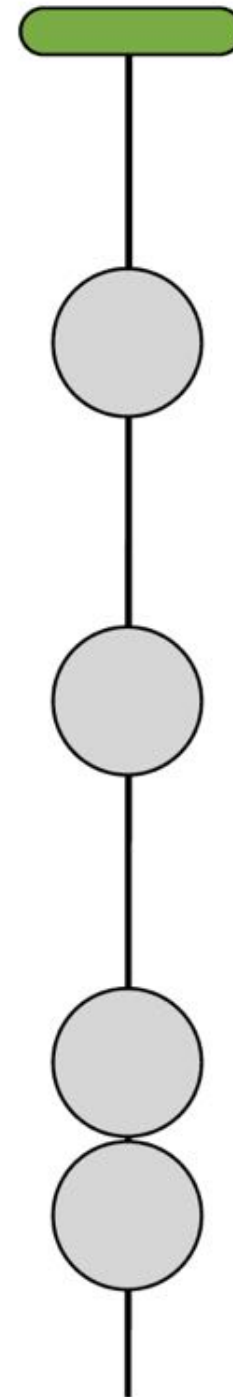
1-2 pattern



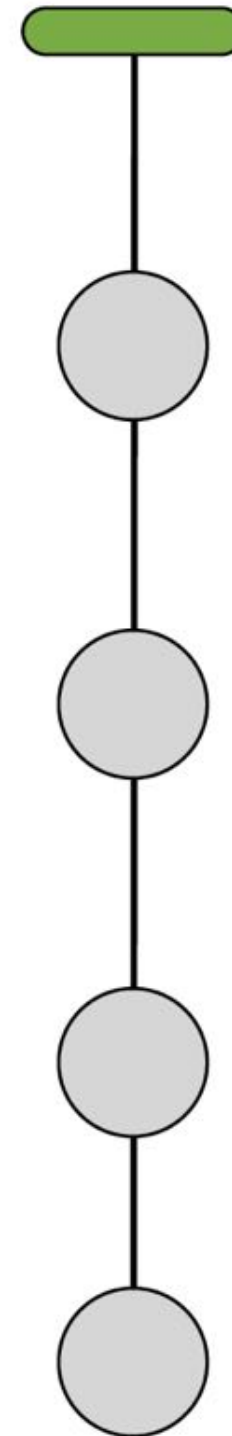
2-3 pattern



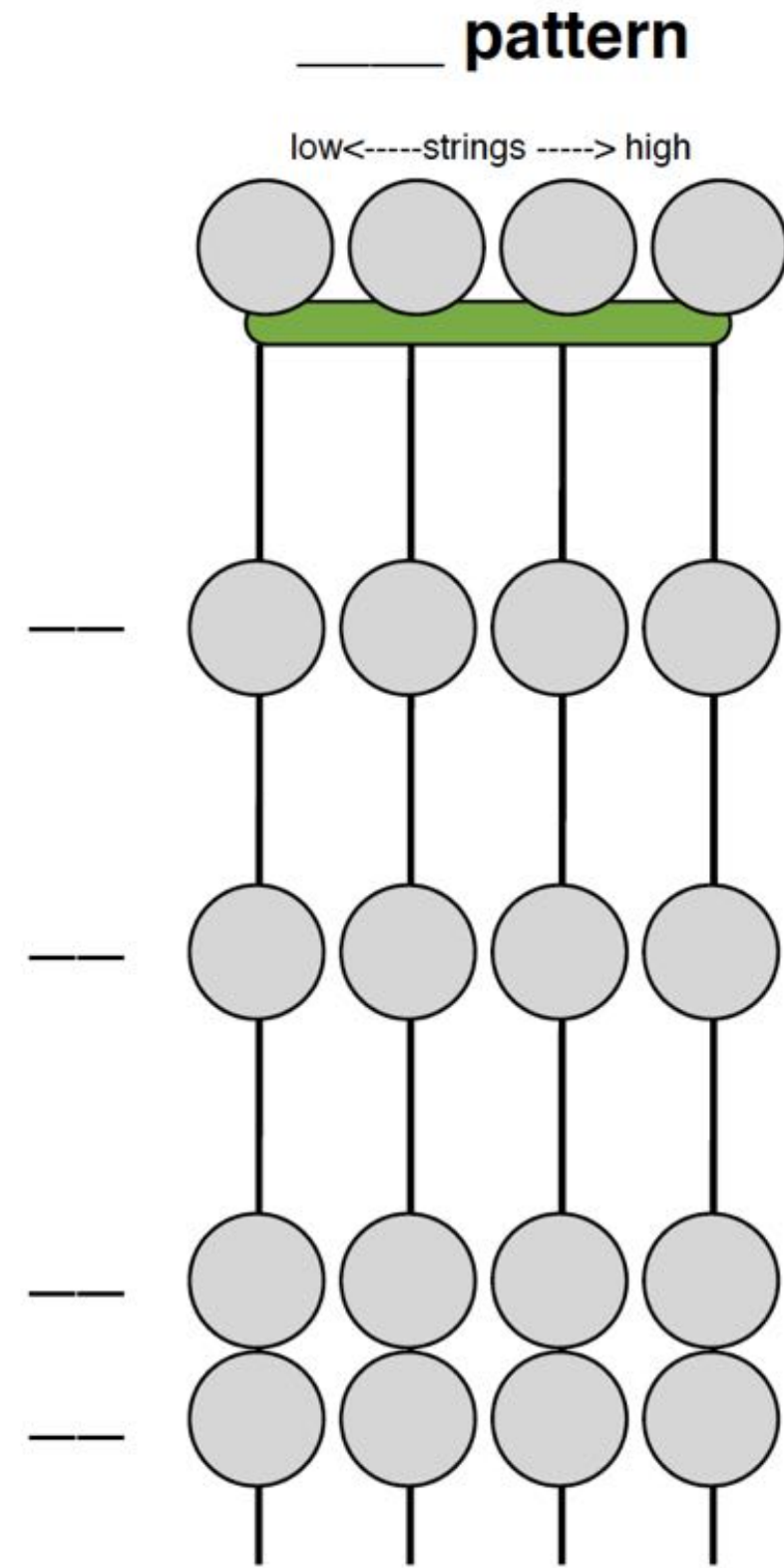
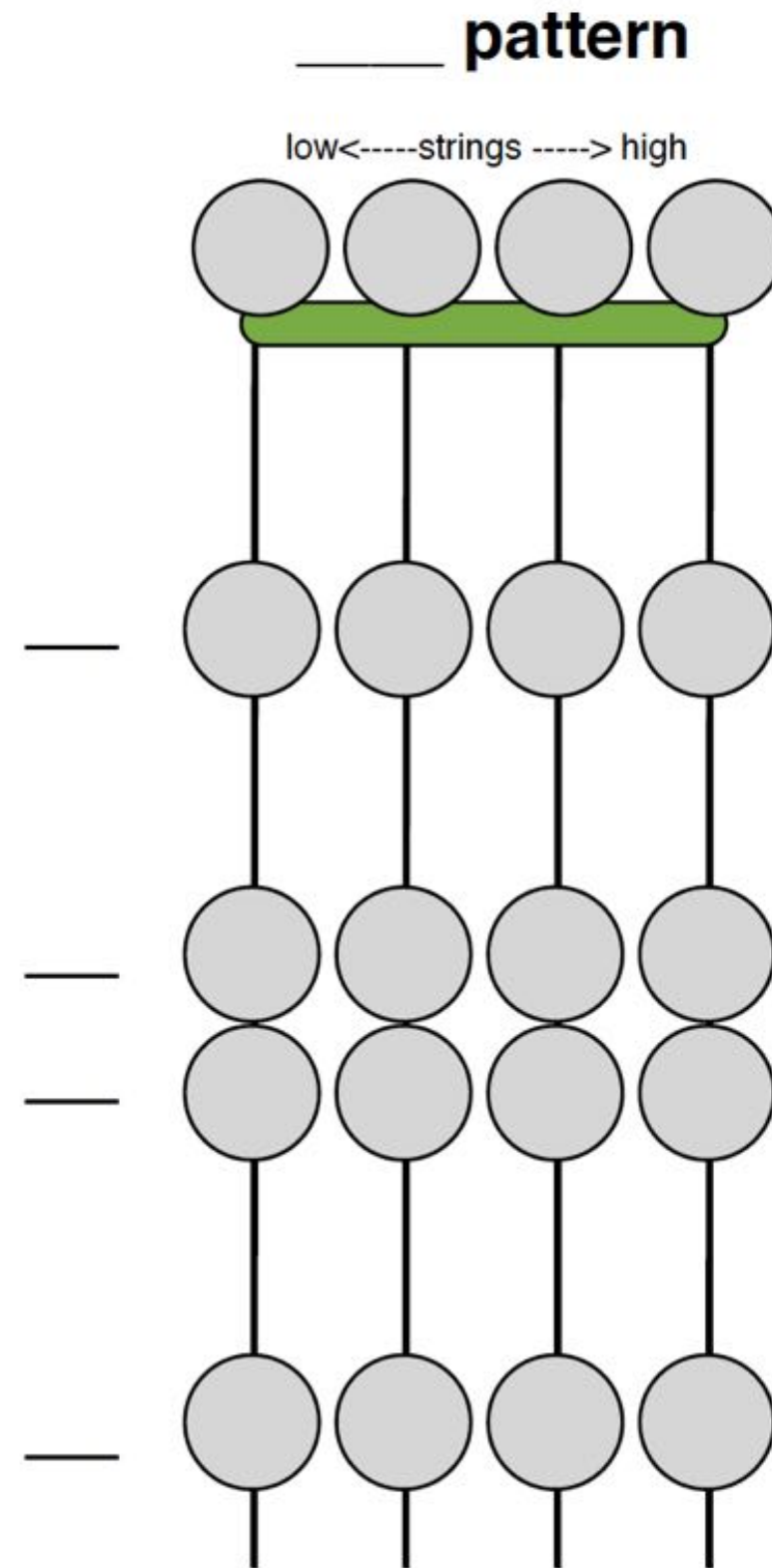
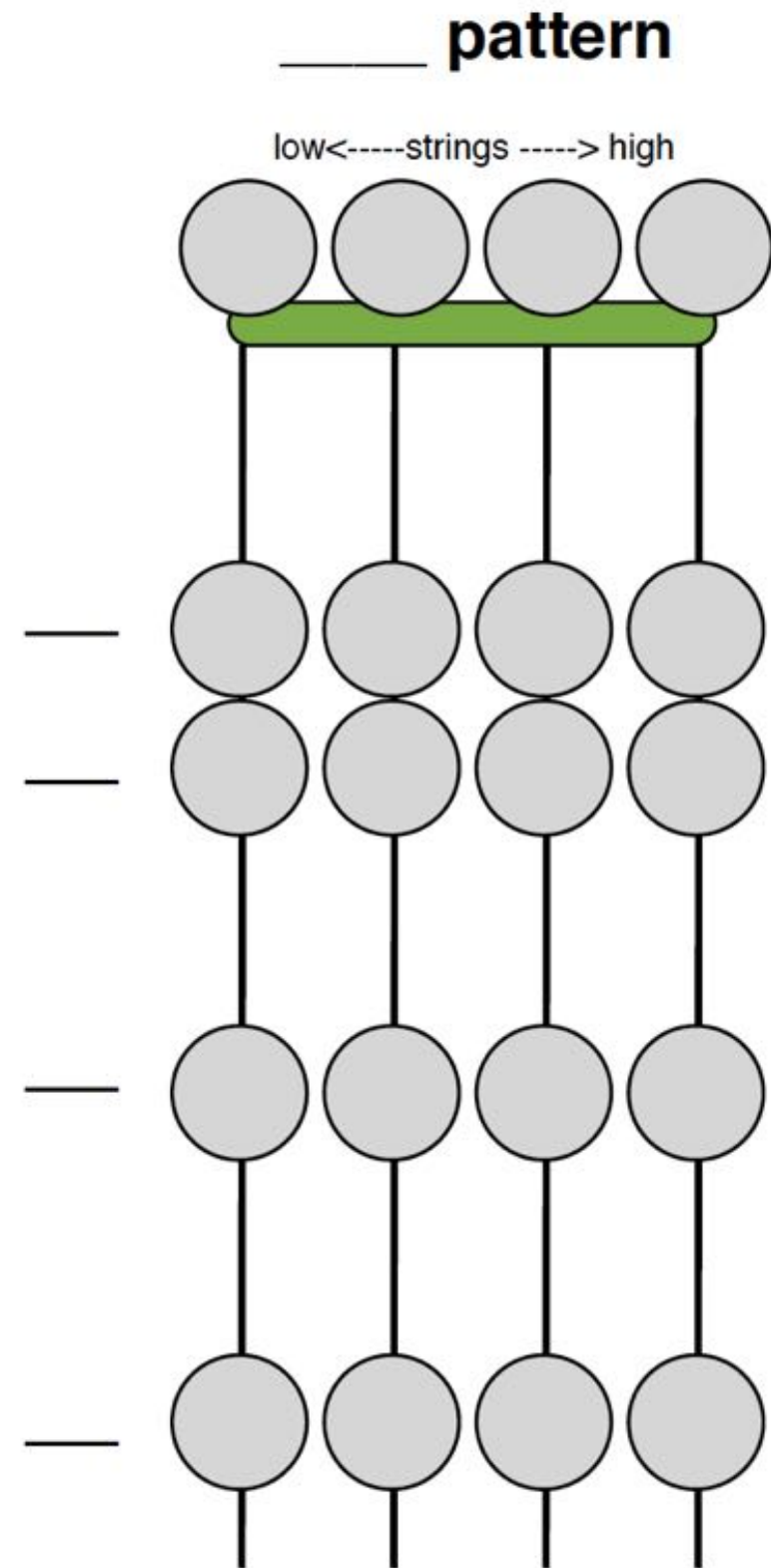
3-4 pattern



open hand



Violin & Viola Finger Patterns



Building Independence

- Find extra resources for students to play duets and small ensembles
- *Essential Musicianship for Strings* by Allen, Gillespie, Hayes
 - Beginning Level
 - **Intermediate Level**

essential
teacher's manual
Musicianship
for strings



INTERMEDIATE
ensemble
concepts

Michael Allen

Robert Gillespie

Pamela Tellejohn Hayes



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B \flat Major Rounds

Come, Follow, Follow

John Hilton

Violin

Viola

Cello

Bass

1

X1

2

4

2

4

1

1

4

1/2

Violin

2

2

4

B \flat Major Arrangements

Partner Song

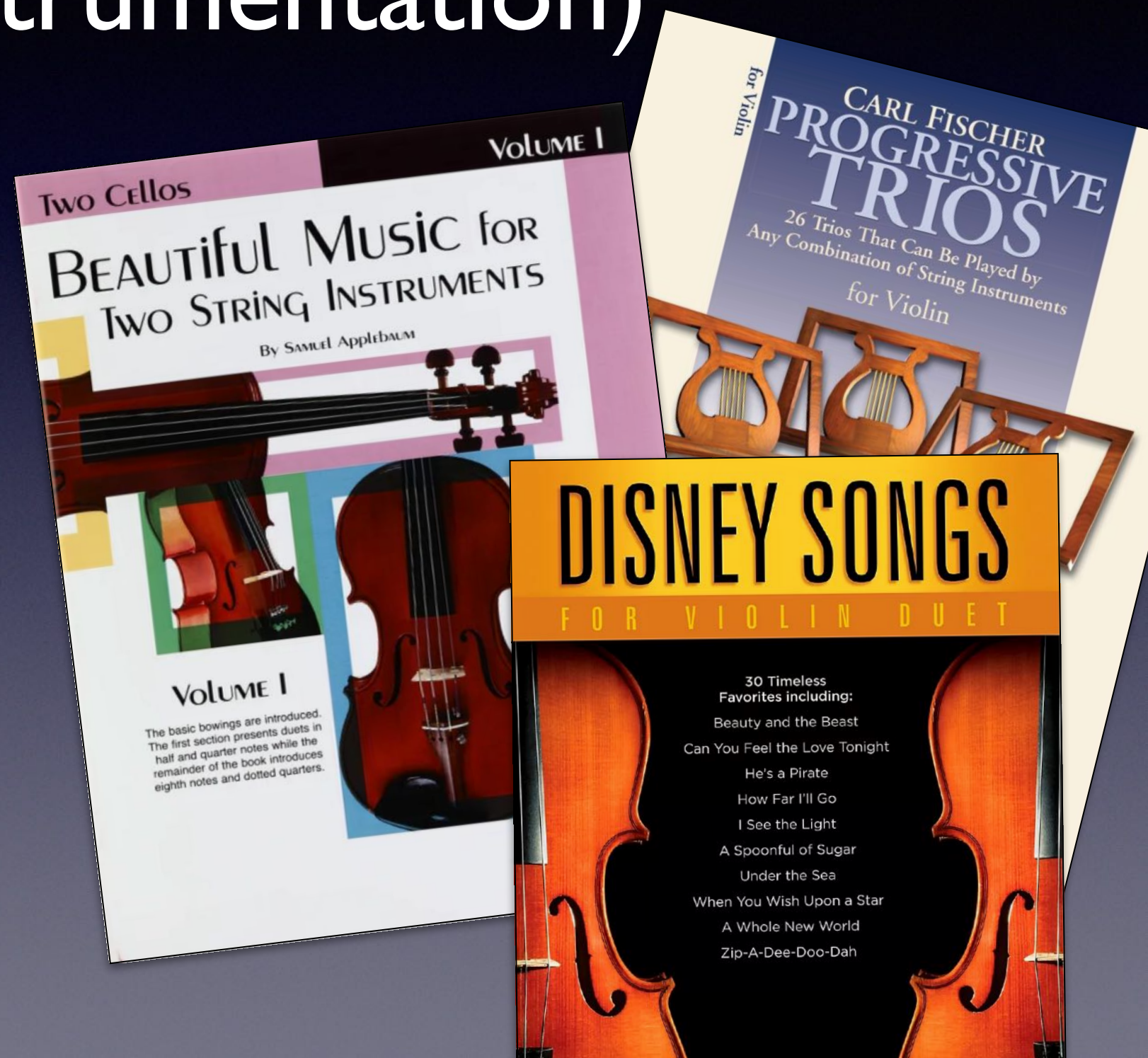
She'll Be Coming 'Round The Mountain
When The Saints Go Marching In

James M. Black
19th Century Western American

The image shows a musical score for three string instruments: Violin, Viola, and Cello. Each instrument has two staves, labeled 'A' and 'B'. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is common time (C). The score is divided into four measures. The Violin part (top system) starts with a whole rest in measure 1, followed by quarter notes in measures 2 and 3, and a half note in measure 4. The Viola part (middle system) starts with a whole rest in measure 1, followed by quarter notes in measures 2 and 3, and a half note in measure 4. The Cello part (bottom system) starts with a whole rest in measure 1, followed by quarter notes in measures 2 and 3, and a half note in measure 4. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings like 'V' and '4'.

Favorite Ensemble Books (with flexible instrumentation)

- Applebaum: Beautiful Music for Two Stringed Instruments (Vol. 1-4)
- Gazda: Progressive Trios
- Pop/Disney etc. duets



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

Finding “newness”

- Encourage private lessons
- Foster social practice sessions (“Pizzicato & pizza” party)
- Plan a field trip to see a local symphony, etc.
- 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!
- Find student leaders to help run class/warm-ups

Finding “newness”

- 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

Learning about
alternative styles
with Christian Howes



www.orchestrateacher.net

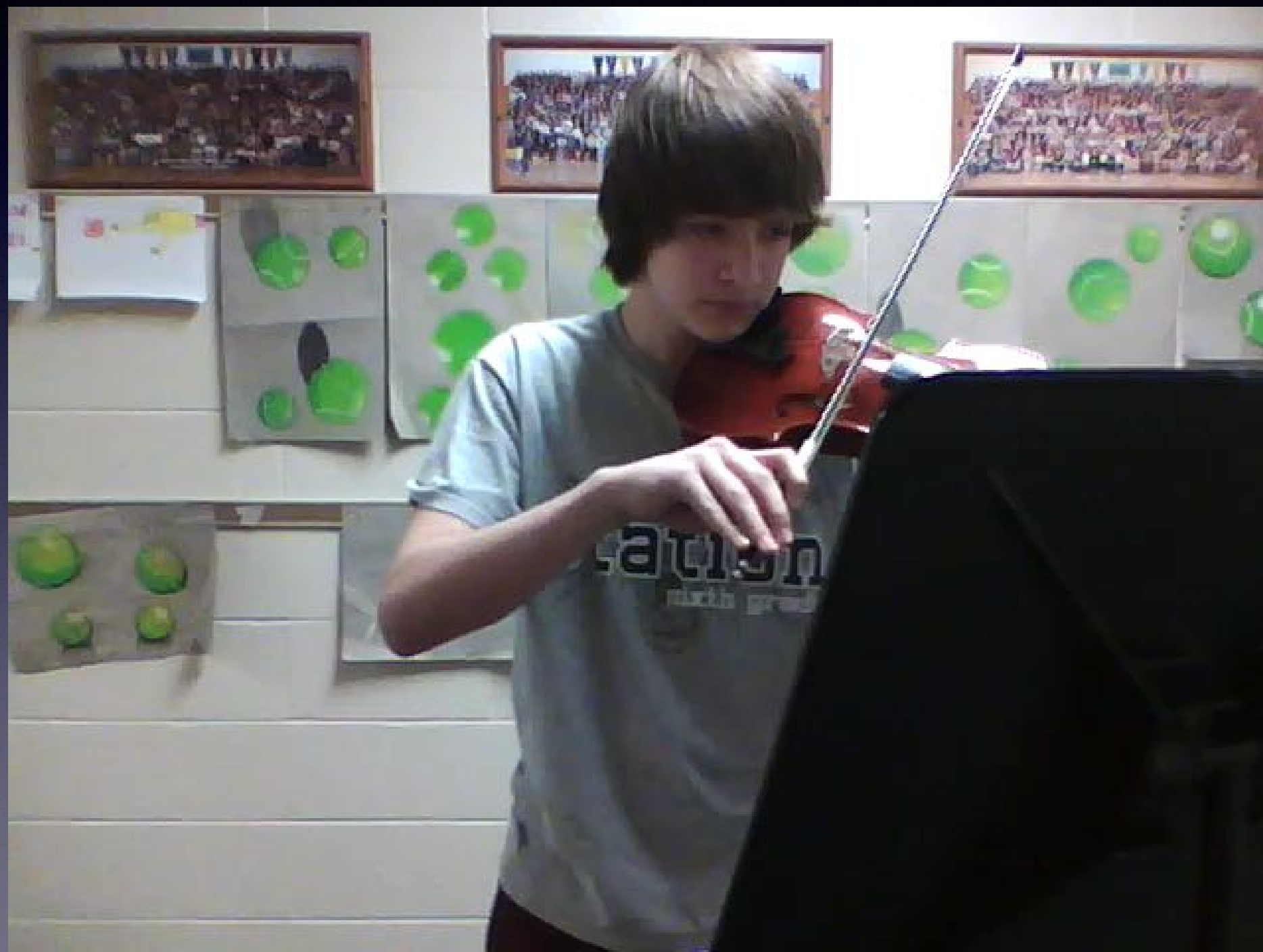
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Christian Howes with the Hilliard Heritage MS Concert Orchestra

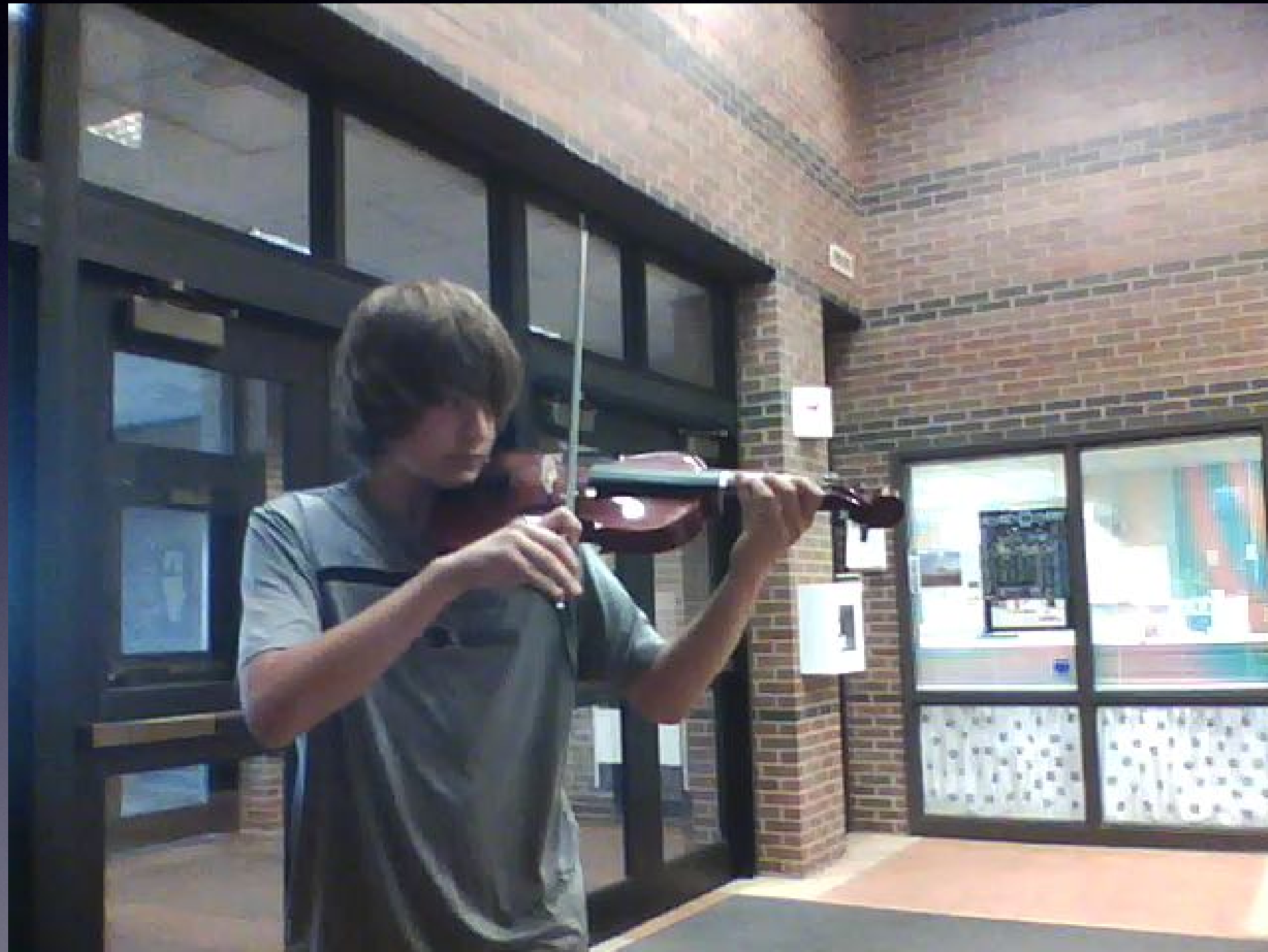
If a student wants to drop...

- 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...



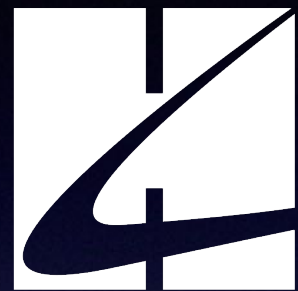
Switching Instruments...



To summarize...

- Understand the needs of intermediate players
- Pay extra special attention
- Foster their musical and technical growth
- Provide a variety of social experiences in addition to the music
- Keep it fresh and fun!

Special thanks to...



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D'Addario

COBB COUNTY
SCHOOL DISTRICT

The logo for Cobb County School District, featuring a large red 'C' with a map of Cobb County inside it.

Contact Me!



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Slides and links to YouTube Channel, Podcast, and more available at:

www.OrchestraTeacher.net