

WEEK 1 PRACTICE PLAN

| Repertoire: | Movement: |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Bach Sonata No. 1 in g minor | Adagio (I): complete |
| Vieuxtemps Violin Concerto No. 5 | An overview: complete |
| Beach <i>Romance and Three Pieces</i> | An overview: complete |

[Click here for marked parts](#)

[Click here for this week's videos](#)

BACH:

- Figuring out the rhythms:** The first movement contains note values all the way down to sixty-fourth notes, so it's easy to end up with a sort of fast-note slurry in some of the more florid runs. But it's a good idea to first determine where every note goes, so any rubato can be an informed decision.
 - The easiest way to do this is to mark where the eighth-note divisions are, resulting in eight marks per measure.
- Destination chords:** In addition to getting a sense of the rhythms in this movement, it's worthwhile to figure out which harmonies are the notable ones; that is, the harmonies that last long enough for a listener to definitively register them.
 - The first chord of the movement is one of these "destination" chords, as is the resolution of the chord on the third beat of the first measure, and those on the first and third beats of the second measure.
 - In general there are one or two of these harmonies per measure, and putting them together gives you the harmonic skeleton of the movement. Mark the harmonies that you feel qualify in your part.
- The basic chord-roll:** Using open strings to start, practice rolling across all four strings, starting with the bottom string and finishing on the top two. Practice rolling with various speeds.
 - Keep in mind that the bottom strings will need more bow pressure than the top two.

- The contact point will also need to move slightly toward the bridge for the top strings.
- Once you're comfortable with this procedure, try rolling starting from the bottom two strings. See if you can reach the top two strings by about the first one-third point of the bow, leaving two-thirds for the top strings.

for more...

[The Three Bow Variables](#)

VIEUXTEMPS:

- Taking stock of the format:** The proportions of this concerto are a bit different than you'd find in the structure of a concerto by, say, Mozart. So spend a little time this week getting a sense of the proportions and main thematic material of the piece as a whole.
 - After a lengthy orchestral introduction, the soloist enters in measure 62, and the first theme doesn't make its first appearance until measure 77.
 - The second theme enters in measure 127, followed by some requisite figuration and a contrasting section in measure 210.
 - The first-movement cadenza is quite long, and leads directly into the second movement – indeed, this concerto proceeds more or less uninterrupted from beginning to end.
 - The third movement is less than a page and a half long!
- Limbering up with Schradieck:** As Heifetz used to famously say, you're never too good or too rich for the first three pages of Schradieck!
 - So every day this week** (maybe even twice a day for the really industrious!), play through those first two exercises with an ear toward pitch, evenness, and clarity. Tempo is of secondary importance.
 - The fingers should feel springy and elastic, lifting off the string with energy. You'll need maximum finger elasticity to tackle the Vieuxtemps!

for more...

[Schradieck, Practice Squad Slumber Party](#)

- Simplifying the opening:** The entrance of the solo in the first movement is essentially just Bb arpeggios, with some extra notes. First, identify which of the notes are in fact extra, and remove them, practicing just the arpeggios in their pure form.
 - Then transpose the arpeggios to different keys, adding stylistically appropriate non-chord tones as you see fit. The goal here is freedom of the left hand, coupled with the ear training that allows you to add those extra notes.

for more...

[Arpeggios](#)

BEACH:

- Score study: *La Captive*:** The idea this week for all four short pieces is to get an understanding of the basic structure of the piece, as well as the general nature of the accompaniment. With each of the four, take a look at the score, and listen to a few recordings to get a basic overall impression.
 - The first of the *Three Pieces* is basically two repeated halves, and the second theme is more a continuation than a contrast.
 - As far as the nature of the accompaniment, this piece is much more of a violin solo, with the piano playing a simple, purely accompanimental role. The character suggests stillness, especially in the first half, so that will inform your interpretation of the melodic material.
- Score study: *Berceuse*:** As with the first piece, the *Berceuse* essentially embodies a single pulse and character, without much structural or thematic contrast.
 - The accompaniment here is significantly more active than in the first piece, with nearly every eighth note accounted for in the piano.
- Score study: *Mazurka*:** The *piu mosso* section suggests something resembling a trio section in an ABA form, which is the largest character contrast within any of the three pieces.
 - In measure 13, the violin becomes the accompaniment to the piano's melody.

- Score study: *Romance*:** The *Romance* is a more expansive piece than the other three, and the key will be emotional and dynamic pacing. With the numerous climaxes present in the piece, it's easy to peak too early without some careful planning.
 - As you examine the score and listen to recordings this week, keep a mental meter of the relative intensities of each climactic moment. This will aid you in pacing your own interpretation.