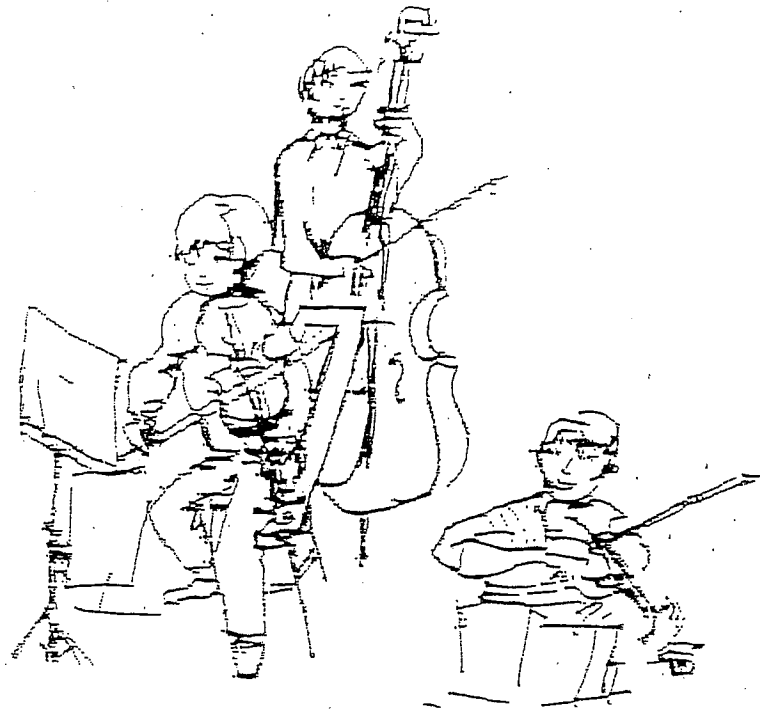


String Project BEGINNING GROUP CURRICULUM



"Our priorities are beauty and expressiveness. And students must come to believe that a melody isn't learned until it is played beautifully and expressively."

Robert Duke
Professor of Music and Human Learning
University of Texas, Austin

Developed by Dr. Dijana Ihas
dihhas@pacificu.edu

Course One
Beginning Group
Playing by Ear Only

Time frame: First semester of instruction in the group setting

String pedagogy approaches utilized at this stage: Shinichi Suzuki and Paul Rolland

Method book for teacher (optional for students): Suzuki, S. *Book 1*

Materials that students need to have: three ring binder with protective sheets for handouts received in the class, simulated instruments/bows, real instruments/bows, **feet charts & practicing CD**

Markings on the bow: Color scotch tape placed in middle (red tape), quarter (blue tape) and eight (yellow tape) parts of the bow stick

Markings on the instrument: Small dot stickers for fingers, *butterfly* stickers for thumb, *bee* sticker for the base of index finger, middle position sticker, high position sticker

Markings on the bow hand: *Two Middle Lines* and *Corner Dot*

Markings on the instrument hand: *Magic Dot* and *Magic X*

Classroom setting: violin/viola students are in standing rest/playing positions on feet charts; cellos are in sitting rest/playing position on the chairs of appropriate height

Pre-Twinkle Phase (first five-six weeks of the semester):

Stance:

- **Posture**
- Legs position:
 - **Shinichi Suzuki's** approach to leg position: weight over the left leg
- Pelvic area:
 - Slightly under the torso (image of the "bucket with water" or "dinosaur tail")
- Torso:
 - Tall and straight (image of the "invisible string")
- Sitting rest position for cellos

- **Taking the bow**
 1. *Rest position feet in line that's just mighty that's just fine* (just that line of the song in singing voice; later the whole song)
 2. *One down look at your toes, two up look at the teacher's nose* (talking voice)

- **Going from rest position to playing position:**
 - *Butterfly* position
 - Step back with your right foot
 - Check you balance and locked knees
 - Sing *Twinkle Song* with "quite" or "not moving" body

Hands/fingers awareness exercises:

- **Bow hand and instrument hand:**
 - *Where's your Bow Hand?*
 - **Bow hand fingers:**
 - Mr. Bent Thumb
 - Hugging Brothers
 - Soft Guiding Pointer
 - Curled Pinkie (violin and violas) Wrapped Around Pinkie (cellos and French bow-hold double basses)
 - **Instrument hand fingers:**
 - Banana Thumb
 - Square first finger
 - Cupcake second finger
 - Cupcake third finger
 - Open umbrella fourth finger

Setting up left hand (no instruments):

- **Strengthening Left Hand Fingers:**
 - *Fingers Popping Never Stopping*
 - *Shoo Fly Don't Bother Me*
- **Tapping Exercises** (on bow-hand forearm):
 - *With all four fingers*
 - *Each finger individually*
 - *Thumb taps and slides*
- **Preparation for Left Hand Pizzicato Exercises:**
 - *Ants* (with rubber band)
 - *Hot Cross Buns* (with rubber band)
- **Preparation for Shifting Exercises:**
 - *See Saw Up and Down* (shifting in the air)
 - *Low Position-Middle Position-High Position* (moving arm through the air)
- **Preparation for Vibrato:**
 - *Fingers Dropping Never Stopping* (for finger vibrato); *Dinner Foods* rhythm (for hand vibrato) & *See Saw Up and Down* (for arm vibrato)

Setting up the bow hand (first with dowel-stick bow; later with the real bow):

- **Bow Hold** (*Franco-Belgium* bow hold; bow is held with the thumb and two middle fingers):
 - **Bow Hand Shape Chant:** *Bunny Chant* (no dowel stick or bow in hand)
 - **Early bow hold:**
 - Suzuki's approach (thumb on silver rim)

- **Bow Hold in Ten Steps:**

- 1. Bow in instrument hand; 2. Open bow-hand palm to the ceiling; 3. Tip of the bow to the tip of the pinkie; 4. Slide the bow across the *Two Middle Lines* until little part of the stick in the frog area reaches *Two Middle Lines*; 5. Bring *Bent Thumb* to the silver rim of the frog: "*half on the silver and half on the hair*"; 6. Hug the bow with *Hugging Brothers*; 7. Bow to the *Station* (open instrument's hand palm) in *Rocket Position*; 8. Wrap *Soft Guiding Pointer* around the bow stick; 9. Bow in horizontal position (hold it in the middle with your instrument hand) and place *Curled Pinkie* at the top of the bow stick; 10. Check that two middle fingers and bent thumb are right across each other and *tap, tap, tap* with your *Curled Pinkie* (cellos/double bass wrap pinkie around)

- **Bow Hold in Five Steps:**

- 1. Instrument hand holds the bow in middle of the stick; 2. Place two *Middle Lines* on the lower part of the bow grip; 3. Bring *Bent Thumb* right across two *Middle Lines*; 4. Wrap *Soft Guiding Pointer* around the bow stick; 5. Place *Curled Pinkie* at the top of the bow stick and *tap, tap, tap*. Bow to *Rocket Position* and do bow exercises (cellos/double bass wrap pinkie around)

- **Bow Exercises:**

- *Up Like a Rocket* (chant)
- *The Wheels on the Bus* (song)
- *Circle, Circle, Carefully we Circle* (song)

Silent Bow Exercises (first with dowel-stick while "air bowing"; later with instruments and bows but no sound):

- Silent bow placement (in three points of the bow: middle, tip, frog)
- Silent bow movement (middle to tip and other way around & frog to middle and other way around)

Open the Gate (moving the bow on the string: from "red" tape to "upper blue" tape):

- Pre-exercises: 1. Student holds elbow and opens and closes the right forearm while saying the chant; 2. Same exercise with dowel-stick or bow while "air bowing"
- Steps for setting the bow on the string on "red" tape: 1. Bow in front of student in *Rocket Position*; 2. TIK-TOK (angle bow towards the instrument); 3. Land to your highest string on "red" tape; 4. Roll to D string (or A string)
- *Open the gate in the morning* – children are coming to play
Close the gate in the morning – children want to stay
Open the gate in the evening – children want to go
Close the gate in the evening –that's how you move your bow!

Twinkle Var. A rhythm (TA KA TA KA STOP STOP):

- Pre-exercises:
 - In the air (shadow bowing)
 - On the *imaginary violin* or on the left shoulder with the *caveman* bow hold
- When this can be executed with an ease transfer it on D string with slow stops (two beats of rest in between rhythm patterns; *Ta Ka Stop Stop Husha Husha* chant) and fast stops (one beat of rest in between rhythm patterns)
- On A string with slow stops and fast stops

Twinkle Song Fingering Preparations:

- *Monkey Song* (first on left forearm; then on hanger; then on fingerboard with no bow; finally on the string and with the bow)
- *Flower Song* (first on left forearm; then on hanger; then on fingerboard with no bow; finally on the string and with the bow)

Left Hand Exercises (with instruments, but no bow):

- **Taping exercises:**
 - With all four fingers then with each finger individually
 - *Left hand thumb tapping & sliding exercises*
- **Strumming exercises:**
 - In all three positions
- **Left hand pizzicato:**
 - *Ants*
 - *Hot Cross Buns*
- **Shifting exercises sequence:**
 - *Shuttle*
 - *Low-Middle-High Position*
 - *High String-Low String*
 - *Grasshopper Gus*
- **Vibrato exercises sequence** (still away from the instrument):
 - *Fingers Dropping Never Stopping* (for finger vibrato); *Dinner Foods* rhythms (for hand vibrato) & *See Saw Up and Down* (for arm vibrato)

Suggested First Performance Program (after five weeks just for parents and other students in the program; at this point students are already working on Twinkle steps):

- *Rest Position Feet in Line* (students are singing)
- *Now I Hold my Violin/Viola* (cellos simply do their steps)
- *Ants*
- *Grasshopper Gus*
- Bow exercises: *Rocket, Circle, Circle or Wheels on the Bus*
- *Concerto on D string and A string* (with slow stops)
- *Monkey and Flower Song*

Twinkle Phase (about next six weeks of the semester)

Keep working on all skills and techniques as assigned.

Explanation for practicing *Ten Twinkle Steps*

Ten Twinkle Steps should be practiced in three ways (each step for one week):

- With Slow Stops (two beats of rests in between notes; words we are using are D Play TA KA TA KA STOP STOP – A Play – etc.)
- With Fast Stops (one beat of rests in between notes: words we are using are D TA KA TA KA STOP STOP – A TA KA TA KA STOP STOP, etc.)
- No Stops

Ten Twinkle Steps (repeat each step four times, assign to student 2-3 steps per class):

- D TA KA TA KA STOP STOP**
- A TA KA TA KA STOP STOP**
- D to A TA KA TA KA STOP STOP**
- A 1 A TA KA TA KA STOP STOP**
- 3 2 1 D** (violins and violas) **4 3 1 D** (cellos)
- A 3 2 1** (violins and violas) **4 3 1 D** (cellos)
- D Major Scale TA KA TA KA STOP STOP**
- Twinkle Part A**
- Twinkle Part B**
- Twinkle the whole song**

(When at step # 7 introduce the rhythm of Variation C with the words *Stop Tinny Stop Tinny*. When at step # 7 with the rhythm of Variation C introduce the bowing of the Twinkle Theme).

Bowing of the Twinkle Theme:

- To be practiced on open D string in the upper middle quarter of the bow for violins and violas, and lower to upper middle quarter for cellos)
- Quick (Q) Q Q Q Q Slow Q Q Q Q Q Slow**
Q Q Q Q Q Q Slow
Q Q Q Q Q Q Slow
Q Q Q Q Q Q Slow Q Q Q Q Q Q Slow

New Left Hand Skill:

- Harmonics (*Persian Song*)

New Right Hand Skill:

- Right hand *pizzicato* (*Jig*)

Suggested Second Performance Program (Winter Concert)

- *Rest Position Feet in Line* (students are singing)
- *Twinkle Variations A, C* (with stops or without stops) *and the Theme*
- *Persian Song*
- *Jig*

Educational Objectives and Assessment Suggestions

Skill (Behavioral) Objectives: At the end of this course the string student will be able to:

- Perform proper *rest position*, take a proper *bow*, and reset their feet in proper *playing position* (upper strings in standing stanza)
- Position and hold their instruments in the correct way
- Hold their bows in the correct way (thumb on the silver rim)
- Perform bow exercises
- Perform left hand exercises
- Play Twinkle rhythm variations A, C, D and Twinkle Theme on open strings and D major scale
- Play Twinkle variations A, C, D and Twinkle Theme in D major

Assessment: Playing Skills Check-Off Chart (at the end of first phase informal (the entire section plays at the same time), at the end of second phase more formal (in duets))

Cognitive Objectives: At the end of this course the string student will know and be able to verbally explain:

- Name parts of the instrument and the bow
- Take care of the instrument
- Explain correct instrument hold
- Explain correct bow hold
- Recognize Twinkle rhythmic variations

Assessment: Picture of the instrument (to fill out the parts), students teaching each other instrument and bow hold

Affective Objectives: At the end of this course the string student will develop the following attitudes:

- Respect for themselves, other students, the teacher, and their instrument
- Habit of regular practicing
- Excitement about music as an art form
- Excitement about learning in group situation

Assessment: Practicing Logs, *Likert Scale* (e.g., "What do you like the best about your instrument?")

CELEBRATE AND REFLECT!!!