

# Viola Technique: The Manual

*How to master...*

*with*

## **Terms & Tips**

A glossary of musical and technical terms for the string player.

**DREW LECHER**

Naperville, Illinois

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# Viola Technique: The Manual

*Apply these methods to*

*Master the skills to*

*Master the repertoire to*

*Perform on the instrument.*

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# About the Author

Anyone seeking confirmation of Drew Lecher's exceptional abilities as a violinist and teacher need look no further. Teaching since the age of 19, the author – at age 24 – was appointed Professor of Violin, and later Viola, at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, London – a most singular honor. He further honed his teaching skills working with gifted children as Specialist Instructor of Violin, Viola & Chamber Music at the Wells Cathedral School in Somerset, England.

**B**orn in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Drew was a precocious student of the violin. When he was barely out of his teens, the young prodigy's extraordinary talents as a freelance violinist led rapid-fire to positions as Concertmaster of the Milwaukee Ballet, Skylight Theater, Milwaukee Opera, Summer Operetta Festival Orchestra and Music Under the Stars Symphony Orchestras – and, notwithstanding his youth – the number one substitute violinist with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. Drew went on to add Concertmaster of the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra in Madison, Wisconsin, and Concertmaster of the Atlantic Symphony Orchestra in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, to his list of accomplishments.

**E**mbracing opportunities to refine his mastery and learn to effectively instruct others, he accepted invitations to pursue advanced studies at international centers of excellence for violin performance and pedagogy, including the Meadowmount School of Music in New York (with Professor **Ivan Galamian** of the Juilliard School), the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London, England (with Professor **Yfrah Neaman**), and the Academie Internationale Ecole d'été in Nice, France (with Professor **Neaman** and Professor **Pierre Nerini** of the Paris Conservatoire).

**A**fter his marriage to soprano, Victoria VerHoven, the couples' growing scope of musical talents brought them eventually to Chicago. Drew Lecher has gone on to perform as a substitute violinist with the Chicago Symphony and Lyric Opera Orchestras and served on the faculties of the College of Performing Arts (formerly Chicago Musical College), Roosevelt University–Chicago, Lewis University–Romeoville and North Central College–Naperville. Drew is Director/Founder of the Stradivari Ensemble of Chicago and has performed in joint recitals with Ms. VerHoven. He has played chamber music and solos for the Public Broadcasting System and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and – on the lighter side – recorded jingles for McDonald's and numerous other corporations.

**M**r. Lecher's advanced students have been accepted at The Juilliard School and Manhattan School of Music–New York; Eastman School of Music–Rochester; Indiana University–Bloomington; New England Conservatory–Boston; Peabody Conservatory of Music–Baltimore; The Cleveland Institute of Music, Cincinnati Conservatory of Music and Oberlin Conservatory of Music–Ohio; University of Illinois–Urbana-Champaign; Northwestern University, DePaul University and Chicago College of Performing Arts–Chicago; The Guildhall School of Music & Drama–London, England and others.

**H**is students have soloed with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and various regional orchestras and won concertmaster, assistant concertmaster, principal and/or high section positions in the Chicago Civic, Chicago Youth, Midwest Young Artists, DuPage Youth, Elgin Youth, Aurora Youth, Metropolitan Youth, West Suburban Youth, IMEA All-State Honors, All-State and District Orchestras.

**S**tudents of Mr. Lecher have joined the London Symphony Orchestra, English Chamber Orchestra, Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, The Guildhall Ensemble, the Alberni String Quartet, Hong Kong Philharmonic and many other ensembles in Great Britain, Germany, Holland, Italy, Spain and the United States, among others.

**Drew Lecher** now maintains a private studio in Naperville, Illinois.

# The Reason

**T**hank you for opening this book.

**I**t is my hope, indeed intent, that these relatively few pages will shed a great deal of light on *How to master...*, in the most efficient manner, the many technical challenges faced by the violinist/violist at all levels of proficiency – whether professional, amateur or student. The modest length is a deliberate choice; it is a synopsis or shortened version of the volumes that could have been written on the subject.

**T**his book is a collection of ‘kernels’ – concepts and actions – that, as applied and elaborated upon, will aid in the mastery of passages and their musical interpretation. The methods of training written out are to be incorporated directly into the development of the repertoire.

**D**o not be overwhelmed by the examples. Even practiced partially, they will guide you in developing your technical facilities and offer quite a simple, readily achievable formula: choose multiple studies in small sections, even one measure, focusing on high quality work. Some studies should be practiced 2 to 3 minutes and others much longer, depending on the time available and your ambition and passion for excellence.

**P**rogress is variable but will continue as you persist; and as challenges are conquered, or nearly conquered, step up to the next level. When you are close to mastering a given section, adding the next level makes the previous part seem much simpler and more attainable and very shortly, it becomes so.

**I**n over 36 years of teaching, the method laid out in these pages has been developed, tested and refined. It is most gratifying to see it succeed time and again.

**Y**ou will experience the same results, I trust.

**E**njoy!

**D.**

# Gratitude

Where does one begin?

It must be with my parents, Rev. & Mrs. Howard C. Lecher. Their sacrifice and support made possible the violin lessons, and the examples they set throughout their own lives showed me how to live a life worth living.

Then, my teachers, **Ivan Galamian** – Meadowmount (of The Juilliard School); **Yfrah Neaman** and **William Pleeth** (chamber music) – Guildhall School of Music & Drama, London; **Pierre Nerini** – Academie Internationale Ecole d’été, Nice, France (of the Conservatoire, Paris); **Leonard Sorkin** and *The Fine Arts Quartet* (with **Dr. Abram Loft**, **Bernard Zazlov** and **George Sopkin**) – University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; **Edward Mumm** – former Concertmaster of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra; **Dr. Won Mo Kim** – visiting professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; and **Raymond Brown** – private instructor, Milwaukee. They were kind, generous, wise, knowledgeable and inspirational – truly wonderful mentors.

Next, my students: Much of what I developed in teaching was to fill gaps in my own skills and knowledge and to assist my students to “get there faster and smarter.” A teacher never stops studying and learning and you were and are a constant source of inspiration and challenge. When you play, you are the most important person in the studio.

Thanks to Jamie Smith, editor, and Casey McGrath, violinist-editor, for your expertise and absolute enthusiasm regarding this project.

My deepest heartfelt thanks to Vicky, my wife, who has put up with a workaholic for over 26 years. Thank you for supporting my efforts so completely.

It would be terribly remiss of me if I did not give thanks to God for the talents, wisdom and life situations that have brought all of this to fruition.

**Drew Lecher**  
Naperville, Illinois  
February 2007

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You supported this endeavor with words of encouragement and honest critiques in the various stages of writing. When given a tip or a question, it made me think further and hopefully better illustrate the concepts I sought to convey. It is most difficult to write about something as second nature as the content of this book is to me and express the ideas to someone who is not familiar with my teaching and all the little “Drewisms.”

Drew Lecher

# Terms & Tips

A glossary of musical and technical terms for the string player.

## AMAP

As much as possible.

## ABA/BAB

Used in 3rds as a shorthand representation of the fingers' *Hand Group* sequences in a 3-8va scale. See page 36.

## Adagio

Slowly and softly – A slow paced movement or section, most commonly with a lyric and calm gentleness as well, except when the composer requires a more intense character – often in high contrast.

## Affettuoso

Affectionately, lovingly.

## Affrettare

Hasten, hurry.

## Allargando

Broaden, spread and slow down the tempo often combined with a crescendo.

## Allegro

Cheerful and merry – thus a fast tempo. (*Not all Allegri are cheerful and merry, but they are fast.*)

**Allegretto** – A lighter character and generally less fast than **Allegro**.

## Amabile

Amiable, sweet, tender and loving in character.

## Andante

Walking, easy going pace – hence a moderately slow and flowing tempo.

**Andante sostenuto** – A slower and broader tempo and character than **Andante**.

**Andantino** – A lighter character than **Andante** and generally a little faster.

## Anima

Soul, wholehearted –put your soul into it; perform with commitment.

## Animato

Animated, lively – quicken the tempo – add more brilliance and often a lighter character of style.

## Appena

Hardly, barely, very little – *appena ritenuto* is to hardly/barely slow down.

## Aperto

Open, resonant tone and character.

## Appassionato

To play with passionate lyricism and a great deal of intensity.

## Arco

The bow, also meaning arc or arch as the bow is curved – The term *arco* or *col arco* is used after a section of pizzicato informing the player to return to the normal method of playing with the bow.

## Assai

Very or much. For example, **Moderato assai** is a very moderate tempo.

## Attacca

An indication that the next movement or section should follow immediately.

## Battere

See **Bow Stroke Styles**.

## Ben

Very.

## Bow Fingers/ Hand/Arm

**This deals with the physics of playing and handling the bow.**

1. **Thumb:** “*Ruler of All.*”
  - a. Fulcrum of the bow and placed on bottom/near-side of the “*thumb-grip*” (leather wrap) so it cannot slip through, between the stick and the hair.
  - b. When using *Flat-Hair* the thumb should have a slight ascending bend into the bow and **not** be in contact with the hair – the palm will be to the side of the frog and slightly forward depending upon bow hold style.
  - c. When using *Side-Hair* have the thumb touch the hair by rolling the bow, simultaneously bringing the hair and thumb towards each other until they make contact – increasing the curl of the thumb/fingers.
  - d. The two points above, i.e., b. and c., will have differing hand/wrist/arm angles, with c. requiring a slightly higher positioning – *take care not to do too much.*
  - e. The thumb must not protrude to the other side and should never touch the fingers.
2. **1<sup>st</sup> Finger:** “*Primary Sound/Tone Producer.*”
  - a. Place on top of bow in or between the two joints/creases.
  - b. **The choice above will affect the angle and location of thumb/fingers/hand to the bow.**
    - 1) With a **shorter, smaller hand** and/or **shorter arm**, consider use of the 1<sup>st</sup> joint/crease (middle), as this will enable an easier bow stroke to the tip – a more diagonal angle of thumb/fingers/hand to the bow known as the “**Russian Bow Hold.**”
    - 2) Conversely, with a **longer, larger hand** and/or **longer arm**, consider placement *between* the two joints/creases – the hand will be slightly squarer to the bow with the fingers more curved. This is known as the “**Franco-Belgium Bow Hold.**”
  - c. **Paramount** is always the *ease and complete balance, freedom and flow of motion.*
3. **2<sup>nd</sup> Finger:** “*Assistant to the 1<sup>st</sup> Finger.*”
  - a. Correlates with the 1<sup>st</sup> finger and should drape over the top and far side of the bow.
  - b. Assists in producing an easy, stable and full sound/tone.
  - c. Release, **do not lift**, from touching the stick/bow when playing rapid bow strokes, e.g., *sautillé*.
4. **3<sup>rd</sup> Finger:** “*Assistant to the 4<sup>th</sup> Finger/Stabilizer, Guide and Agility Expert.*”
  - a. Place on top with 2<sup>nd</sup> joint/crease (outer) wrapping far side of the bow and able to touch the frog when desired.
  - b. Assists in counter-balance of bow, stabilizing angle, guiding direction and flexing.
5. **4<sup>th</sup> Finger:** “*Counter-balancer par Excellence.*”

**As the title indicates, this is your main controller for all counter-balance activity.**

  - a. Place on top of bow slightly set to the near side of the bow – this will prevent slipping over to the far side.
  - b. It must be curved, agile and flexible.
  - c. It must be adaptable and contribute greatly to all movements from the subtlest of motion one moment to powerful, sweeping, rolling actions the next.
6. **Hand**
  - a. Very slight cupping of the palm producing tiny hills in the knuckles – almost flat.
  - b. Back/top of hand should **retain its angle to the bow** at all times – this enables a consistent maintenance of the bow’s path across the string, providing tonal control.
  - c. It is the thumb and fingers, working independently, which flex and take out the bumps.
7. **Wrist/Elbow/Shoulder Joints**
  - a. Constantly on the move and flowing with the *Plane* of the bow stroke.
  - b. The exception to this is the bow stroke’s change of direction – up to down and down to up.
    - 1) The **thumb and fingers** take over the *finishing* of the stroke – see **8.** below.

## 8. Bow Changes

- a. Use a *very small flowing* action of thumb and fingers, *along* the **Plane** – see 8. d.1 & d.2 – *independent of the hand*, to **finish** the bow’s direction, enabling a momentary pause for the Hand/Forearm/Upper Arm so they may prepare for the change of direction.
- b. For a **smooth change**, imperceptively *slow and lighten* the bow for the finishing moments of the stroke.
- c. To **hide the bow change** completely – **Legato Détaché** – the sound should be *sustained through the end* of the stroke with the new stroke taken slightly *lighter and slower* – allowing the resonance of the previous stroke to over-shadow the new stroke. (This can be accomplished in any dynamic range.)
- d. **Throw/Catch** – the thumb rules this activity.
  - 1) As you END the down-bow stroke slightly **throw** or *elongate the thumb/fingers*.
  - 2) As you END the up-bow stroke slightly **catch** or *contract the thumb/fingers*.
  - 3) This action, often called **Collé Stroke**, and piloted by the thumb, is a very good developer of right hand agility. See under **Bow Strokes** both **Collé** and **Thumb- fingers Stroke**.

## 9. Arm

- a. The **Forearm** rotates clockwise (out)/counter clockwise (in). [Supination–palm up/Pronation–palm down]
  - 1) It is the “*Secondary Motor*” to the overall bow stroke, whether large or small.
  - 2) Very important in directing and pulsing the bow changes.
  - 3) Its *rolling action* combined with the *wing* movement of the upper arm (see 9. c. 2) is *subtly* used to assist string crossings.
- c. The **Upper Arm** is the “*Primary Motor*” for the bow stroke – both **Up** and **Down**.
  - 1) Pulls back to begin the **Down Bow** in the lower half and also pulls back to begin the **Up Bow** in the upper half of the bow.
  - 2) Initiates weight into and out of the bow.
  - 3) Makes a *wing-like* move for string crossings.
  - 4) Lines up **just below the bow when using flat/full hair**, and **raises slightly** for playing on the side of the hair – along with the rolling action of the stick to bring the hair and thumb together for stability. See 1. **Thumb: “Ruler of All.”**

## Bow Placement

Do in relation to the *bridgelfingerboard* with variables based upon: **1) point of contact, 2) speed of bow, 3) weight of bow, 4) amount of hair, 5) string selected and 6) vibrating length of string/position number** in order to bring out the desired dynamics and character of the music.

1. **Higher/nearer.**
  - a. *Higher strings* are played *nearer* to the bridge, if all else is kept equal.
  - b. *Higher notes* on the same string are *nearer* to the bridge in bow placement, if all else is kept equal.
2. **Lower/further.**
  - a. *Lower strings* are played *further* from the bridge, if all else is kept equal.
  - b. *Lower notes* on the same string are *further* from the bridge in bow placement, if all else is kept equal.

## Bow Strokes

**The true artist/master musician will incorporate a wide variety of bow strokes with subtle transitions that enhance the phrase appropriately in order that the music is fully served.**

**In many instances the “Bow Stroke Style” will meld from one style, or aspect of a style, to another.**

**There will also be many situations of a distinct change from one stroke to the next, as in *Détaché* to *Martelé*.**

**Patience and persistence must be the hallmarks in all your work on the instrument.**

**Arpeggiando** – The slurred rolling of the bow across 3 or 4 strings to play *arpeggiated chords* – often done rapidly and sometimes with the bow springing off the string for greater articulation and clarity. See **Bariolage**. (These can also be accomplished with separate bow strokes.)

**Bariolage** – To quickly roll or *arpeggiate the bow* across three or more strings (multiple notes in each bow stroke). The stroke can be accomplished either on the string or springing off the string in a quasi **Ricochet** style. See **Arpeggiando**. (These can also be accomplished with separate bow strokes.)

**Battere** – To bat, beat, hit, strike, knock. An extremely strong vertical attack of the bow using flat hair and a short stroke. It is used to imitate stomping of the feet in Vivaldi’s “*Winter*.” Though often a heavy and intense stroke, it can be done in all dynamic ranges – thereby lending its unique character to the music. When lightened it is indeed very close to **Spiccato secco/Crisp Spiccato**.

**Collé** – see **Thumb-fingers Stroke** – A stroke *from the air* that upon setting/sticking to the string is immediately directed in a crisply accented fashion by the bow **thumb-fingers** in either down-bow or up-bow and *instantly lifted*, ready to be done again. *Initially do not allow the bow-hand to move up or down, or any rolling action whatsoever. (Keep the back of the hand still.)* Practice in all parts of the bow, but generally it is done as a *lower-bow stroke*. Make use of a wide range of dynamics, *ppp* to *fff*, adding more arm as the stroke gains power and breadth of motion. Relate the immediacy of tone and **grab of the string** to that of **pizzicato** – hence this stroke can be referred to as a **“thrown pizzicato with the bow.”**

**Col legno** – Literally “*with the wood*” of the bow and used for special tonal effects. Roll the bow so that the hair is toward the ceiling or at least on its side. The string is slapped or hit with the stick so take care not to use your best bow, as it can be marred.

**Détaché** – The basic but all-important stroke from which everything else is derived – notes are well sustained and played with individual and connected bow strokes of any length.

1. **Détaché Décisivement/Decisive Détaché** – A sustained tone with distinct bow changes.
2. **Détaché Lancé** – A very quick, short and lively stroke, without accent and yet released from the initial start.
3. **Détaché Porté** – No initial accent due to a *slight swell* or *sneaking* into the note at the beginning of the stroke followed by a lightening and relaxing of the tone to the end of the stroke.
4. **Grande Détaché** – Similar to *détaché* with extraordinary length given to the stroke, increases breadth of tone and character that is well sustained.
5. **Détaché Pulsé/Pulsed Détaché** – Begin the stroke with additional weight and speed of bow followed by a release, retaining fluidity of motion and never stopping the bow. In certain instances the bow may minimally leave the string at the end of the stroke – make sure the return landing is of utmost elegance and refinement appropriate to the passage.
6. **Détaché Lié/Legato Détaché**– Seamlessly connected strokes. See **Bow Fingers/Hand/Arm, 8c.**

**Fingerstroke** – see **Thumb-fingers Stroke.**

**Flat Hair** – Not a stroke, but a method or technique, used in virtually all but the lightest of touches. A most basic and important bow technique where the stick of the bow is directly above and perpendicular to the hair. This enables the player to achieve the *fullest tones* possible and the *crispest, quickest responses* in all types of bouncing and springing strokes. For greater ease and technical stability, it is best when the hair is rolled out from the thumb. **Note that this requires a slightly lower wrist/arm and pulled-back right arm positioning, as the rolling out action moves the hair toward the fingerboard.** Its counterpart is the **Side Hair**. Also, see **Thumbless**.

**Flautando** – A lightly weighted stroke of slightly higher bow speed producing a flute-like sound generally performed near or over the fingerboard.

**Flying Spiccato** – See **Spiccato/Spiccato volante.**

**Flying Staccato** – See **Staccato/Staccato volante.**

**Fouetté/Whipped Bow** – Accomplished with *stinging horizontal attacks* to the string from very close proximity above, lending tremendous excitement to the given note(s) and passage – often alternating with another bow stroke style. Generally in the upper half of the bow and, though usually executed with the up-bow, make sure to master the down-bow as well.

**Jeté** – A *fast, sudden, thrusting* projection of the bow, which can be executed on the string or from slightly off the string, with less biting sting than the **Fouetté**. It can be combined with **Ricochet** for a quick brilliant character of several notes per stroke.

**Legato** – A smooth and *continuous connection* of notes, both slurred and separate bows – **Détaché Lié/Legato Détaché**. Do not allow the hit of the fingers to disturb the fluid connection.

1. Anticipate string crossings by having the *new finger* placed on its note/string and the *old finger* maintained until fully sounding the *new*.
  - a. **IN SHIFTS, very subtly lighten and slow the bow – take care that this action is inaudible and the music continues its flowing motion.**
2. The **bow** must also anticipate the *new string* by imperceptibly joining the *old and the new together*.
  - a. **Practice a momentary double-stopping of the notes by a subtle blending from one string to the other in such a way that one cannot distinguish the beginning of the double-stop and its demise.**
3. **Pulsed legato** – A *lyrically* articulated/accented bow stroke of varying degree that is afterward sustained for the full duration of the note’s value.

**Louré** – See **Portato**.

**Marcato** – A very marked, stressed and aggressively accented bow stroke, often with an abrupt or stopped ending – more along the line of a *military march* character.

**Martelé (Martellato)** – Hammered: A very aggressively accented bow stroke with a release at the end, allowing the sound to breathe. Potentially a tremendously strong and powerful stroke in its initiation - bite/press the string down with the bow hair and then *explode* in the given direction.

1. The down-bow at the heel/frog of the bow is still rather effortless and thus requires no undo stress in the bow-arm/hand/fingers.
2. The up-bow, especially at or near the tip, quite possibly requires three to five times the effort; **but do not seize-up the bow-arm/hand/fingers – or the left-arm/hand/fingers for that matter. WITH PROPER PROPORTION OF BALANCE AND STRENGTH IT CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED QUITE EASILY.**

**Messa di voce** – A term from vocalists meaning to gradually crescendo and decrescendo on a given note – “hair-pins” up and down (a vocal technique to help the singer maintain pitch/tone). Often used in music of the *Baroque* and *Classical* periods, take care not to over use what can be a very beautiful and special effect.

**Ondulé** – An undulation of the bow and/or left hand fingers.

1. **Bow:** A very rapid *waving/rolling* (undulating) of the bow back and forth across two neighboring strings – this can have any number of notes per bow.
2. **Left Hand: Fingered Tremolo** – *tremolo of the left hand*. This is not a bow stroke, but is included due to the shared terminology. It involves rapidly alternating between two notes on one string (four notes in *double-stops*), during one bow stroke and often with an interval greater than a 2nd. It is to be executed in the same way as a trill or with the given rhythm.

**Paganini Bowing** – A bowing pattern of rhythmically equal notes, such as 8th notes, in a *duple 4-note sequence*, where the **bow** plays a *3-note pattern* of alternating **single/2 slurred** sequence, causing a cross rhythmic motif. See **Basics II**, Var. 13, pg. 13.

**Piqûre** – see **Sting/Piqûre**.

**Ponticello** – The drawing of the bow on or very near to the bridge, giving an icy, metallic and “fingernails on the chalk-board” character of tone – used sparingly and wonderfully for special tonal effects such as icy winters, fearful shivers and spook moments.

**Portato** – A generally broad, pulsed stroke, also known as **Louré**, which is very similar to the **Détaché Porté**, noted previously, but with a more instant or immediate quality to the pulse. It has *multiple notes per bow stroke* and varying degrees of release, even to a slight leaving of the string.

**Retake** – The action of minimally releasing the bow off the string and recovering, hence **retaking**, the length of bow in either direction. It can be done as a *full retake* from one end of the bow to the other or a *partial retake* in any incremental size. At the tip, there are times that the hair does not actually leave the string, thereby giving the *slightest* imitation of a singer inhaling.

**Ricochet** – The throw or drop of the bow setting off a series of two or more successive notes as the bow naturally rebounds and hits the string again. Often followed by a change of bow to *clarify the musical arrival point* or with a modification of bow speed, *faster or slower*, to add excitement and flare or relaxation and calm, respectively. It relates to **Spiccato volante** and **Staccato volante** at higher speed and even to the **Jeté**, which has the characteristic of added brilliance and flare. **The flat hair will give the crispest response.**

**Sautillé** – Often initiated on the string, the bow *jumps* or *hops up from* the string in a very excited fashion. It is a more flamboyant version of **Spiccato sulla corda/on-the-string Spiccato** and is accomplished with the use of very small strokes and flat hair. It is generally a grouped series of notes as the natural sequence of strokes is often initiated in patterns of 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, etc. As with **Spiccato**, the bow placement and ratio of height/length determine the character and degree of brilliance afforded to the passage. *Higher speed will be higher up the bow and lower speed will be lower down the bow. It is often best in higher speeds when the thumb, 1<sup>st</sup> finger and 3<sup>rd</sup> finger are proactively used; the 2<sup>nd</sup> finger simply releases away from the stick* (do not lift as this action is tense and inhibiting); *and the 4<sup>th</sup> finger is also released, hovering over the bow in a natural and relaxed curve.*

**Side Hair** – Not a stroke, but a method or technique used in virtually all the strokes, particularly for the lightest and most delicate of touches. A most basic and important bow technique where the stick of the bow is rolled away from the bridge thereby giving the hair a diagonal tilt to the string. This enables the player to achieve the *lightest tones* possible and the *gentler lyric effects* in varied types of bow stroke styles. For *greater security, ease and technical stability*, it is best when the hair and thumb are rolled toward each other. *When they touch*, the bow gains **total stability**, enabling the player to have complete ease and security of action. Note that this requires a *slightly* higher wrist/arm and forward right arm positioning. Its counterpart is the **Flat Hair**.

**Son filé** – The long sustaining of tone. It is the string player's *breath control* and should be practiced with varied crescendi and diminuendi in addition to a level sostenuto tone.

**Sostenuto** –

1. A very level, well maintained sound that is sustained for the note's full value and connected tonally to the next note. It can be achieved with the total variety of bow stroke lengths from short to long – when it closely relates to and indeed becomes the *son filé*.
2. Also used in tempo markings, such as *Andante sostenuto*, to indicate a slower, broader pace.

**Spiccato** – An enunciated, springing, jumping bow with *evenly proportioned action and a clear ringing tone* – play each note on a separate bow stroke. More individual than *Sautillé*, it will take on many *characters of interpretation* depending upon the point of contact, speed, weight, amount of hair and placement of the bow. **From the air (1, 3, 4 & 5) and from the string (2).**

1. **Spiccato dramático/Dramatic Spiccato** – A more aggressive and excited style of stroke that lends greater individual identity to each note, predominantly done in the lower quarter of the bow using various degrees of *Collé* for added inflections.
2. **Spiccato lirico/Lyric Spiccato** – Consists of a *brushed and broadened* lengthening of the bow-hair contact with the string, tilting toward the fingerboard to the side of the hair, thereby achieved with greater horizontal action and less vertical height. (**Lower in the bow.**)
3. **Spiccato secco/Crisp Spiccato** – A dryer, crisper stroke, it has a greater vertical *drop and rebound* with less horizontal draw of the bow. (**Higher in the bow.**)
4. **Spiccato sulla corda/On the string Spiccato** – At higher speeds the *Spiccato* will be on the string. The stick will maintain a bouncing, springing action – vertical articulation – but the hair will not actually leave the string. *As in Sautillé, it is often best in higher speeds when the thumb, 1<sup>st</sup> finger and 3<sup>rd</sup> finger are proactively used; the 2<sup>nd</sup> finger simply releases away from the stick* (do not lift as this action is tense and inhibiting); *and the 4<sup>th</sup> finger is also released, hovering over the bow in a natural and relaxed curve.*
5. **Spiccato volante/Flying Spiccato** – A stroke related to *Staccato volante* but of greater height above the string and individuality of strokes with notes. Also generally done in the upper portion of the bow with the added ability to *remain in place* or even recover territory *traveling* towards, or fully to, the heel or tip as needed via the *Retake*.

**NOTE: These types, 1 – 5, often are mixed within the same passage and/or alternate with another bow stroke style to convey the desired effect.**

**Practice Tips:**

1. **Drop** the bow vertically to the string at various points along the bow – note how it bounces – then catch or control the next drop, gradually adding the direction of the *down* and *up* bows.
  - a. *Flatter hair* bounces with a crisp, very distinct response and *angled hair* has a gentle, less distinct articulation.
  - b. Use the **Crescent Bow**, even in these small strokes, as this will *prevent* the usual stiffening of the wrist and elbow.
  - c. Use a small **Thumb/fingers Stroke**, adding greater arm motion as required.
  - d. In faster passages use less bow and keep closer to the string.
2. **Set** the bow on the string, at first in the middle. Use **flat hair**, weight the stick down so that the bow touches the hair (not the string) and then **suddenly** draw the stroke (down or up) and spring up and off the string. Maintain the **Spiccato** action. Apply points 1a – d above.
3. When done correctly, *the bow does 90% of the work.*
4. **Do not tighten the bow hand/wrist/elbow/shoulder.**

**NOTE: Accented triplets are very good for developing evenness and control.**

### **Staccato** –

1. A most abrupt and separated series of marked and crisply executed pulses on the string in quick succession during one bow, down or up, that lends at once a virtuosic brilliance and, alternately, a suave articulated lyricism in the hands of the accomplished musician. **Take care not to be too gritty and abrasive in tone.** If sprung off the string at high speed it is referred to as **Staccato volante/Flying Staccato**.
  - a. **Staccato volante/Flying Staccato** – Usually on the up-bow, though a limited number of notes can be done on the down-bow from the heel/frog. Begin either on the string or with a *close attack* from above followed by a springing-up off the string for each note. Generally broaden the earlier notes and add speed appropriate to the passage and intensity of character as one progresses to the end. **It is a most brilliant effect.** (The *cousin* of **Spiccato volante/Flying Spiccato**.) See **Basics III**, Variations 12 – 15, pages 14 & 15.
2. Similar to and often interchanged with **Marcato**. It is a distinct setting apart of the notes.
3. In **orchestral playing**, this is accomplished with a **Spiccato drammatico/Dramatic Spiccato**.

**Sting/Piqûre** – An extremely short down-bow or up-bow *slap of the bow hair*. It is usually near the very tip of the bow, imitating the sound and character of pizzicato, but without the setting/sticking into the string of the **Collé** stroke. In its suddenness it resembles the **Battere** and **Fouetté** strokes most, with a singular, more vertical attack of the bow thrown to the string. *Particularly well suited to alternate with Left-Hand Pizzicato.*

**Sul tasto/Sulla tastiera** – Over the fingerboard and therefore of a lighter quality of sound. (*Often a slightly faster, more flowing bow speed is required.*)

**Tenuto** – A holding or lingering on a note, *with an extra degree of sustaining*, for musical character.

**Thumb-fingers Stroke** – The name is chosen as the *main impetus or source of action* comes **from the thumb** with the *fingers simultaneously* “*joining in on the game.*” This **stroke on the string** is directed by the bow hand **thumb-fingers** in either down-bow (“**Throw**”) or up-bow (“**Catch**”), hence “**Throw/Catch**” (#2 below). When used with longer bow strokes, it is applied to the **very end** of the stroke, allowing the right arm a moment’s pause just prior to the change of direction – **it finishes the old stroke**. *Do not allow the bow-hand to move up or down, or permit any rolling action whatsoever – keep the back of the hand still.* Practice in all parts of the bow. Make use of a wide range of dynamics, *ppp* to *fff*, and bow placements – heel to tip and fingerboard to bridge. Initially keep *on* the string, later adding lifts (see 3 below).

1. Upon adding arm motion, make sure the **thumb-fingers** action is applied to the **END OF THE STROKE** – initially use a little *zip-accent*, *suddenly speeding the thumb-fingers* action thereby making it audible.
2. “**Throw/Catch**” – at the **end** of the down-bow, **Throw** – *extend/elongate* – **thumb-fingers**; at the **end** of the up-bow, **Catch** – *curl/contract* – **thumb-fingers**. (*Less motion is best.*)
3. When playing a short, lifted stroke, relate the immediacy of tone and **grab of the string** to that of **pizzicato** – hence this stroke can be referred to as “**pizzicato with the bow.**” See **Collé**.

**Thumbless** – Not a stroke, but a practice technique. Place the bow on the string with **flat hair** at or near the heel and *carefully* remove the thumb so that only the fingers are on top of the bow in their *normal positioning*. Adjust the arm height and angle to accommodate this setting – feel the fingers in contact with the *top* of the bow. Now do a slow stationary roll across the strings. *Do not let the tip of the bow go behind your head.* **This provides a feel for how well the bow balances on the flat hair, thereby fostering ease of control and mastery without excessive gripping.**

**Travel** – The action of *subtly* progressing in either direction, *toward the heel* (longer up-bows) or *toward the tip* (longer down-bows), with a series of strokes to attain another area of the bow, used when the *bow pattern* does not naturally produce this result. This is to be accomplished in such a way that the listener does not hear any accents, *unless* the accent is intended for musical inflection.

**Tremolo** – An extremely rapid, short bow stroke attained by repeatedly waving/throwing the right hand from the arm via the wrist, usually performed at or near the tip of the bow. In very strong passages, or during a crescendo, the player should **travel** toward the heel of the bow. When a greater sustained tonal volume is required the forearm will be brought more into action using a very rapid **détaché** or **jeté** stroke.

**Viotti Bowing** – A hooking of notes, two per bow, in off beat paired staccato strokes with the accent on the second note – therefore on the beat when playing 8th notes. See **Basics II**, Var. 14, pg13.

**Whipped Bow** – See **Fouetté**.

## **Brio**

Sprightliness and liveliness – *con brio* is with liveliness and exuberance. **Brioso:** Brisk and lively.

## **Calando**

Declining, decreasing, settling and diminishing in a gradual manner.

## **Cantabile**

Singing, lyric tones.

## **Chord**

The vertical writing of three or more tones that are most commonly performed in a quick succession with the bottom two notes played together, immediately followed by a string crossing (*lighten and slow the bow during this action*) to the top two notes. *There are numerous variations of execution and artists will avail themselves of what they feel is the most appropriate style for the music.*

1. In **three-note chords** the middle note is usually played with both the bottom and the top.
2. In **four-note chords** the bottom two notes are played and then the top two notes – also, bottom 2/middle 2/top 2 is an interesting, though less used, option.
3. Most often the rhythmic pulse is placed on the high notes.
4. Sometimes, as in unaccompanied Bach, we use a **top/down** variation – this would generally place the pulse on the bottom.
5. The pulse (points 2, 3 & 4) can also be placed at the beginning of the chord when broadening the musical line.
6. One can also vary the style by *arpeggiating* – playing single notes and arriving on a single note or **double-stop**.
7. The *main note* can be held longer, if stylistically appropriate and/or indicated by the composer.

## **Chromatic**

A pair of notes or series of notes that are half steps/tones apart.

## **Coda**

The last section of a movement or piece that confirms its conclusion.

## **Col/Colla**

With or glued to, as in **colla voce** – *with the voice*. Stay with/be glued to every note, **Rubato** and inflection of the voice or other musical line that one is playing with.

## **Con**

With, as in **con fuoco** – *with fire*.

## **Crescendo**

To grow, increase and expand tonal volume – often coincides with increased intensity of character.

## **Crescent Bow**

**The most important technique for the development of tonal resonance and fluidity of bow arm motion.**

The *partial slightly orbital path* around the scroll of the instrument (player's left hand) enabling the tone to resonate with greater clarity and projection, **additionally offering a natural way to free up the right arm's motions through the joints of the wrist, elbow and shoulder.**

1. The bow strokes are to be accomplished with a **slight rounding-of-the-path**, thus **Crescent Bow – the curved drawing of the bow**.
2. The down and up-bow paths are *mirror images* of each other.
3. The down-bow must have a **pulling back** of the **upper arm** in the lower 1/2 of the bow followed by a **pushing out/forward** in the upper 1/2 as the bow continues toward the tip.
  - a. The point at which the right elbow is 90-degrees determines the upper and lower 1/2 of the *bow stroke*.
4. The up-bow must have a **pulling back** of the **upper arm** in the upper 1/2 of the bow followed by a **pushing up diagonally** of the left hand for the lower 1/2 toward the heel of the bow.

**NOTE: The Crescent Bow is necessary to compensate for the natural resistance of the bow caused by the string/bridge combination – the nearer to the bridge, the greater the resistance. It is like walking into the wind – we lean into the counter force.**

## Da capo

To the head or top of the movement – return to the beginning. Abbr. *D.C.*

## Deciso

A decidedly rhythmic character that can be accomplished in all dynamic ranges and many bow stroke styles.

## Decrescendo

To decrease tonal volume – often corresponding with relaxing the character of the phrase, section or movement.

## Divisi

Divide.

## Delicatamente

Delicately and softly - finely.

## Double Stop

The playing of two strings simultaneously, such as 1<sup>st</sup> finger on the D-string and 2<sup>nd</sup> finger on the A-string – hence the *stopping* of those respective strings. The term is also applied when one of the notes is played with an open string.

## Dolce

Sweet, mild and gentle. **Dolcissimo** – Extremely sweet, mild and gentle.

## Dots

1. Placed to the *right of the note*, the dot increases the value of the note by 50%, e.g., a half note equals 2 quarter notes and a dotted half note equals 3 quarter notes.
2. Placed *above or below the note*, it shortens the sound by approximately 50% without modifying the rhythmic value – there is any number of exceptions to this guide of how short to play the note. The musician must respond to the character and tempo of the music with an experienced and trained ear as to what is appropriate in length of sound and type of bow stroke to be applied, such as *Spiccato, Staccato, Martelé, Ricochet, etc.*
3. Placed *above or below the note in sets of two or more*, it refers to the number of rhythmically even articulations with the bow per written note, i.e., when there are two dots above/below an 8th note we play duple 16ths and when there are three dots we play triplet/tuple 16ths or duple 16ths if the dots are on a dotted 8th note, as in the written study. See **Basics II**, Var. 1-8, pg. 13.

## e

And.

## “Equal” (=)

In fingerings, this indicates the placement of one finger on two strings to play 5ths simultaneously and/or to accomplish a smooth transition from one string to the next via the 5th.

## Espressivo

Expressive emotional playing usually implying a lyric, warm tone that is heartfelt and a bit more intense than *dolce*.

## Face

The left-hand’s fingernail – note the angle and direction each “*faces*” depending upon the intervals and strings. **This is to be maintained during the shift of any specific finger**, unless rotating to prepare a new face angle.

## Fermata

Stop and/or pause in the rhythmic flow of the music, to be done by holding the note longer than the written value or with silence when placed over a rest, bar-line or at the end of a movement before continuing on.

## Fine

The finish, end or conclusion of the composition. Pronounced *fee-nay*.

## Fingered Tremolo

*Tremolo of the left hand* is related to the *tremolo/trill* in that it is a rapid alternating of two notes (four in *double-stops*), often with an interval greater than a 2<sup>nd</sup>. These notes are slurred together. This is not a bow stroke, but is also included in that category – see *Ondulé* – due to the shared terminology.

## Flat Hair

See **Bow Stroke Styles**.

## Forte

Strong, firm and loud – a way to play the passage. Not loud and harsh, but of *strong character and tone*.

**Fortissimo** – extremely strong and powerful.

## Forza

Strength, power and force. *Con forza* is with strength, power and force.

## Frog

See **Heel**.

## Fuoco

Fire – *con fuoco*, with fire: perform with great intensity.

## Giusto

Exactly, just in time – with rhythmic exactitude or precision. “*Just so!*”

## Glissando

Used to indicate a *slide of the finger(s)* up or down the string.

*Chromatic Glissando* is accomplished by simultaneously *vibrating* while *sliding* up or down, causing the sequential half steps to sound – a virtuoso technique varying from brilliant and intense to light, elegant and charming.

## Grandioso

Grandiose, grand – perform in a grand, open and projecting style.

## Grave

Heavy, weighted and grievous – as despair and death in character or mood.

**Gravemente** – To play heavily, sternly and with great seriousness of interpretation.

## Grazioso

Gracious, graceful, charming and elegant in style.

## Guide Notes

The extra notes played to **assist in tuning (1)**, and *particularly* used in **mastering shifts (2 & 3)** – also known as *end-over shifts*, where the *new finger comes over* its note at the *end of the shift*. **Adjust measurement/interval of these two fingers during the shift as this lends a consistency of intonation combined with a balance of motion.**

- Using the interval of the 4th when playing 3rds and 2nds and the 8va when playing 6ths and 7ths, are examples for tuning in a given position – also the use of open strings below or above.
- When **shifting** to notes/positions on the **SAME STRING**, it is most important to:
  - Shift with *old* (last) finger to *new* position – then place *new* finger on *new* note, as when music shows B-1 on A to E-2 on A, practice: B-1 on A to D-1 on A, adding E-2 on A. (*Old finger to new position to new finger/note.*)
  - Shifting from a finger other than 1<sup>st</sup> finger, also shift with *old* (last) finger to *new* position, such as, C-2 on A to E-2 on A. (*Old finger to new position/note.*)
  - IN ALL SHIFTS** practice the 1<sup>st</sup> finger’s shift from *old* position to *new* position.
- When **shifting** to notes/positions on **DIFFERENT STRINGS**, it is most important to:
  - Shift with *old* (last) finger on *old* string to *new* position – then change to *new* string/note; for example, when music shows A-1 on G to F-3 on A, practice: A-1 on G to C-1 on G then cross strings to F-3 on A. (*Old finger on old string to new position to new string/note.*)

- b. Also **reverse** the shift/string crossing, *old* finger to *new* string and shift to *new* position – when music shows A-1 on G to F-3 on A, practice: A-1 on G to B-1 on A then shift up to D-1 on A and play F-3 on A. (*Old finger to new string to new position to new note.*)
- c. **And** shift with the *new* finger on the *new* string to the *new* position/note.
- d. **Think of the Knight’s move in chess.**

## Hand Groups

Interval patterns of measurement.

See pages 6-9.

*They are the “words” – the language of notes and intervals as translated from the page to the violin fingerboard.*

A combination of interval spacing between fingers, as in, open/closed/open or whole/half/whole, steps or tones which is the “**Beginning Hand Group**” – **BH**. (Note that pitch intervals change with varied string combinations, but the *Hand Group* can remain the same.) See **Intervals, 2**.

## Harmonics

1. The overtone series of pitches possible on each string accomplished by very lightly touching the string. Particularly used with intervals of the 8va, major 6th, 5th, 4th and major 3rd.
2. **Fingered Harmonics** are those whereby we place a finger firmly on the string combined with a higher finger on the same string using a very light touch – most often performed with the interval of the 5th, 4th or major 3rd.

## Heel

*Frog* (English), *Frosch* (German), *Talon* (French), *Tallone* (Italian).

## il

The.

## Impeto

Impetus, energetic, forceful, impact – to play with intensity and drive.

## Intervals

Notes and Fingers

Distance in pitch between **notes** (1) and the distance between **fingers** (2).  
(Note particularly the **Open & Closed Hand Groups**, pages 6-9.)

1. The **distance between notes**, e.g., 1/2 step/tone equals a minor 2nd such as B to C and a whole step/tone equals a Major 2nd as with B to C#.
2. The **distance between fingers**, e.g., 1/2 step equals a **closed** space and a whole step equals an **open** space. See **Open /Closed Hand Groups**, pgs. 6-9.
  - a. The 1/2 step space will sound a **minor 6th/Augmented 5th** (*not the same*) when a finger plays on one string and the neighboring higher finger plays on the neighboring higher string, such as, **m6** = E-1 on D to C-2 on A whereas the **A5** = E-1 on D to B#-2 on A-string.
  - b. The 1/2 step space will also intone the **Augmented 4th** (*Tritone*–3 whole steps) or **diminished 5th** (*not the same*) when the left-hand plays Bb-2 on G with E-1 on D (**A4**) whereas **d5** = A#-2 on G with E-1 on D.
  - c. **THE DISTANCE BETWEEN FINGERS IS NOT EQUAL.**
    - 1) Within a given position playing whole steps, the left-hand is *proportioned*, as each interval higher is measured smaller, in other words, *large, medium & small*.
    - 2) Similarly, in higher positions the left-hand is *proportionally* smaller, that is, an 8va up on the same string is *half the size* of the lower 8va.
    - 3) In **Pure Pitch**, or **Natural Pitch**, the 1/2 steps will vary as “*sharps lead up*” – C# is tight to D, whereas, “*flats lead down*,” with Db tight to C; therefore C# is above Db. **Pure/Natural Pitch is not tempered.**
    - 4) **EXTRA TIP** – if 1/2 steps *change* letter names of notes, they are *tight* or *close* – *same* letter name is *loose* or *open*.

**NOTE:** Odd numbered intervals are always *line-to-line* or *space-to-space*, such as 3rds and 5ths, etc. Even numbered intervals are always *line-to-space* or *space-to-line*, as with 2nds and 4ths, etc.

## Intonation

### Achievement of:

**The ears are the caboose – by the time it is out there, it is too late.**

Pitches and interval relationships must first be heard in the *Inner Ear* – the mind – then measured by the hand.

1. **Best accomplished with** the use of Perfect 8vas, Perfect 5ths, Perfect 4ths and/or the previous note on the neighboring string.
2. Also **assisted by** the use of the open string *below* or *above* the string being played.
3. In **Pure/Natural Pitch**, the 1/2 steps will vary as “*sharps lead up*” – C# is tight to D, whereas, “*flats lead down*,” with Db tight to C; therefore C# is above Db. **Pure/Natural Pitch** is not tempered.
4. **EXTRA TIP** – if 1/2 steps change letter names of notes, they are *tight* or close – same letter is *loose* or open.
5. Apply the use of rhythmic **Repetition Hits** (RH).

**NOTE: You must actually feel the intervals’ sizes and proportions relative to the position being played as you hear them in your inner ear – visualize their measurement.**

*Open and close the palm/knuckles/fingers in measuring intervals – be elastic, pliable and formed – ALWAYS balance to fingerboard.*

## Largamente

Large, wide and broad in style – hence a slowing, broadening and expanding of the tempo and character.

## Largo

Broad, open and extensive in character, style and tempo – therefore a slower paced tempo.

**Larghetto** – A less slow and weighted style with a slightly more moving tempo and lighter, easier character.

## Left Hand/Arm

See Posture.

1. In the lower 4 positions, line up **2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> fingers’ knuckles** approximately parallel to the fingerboard (see 4 below) – with a **rounded diagonal** approach of the hand to the neck.
2. **Thumb** should initially be across from the knuckle of the 1<sup>st</sup> finger, behind the tip – this will modify based on string, position and intervals or type of passage being played. See **Posture**, 3a.
  - a. Develop independence of motion – **never** grip or squeeze the neck.
3. **Hand** is *rotated* clockwise to lower strings and counterclockwise to higher strings *in conjunction with* the left forearm rotation and the left upper arm pendulum action.
4. **Wrist** in lower positions is to have only a slight bend out to enable number 1 above.
  - a. It is to be *stable during shifts* and therefore must **not** collapse toward the instrument during shifts up.
  - b. Conversely, it **must not lead-out** for the shift down, thereby dragging the fingers to the new position.
  - c. Energy flow must be maintained throughout to prevent seizing of the fingers.
5. **Forearm** rotates for hand – see 3 above.
  - a. The “**motor**” for the vibrato.
  - b. The “**assisting motor**” for shifts – pull toward ribs for shifts up and away for shifts down. (The arm opens and closes like a fan.)
6. **Upper Arm:**
  - a. Does a pendulum-like move and is the “**motor**” for string crossings
  - b. The “**motor**” for shifts – pull toward ribs for shifts up and away for down. (The arm opens and closes like a fan.)
    - 1) Do not allow the instrument to be pulled down while shifting, rather maintain the *lifting* (see d. below) responsibility of the upper arm at all times.
  - c. The “**assisting motor**” for vibrato.
  - d. The “**lifter of hand**” for support of the instrument and to go over the instrument’s top in higher positions.

**NOTE: If allowed, indeed encouraged, the fingers/hand/arm will adjust for the type of passage, i.e., 3rds and 6ths, etc. In 3rds a greater clockwise rotation will be used with high fingers (3 & 4) on the lower string and low fingers (1 & 2) on the higher string. With the same strings when playing 6ths, conversely, a greater**

counter-clockwise rotation will be used with the neighboring higher finger on the higher string. The pendulum action of the left arm will also come into play to assist the balancing of the fingers on the strings.

**SYNOPSIS: ALWAYS** achieve a *natural balance* and *efficiency of motion*.  
Observe these and all other adjustments readily incorporating them into your technique.

### **Legato**

See **Bow Stroke Styles**.

### **Leggiero**

Light and nimble – when fast, an accomplished and “tossed off” passage done with great ease and panache.

### **Lento**

Slow, loose, tardy – a slow lingering stretched out tempo.

### **L’istesso**

*L’istesso tempo* is to continue in the same tempo.

### **Ma**

But, yet or still.

### **Maestoso**

Majestic and grand – proud and stately musical character.

### **Meno**

Less.

### **Mesto**

Sad.

### **Mezzo**

Middle, half – *mezzo voce* is “half-voice” and *mezzo forte, mf*, is “half-strong” or “half-loud.”

### **Moderato**

Moderate – moderate pace. **Moderatissimo** – extremely moderate tempo.

### **Molto**

Much.

### **Morbidezza**

Softness.

**Morbido** – soft and/or delicate.

### **Morendo**

Dying or fading away.

### **Natural Pitch**

Not tempered or modified – synonymous with *Pure Pitch*. See **Intervals** and **Intonation**.

### **Natural Tones**

The **resonant tone/sound** created by *drawing the bow* hairs across the open string and/or when a finger is firmly placed upon the string to produce a given pitch. This can also be accomplished via *pizzicato*.

### **Nobile**

Noble – to perform in a confident, enlightening and dignified fashion with uplifting spirit.

### **Ordinario**

Return to the ordinary/natural tone drawn with the bow – abbr. *ord.*

## Paganini Bowing

See **Bow Stroke Styles**.

## Perdendosi

Fade away to nothing, to gradually disappear.

## Piacere

Pleasure, joy – “*A piacere*” is to play using your preference with both *tempo and rubato* in an enjoyably free manor. Learn the passage as written – this will guide you into an artistically appropriate freedom of interpretation.

## Piano

Softly. **Pianissimo** – very soft.

## Piu

More.

## Pizzicato

The **plucking of the string** with the right or left hand fingers.

1. For greater clarity and resonance use *extra pressure* with the left-hand fingers and maintain that strength of finger after the *pizzicato*.
2. For a *short abrupt note*, immediately release the left-hand finger.
3. Pluck **further** from the bridge for *more warmth of tone*.
4. **Nearer** to the bridge for greater precision and crispness of tone.

## Planes

The **drawn line of the bow path angle** determined by the string(s) selected.

There are **9 Basic Planes**. See pages 4 & 5.

1. The **4 single** strings – keep to center of plane, but allow for variables based on tonal inflections and anticipation of traversing from one string to another.
2. The **3 double** strings – favor balance toward the lower string.
3. The **2 triple** strings – slightly favor the lower side of the middle string.
4. There is arguably a **10<sup>th</sup> Plane**.
  - a. The bow is placed on the middle two strings – leaning to the lower – generally above, or very near to, the fingerboard.
  - b. With tremendous weight and bow speed, play all 4 strings at once and/or with minimal role.

## Poco

Little. **Pochissimo** – very little, tiny.

## Ponticello

See **Bow Stroke Styles**.

## Posato

Steady, calm and with composure.

## Position / Numbers

**Left hand.**

**Bow fingers/hand/ arm are included in the first statement.**

1. Far more than a location numbering system of notes and fingers, it is *everything positioned* – *the balance/angles of the fingers/hand/wrist/arm*. The performer must be totally aware of every aspect of movement flow and measurement over the entire spectrum of the instrument. **It is not enough to know the sound of the pitch.** One must train the successful actions in every detail, memorize the feel of their measurement, the sequence flow and how the motions are supportive and complimentary to the musical phrase – both dynamic and character.

2. The **system of numbered locations** for the left arm and hand as related to fingers and notes.
  - a. The **1<sup>st</sup> Position** is based on the low notes of each string with the individual finger playing a *new lettered note* in sequence, e.g., B-1 on A, C-2 on A, D-3 on A and E-4 on A.
  - b. Upon moving the 1<sup>st</sup> finger up to C on the A-string, via the *shifting* of the arm/hand toward the player, one has achieved the **2<sup>nd</sup> Position** and upon moving the 1<sup>st</sup> finger up to D on the A-string, via the *shifting* of the arm/hand toward the player, the **3<sup>rd</sup> Position** is achieved – thus subsequent moves realize higher positions.
  - c. **It is most important to know that there is more than one 1<sup>st</sup> Position, etc., as the sharps, naturals and flats necessitate many adjustments in both the arm and hand.**
  - d. Suffice it to say that there are *basically three positions* for every number assigned, hence “High,” “Medium” and “Low” 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, etc. positions.
    - 1) Acknowledging this fact will alert the player to *adjust the arm and hand accordingly*, adding tremendous ease of action with a greater refinement of location in positioning.
    - 2) **Do not force the fingers onto “spots” with extreme extensions or contractions** – simply adjust your balancing/positioning, and the fingers will function with ease and accuracy.

**NOTE: In odd numbered positions – odd numbered fingers, 1 & 3, will be the line notes (“odd notes”); even numbered fingers, 2 & 4 (0), will be the space notes (“even notes”). In the even numbered positions the opposite will be true.**

## Posture

**This deals with the physics of playing and handling the instrument.**

### **1. Stance 2. Instrument 3. Left Hand: a. Thumb & b. Index Finger Shifts in #2 & #3**

1. Stand/sit **tall** supporting the abdominal and lower-back regions – “tuck in the butt and suck in the gut.”
  - a. **Lift the chest** without arching the lower back – keep it straight as possible.
  - b. When standing, balance over the arches of the feet – do not lean over the toes.
  - c. Keep an *easy, flexible, alert* stance and **never** lock the knees.
2. The **instrument** is to be held so that the **strings are parallel** to the floor.
  - a. The **left arm** should be held high enough so that the **left hand** is approximately **mouth/nose high**. (*This practice goes back to the writing of Leopold Mozart in 1756.*)
    - 1) The **left arm** should take the fingers to the desired string(s) by the pendulum action **from** the shoulder.
    - 2) Shifts are accomplished by moving the – *note the order of thought* – **arm/hand/thumb/fingertip simultaneously**.
  - b. The instrument is to **rest on the collarbone** and the **left hand**, supported by the **thumb** across from the thumbnail and on the **side of the index finger**, above the knuckle joint. Do not fall into the web between the thumb and the palm of the hand.
  - c. The angle from the body should be such that the player can easily reach the tip of the bow when drawing it across the strings.
  - d. If using a **shoulder-rest**, do not give it a vice-like grip – the instrument must be light and easy in the hand.
  - e. Do not clamp down on the **chin-rest** – its main function is to *lightly* stabilize the lateral roll of the instrument and to assist in downward shifts, particularly in the lower positions.
  - f. Choose a chin-rest and, if using, shoulder-rest that prevent an inordinate amount of dropping the head forward. (See 1 above.)
3. The **left-hand, thumb and 1<sup>st</sup> finger** are responsible for holding, balancing and maneuvering around the instrument like an Olympic skater or gymnast. Together, they form a *supporting wedge* in the lower positions that must **never** be gripped in a vise-like manner.
  - a. **Thumb:** It must be *flexible, agile and free* to move.
    - 1) Place the pad of the **thumb** on the G-string side, slightly under the neck and across from the 1<sup>st</sup> finger’s knuckle – it will have varied locations/angles depending upon the string, position and type of passage.
    - 2) As we shift up the **thumb actively follows simultaneously**, supporting the instrument along with the side of the 1<sup>st</sup> finger and gradually flowing *diagonally* underneath the neck behind the 1<sup>st</sup> finger to solely support the violin/viola – this diagonal move is generally not needed in the *lower three positions*, four with a larger hand, **unless** one is progressing into higher positions and/or playing 3rds and other patterns that require the higher fingers to be on lower strings, while lower fingers are on higher strings.

- 3) As the fingers/hand progress *over the top of the instrument*, the thumb should continue its flow *diagonally* underneath the neck, eventually to the high string's side of the neck and then over the top *on the side of the fingerboard* – by which time the upper arm has *freely lifted to lightly support* the instrument, see a) below. One must stand/sit **tall** to achieve this with proper balance, opening the chest without lifting the shoulders.
  - a) During the above, 3), *without a shoulder-rest*, the **upper arm** near the joint of the shoulder will rise to the back of the instrument, lending a *light support* – the thumb is no longer doing that job.
  - b) **DO NOT LIFT THE LEFT SHOULDER'S NECK AREA.**
  - c) The **thumb** will be approximately a 90-degree angle from the first finger when going above the top and *along the side of the fingerboard*. (If the thumb is “double jointed,” the angle will be smaller, but initially try opening the hand-thumb angle. Finally, choose what is *easiest and most maneuverable*.)
  - d) In higher positions, the **thumb** easily prevents the instrument swinging to the right.
  
- b. **1<sup>st</sup> Finger:** In the lower three or four positions it should touch the side of the neck *lightly* so it *moves easily* when employing vibrato – in *vibrato* the *thumb pivots* and the *side of the 1<sup>st</sup> finger slides* – with the instrument's neck *above* the knuckle.
  - 1) **This enables tremendous ease and freedom of action** in the left-hand fingers, as there is **no squeezing** of thumb and 1<sup>st</sup> finger to hold the instrument.
  - 2) This method keeps the neck of the instrument from falling into the web between the thumb and palm – *there must be no tightening of the player's left side, shoulder, neck and jaw.*
  - 3) When shifting, keep the *face* of the finger the same, *balancing* to the curve/angle of the fingerboard – this is true for each of the fingers.
  - 4) On *lower strings* we leave the side of the neck *sooner*, sometimes as early as the 3<sup>rd</sup> position, as one progresses up the string.
  - 5) On *higher strings*, leave the side of the neck *later*, usually 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> position.
  - 6) The smaller the hand, the sooner the 1<sup>st</sup> finger will leave the side of the neck and, conversely, a larger hand will cause the side of the 1<sup>st</sup> finger to keep a *light* contact with the neck of the instrument longer.

**NOTE: Points b. 4) & 5) are entirely based upon hand size, finger length and type of passage.**

### Portamento

*Portamento is to slide down – Portando is up.*

To slide the finger from note to note – often a change of finger will be used to enhance the clarity of the new pitch/tone. Always to be done with utmost taste and refinement appropriate to the style of composition.

### Precipitato

Hasty and rash – to proceed in a rushing, hurried manner with tremendous momentum culminating in an abrupt, sudden and crashing arrival.

### Practice

**This is it!**

**Use the metronome – it's your friend and assistant.**

This is where the “rubber meets the road.”

Understand that **how well** you practice, determines **how much** you achieve.

1. Know the **notes and intervals**, therefore *Hand Groups* – patterns of interval measurements.
2. Balance and proportion the left-hand/arm – favoring the 4<sup>th</sup> finger when in use.
3. Achieve good intonation with the pattern being worked on (keep it a small amount).
  - a. Use *double-stops* and *open strings*.
  - b. Use *Repetition Hits* and *rhythmic patterns*.
  - c. With *shifts*, always use *guide notes*.
  - d. *Vary the key* by moving up and down in 1/2 steps/tones – do at least 3.
4. Balance the *Planes* of the bow.
  - a. Note the quantity of hair to be used – when in doubt, use *flat hair*.
  - b. Set *upper right arm* just below the *plane* of the bow. Imagine a perpendicular line from the side of the stick and keep the upper arm *slightly* below it.
  - c. Adjust the right *forearm/wrist/hand/thumb/fingers* accordingly.
  - d. Vary the bowings.
5. Begin to add in the **composer's rhythms, dynamics and musical characters**.
6. Add the bowings, if not already achieved bringing tempo up **gradually** – keep it easy, but require improvement.

## **Presto**

Instant, quick and very fast. **Prestissimo** – extremely so.

## **Pulsed legato**

See **Bow Stroke Styles – Legato**.

## **Pure Pitch**

Not tempered or modified – synonymous with *Natural Pitch*. See **Intervals** and **Intonation**.

## **R**

Rhythmic patterns. (As used in this book.)

These must be ongoing in all of your work on the instrument, adding variety, interest and challenge.

With them you will achieve far more, far sooner.

## **RH**

(Rep Hits)

**Repetition Hits** of the left-hand fingers thrown from the knuckles to gain a freer action with greater accuracy – **do not pound the fingers as in knocking loudly on a door.**

1. The action is to be *decisive* and *light*.
  - a. For dramatic and/or intense passages we do apply greater strength, always maintaining freedom of action with flexibility.
2. Best done in rhythmic patterns.
  - a. For the longer rhythm, feel the finger hold the note *like an electro magnet* that you simply *turn off* when the note ends – *the finger rhythmically and automatically releases the string*.
  - b. The fingers must remain *close to the string and above their note*.

## **Rallentando**

To slacken or slow down the pace. See **Ritardando**.

## **Ravivare**

Revive, reanimate, enliven, and stir – to brighten up.

## **Recapitulation**

Used to denote the composer's return to the opening statement, however brief it might be.

## **Religioso**

Religiously – to perform in a prayerful and meditative manner.

## **Restez**

Remain in position.

## **Right Hand/Arm**

See **Bow Fingers/Hand/Arm**.

## **Rinforzando**

Reinforce, strengthen – a very sudden attack or accent.

It can also refer to a section or phrase and then is played with greater strength of character and commitment.

## **Ripieno**

Literally *full* – as in *con ripieno* (with full section – all) or *senza ripieno* (solo – without full section).

## **Risoluto**

Resolute and determined – of strong character tonally and stylistically.

The dynamic can vary widely, but most often is in the *forte* range.

## **Ritardando**

To delay or be slow. It is a gradual slowing with any variety of dynamic and musical effects. See **Rallentando**.

## Ritenu

To check or detain – an *instant*, or at least very quick, adjustment to a slower tempo.

## Roman Numerals

1. Indication of the *note/chord* of the scale/key. See pages 2 and 3.
2. Indication of the *string* to be played on, i.e., *Violin* = E-I, A-II, D-III, G-IV and *Viola* = A-I, D-II, G-III, C-IV. (*Note that this is the only time we start with the high notes and work down.*)
3. Indication of the *position* number on the fingerboard.

## Rubato

In essence, to *steal time*, stretching and/or shrinking the sound value of the rhythms in such a way that it enhances the musical phrase and/or rhythmic character of the passage. At times this is subtly done with only the musical line/soloist being highlighted and at other times the complete notation will move in an elastic quality done to affect the tension/release character of the passage.

## Sans (*French*)

Without or free from.

## Scherzo

A joke, jest or trick – a rapid vigorous movement containing everything from light hearted gaiety to even a sinister and twisted character and mood. Always very rhythmic in style and with quick changing sequences.

**Scherzando/Scherzoso** – playful.

## Sciolto

Loose, free and easy. **Scioltezza** – nimbleness, ease and fluency.

## Segno

Sign, hence *del segno*, abbr. *D.S.*, is to go to *the sign*.

## Segue

1. To continue into the next section or movement without a stop.
2. To continue in the same style or manner that is shown briefly, such as an arpeggiation of a chord where the following chords are simply written in vertical block form.

## Sempre

Always, continuously.

## Senza

Without – *senza sordino* is without the mute and *senza vibrato* is without vibrato.

## Sforzato

Forced – to *dramatically* accent the note(s) with tremendous intensity relative to the dynamics and character of the passage.

## Shifts

**See – Left Hand/Arm; Posture 2 & 3; Guide Notes;  
Basics III pg 14-15; Basics IV pg 16-17; Shifting pg 24-26.**

**Note the method of training shifts throughout the studies.**

### **Shift/Full Shift:**

1. Shift arm/hand/thumb/fingertip **simultaneously** maintaining the *face* angle (fingernail) of the sliding finger.
2. Practice slow, smooth movements of varying touch, rhythm and tempo – avoid *whiplash* or *fishing for note/position* (where the finger searches/rolls for the *missed* note).
3. **Shrink** the hand gradually while **shifting up** – *the lower fingers/knuckles close in the direction of the shift toward the higher finger.*
4. **Expand** the hand gradually while **shifting down** – *the lower fingers/knuckles open in the direction of the shift away from the higher finger.*
5. In points 3 & 4 above, use the contracting or expanding capabilities of the palm and knuckles.

### ***Pivot Shift/Half Shift:***

1. The thumb retains its location, only pivoting as needed.
2. Move arm /hand/fingertip **simultaneously**.
3. The *face* may or may not change angle.
4. **Generally used for shifting smaller intervals especially when there will be a quick return to the previous position.**

### ***Walking Shift:***

1. It could be referred to as ***Left Hand Traveling***.
2. The finger *extends/contracts* (walks), during which time the left arm and hand are moving in the *same* direction.
3. **Do not roll off** the pitch of the note you are walking from. Keep the *face* of the finger you are walking from – if it must move/twist/roll then compensate so the pitch is retained.
4. Closely related to the ***Pivot Shift/Half Shift***, the thumb *does* slide during the “walk” or immediately thereafter.
5. It is used in small to moderate shifts when no audible slide is desired – the arm/hand will attain the new position.

## **Side Hair**

See **Bow Stroke Styles**.

## **Smorzando**

Fade away – gradually soften to inaudible.

## **Son**

Sound or tone.

## **Sordino**

Mute – *con sordino* is with the mute and *senza sordino* is without the mute.

## **Sotto**

Under, beneath or below.

## **Stentato**

Stunted or halting – to play in a halting manner.

## **String Crossings**

Also see – **Bow Fingers/ Hand/Arm**

### **Right Arm:**

***Wing*** – the up and down arch-like action of the right arm *from* the shoulder to cause string crossings of the *bow* and/or string crossings for *pizzicato*.

### **Left Arm:**

***Pendulum*** – the swinging move of the left arm from the shoulder to accomplish string crossings for the left-hand/fingers assisted by a clockwise rotation of the forearm/hand to lower strings and a counter clockwise rotation of the forearm/hand to higher strings – *take care not to turn out too far with the left hand*.

## **Substitution**

The changing of finger, when playing a *repeated note*, to add a degree of inflection, whether intensifying or calming the phrase – vibrato, bow speed and weight will enhance this moment. Frequently done in a descending direction, it can also be appropriate when ascending in position.

## **Sul**

Italian for “*on the*,” hence, “sul G” means on the G-string.

## **Technique**

***Technique is the tool by which we accomplish the artistic.***

The all-encompassing term covering the complete universe of movements – all for the purpose of depicting the varied characters, types and personalities of the musical phrases and compositions. The greater the mastery of

technique, the greater the *potential* for artistry. It is not enough to play the “little spots on the page.” They all have artistic value and must be made to contribute to their individual phrases – thereby the overall work or composition. ***The notes are like little people – each has a duty and responsibility to fulfill – as they all contribute value to the composition being played.***

### **Tip of Bow**

*Point* (English), *Spitze* (German), *Pointe* (French), *Punta* (Italian).

### **Tone**

*The type or quality of sound given by any musical instrument, or any sound created.*

1. The pitch of the note.
2. The sound created by drawing the bow across the string(s) and/or plucking the string(s).
3. The distance/interval of two pitches, for example, C to C# is a 1/2 tone or 1/2 step; C to D is a whole tone or whole step and C to F# is an Augmented 4th or Tritone – 3 whole steps.

### **Torpid**

Torpid or drowsy.

### **Travel**

See **Bow Stroke Styles**.

### **Triangular 5ths**

The **visual pattern** that occurs when writing out the sharps and flats of the **Circle of 5ths** with the key of “C” in the center, the sharp keys listed progressively above and the flat keys listed progressively below.

### **Trill**

**The rapid-fire, reflexive action of a finger.**

More specifically, a quick **throw of the finger from the knuckle**, where the velocity excites the main note to varying degrees. The *trill* note is the ***upper auxiliary/upper complement*** to the written note.

1. Adding altitude to the action lends greater incisiveness and compensates for using a very light touch in the hand – *one must not squeeze the finger down, as it will not release quickly enough.*
2. For absolute clarity of pitch, there must be **no** vibrato in the trill, excepting the ***Vibrato Trill*** – used in situations where the interval, most commonly a 1/2 step in higher positions, is too small to freely throw the finger and remain in tune.
  - a. **Vibrato Trill**
    - 1) The trill finger is placed on the lower finger’s nail to the high-string side, using just the corner edge of the trill finger.
    - 2) One then vibrates in an **upward direction** momentarily rolling the trill finger onto the desired pitch – upon returning, the main note is again at its correct location.

### **Triple Stop**

A **3 note chord, vertically written** – e.g., 1<sup>st</sup> finger on the G-string, 2<sup>nd</sup> finger on the D-string and 3<sup>rd</sup> finger on the A-string – hence the *stopping* of those respective strings. The term is also accepted and used when one of the notes is played with an open string. It is executed with three strings simultaneously, broken in pairs (most common), singly arpeggiated or other variation with the bow.

### **Troppo**

Too, too much, excessively – *Allegro ma non troppo* is fast, but not too much or too fast.

### **Tutti**

All.

### **V**

Variations. (As used in this book.)

### **Vi-de**

The indication to cut from one note (*Vi*) to another (*de*).

## **Viotti Bowing**

See **Bow Stroke Styles**.

## **Vibrato**

*The sibling to shifts.*

*Complement to character of the phrase.*

Primarily accomplished by the **rapid shifting/pumping** of the **arm**, in line with the string, along with the **flexing/rolling** of the **fingertip**. These two are sympathetically joined **via the wrist**.

*(There must be no contrary action to these simultaneous moves.)*

1. The direction is from the *pitch to below and return* again – the ear picks up the higher tone.
2. The wrist should have a pro-active flexing action – controlled, yet a loose, free quality of movement. It relates in feel to shaking dice in the hand or shaking the fist (use a relaxed, slightly open hand) – do not let the hand flop beyond the wrist in either direction.
  - a. The hand must **not** go in an opposite direction to the forearm via the wrist.
3. The *easiest positions to first achieve vibrato* are the 3<sup>rd</sup> through the 5<sup>th</sup> positions.
  - a. Do **NOT** brace the base of the hand against the shoulder/rib or back of the violin – this creates opposing actions that are counterproductive.
4. In essence: play the note and *simultaneously* “*shift down*” **while flexing and rolling the fingertip**, then “*shift up*” with the returning finger motion. (Do not actually change position.)
  - a. Practice Slo-Mo/Fast (Slow Motion then Fast).
5. *Vibrato has any number of speeds and intensities with various depths of range all to be employed in the most refined manner and style of interpretation.*

**Note:** There is one other seldom taught, but most useful, technique where the finger is actually shifted/slid back and forth to give an exceptionally full *vibrato* – it is generally confined to the 4<sup>th</sup> finger and should be used wisely and sparingly, so that the listener is unaware.

## **Vivace**

Lively and quick in tempo and character.

## **Voce**

Voice: *Colla voce* – with the voice and *Mezzo voce* – half voice.

## **Walking Shift**

See **Shifts**.

## **Wing**

Descriptive of the upper right arm motion for string crossings – see **String Crossings**.



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# Viola Technique: The Manual

*Apply these methods to*

*Master the skills to*

*Master the repertoire to*

*Perform on the instrument.*

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