

WEEK 3 PRACTICE PLAN

Repertoire:	Movement:
Bach Sonata No. 1 in g minor	Adagio (I): complete, Fuga (II): mm. 1 - 24
Vieuxtemps Violin Concerto No. 5	Allegro non troppo (I): mm. 62 - 107
Beach Romance and Three Pieces	Berceuse: complete

[Click here for marked parts](#)

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

BACH:

- Releasing the sound:** Instead of thinking of “pressing” the sound out of the instrument, think more of the interplay between the bow and the string that maintains the free vibration of the string. As with producing a ringing sound from the rim of a wine glass, too much pressure can choke the sound and hamper the necessary vibration.
 - More important than pressure is the smooth, continuous horizontal motion that draws the sound from the instrument.
 - Make this your focus in playing through the second half of the first movement. If you find yourself pressing or choking the sound, stop and reset. You may find that after a few reminders, you’ll acclimate to the process and it will become more natural to “draw” rather than “press.”

for more...

[The Three Bow Variables](#), [Guest Class with Kim Kashkashian](#)

- Half-steps and leading tones:** For maximum character in a piece like this, you’ll want the sort of expressive intonation that’s not possible on a keyboard. One shortcut to this type of intonation is tight half-steps.
 -  This doesn’t mean, of course, that every half-step should be as close as possible...but keep an eye and an ear out for leading tones, whether leading upward or downward.

- A good example is the relationship between the B-flat and A in the ninth measure, in which the B-flat should be shaded on the low side.
- Tritones are also fair game for this kind of evaluation, as they represent a half-step relationship between two fingers.
- Use your ear to determine which half-steps throughout this movement are satisfying when played as “tight” intervals, and adjust accordingly.
- Single strings vs. double-stops:** In the fugue, this week’s task is to find the interplay between the strings – specifically, the difference in the right arm’s level between single strings and double-stops.
 - The trick here is to always get the right arm to the correct level in advance.
 - Note the difference in arm level between, for example, the G in the second measure and the double-stop between G and E-flat. Be sensitive to these small but important differences throughout – particularly on the top two strings.

for more...

[3- and 4-note chords](#) (2025Q3 Welcome Call)

VIEUXTEMPS:

- Arpeggios, part I: ringing tones:** For tackling any of the many arpeggios in this movement, the first step is to make sure any open-string notes ring with the open strings. Take the opening arpeggio as an example. Play slowly and really maximize the ring!
 - Then make sure those same notes, once you’ve established them, also ring in context while you play them with vibrato and the appropriate bowings, maybe even trying them closer to tempo.
 - Make sure the more ornamental notes fit around the open-string notes, and not the other way around.

for more...

[Tuning the Scale Degrees](#)

- Arpeggios, part II: keeping the first finger down:** For the downward arpeggio starting in measure 68, the important factor is to keep the first finger down.
 - In shifting downward, note the spacing between the first and second fingers. Note the whole step between G and F after the first shift, the half step between E-flat and D after the second, and so on. Anticipate this finger spacing in every shift.
 - Also, at the end of measure 69, be sure to cover the fifth between F and B-flat with the first finger.
 - Keeping the first finger down is also the key to a passage like the one at measure 83

for more...

[Arpeggios](#)

- How about some scales?:** In measure 88, finding the minimum possible finger pressure is important: it's all on the G string, the thickest string, so lessen the pressure with the fingers until you can feel a little bit of buzz. The bow requires some pressure, of course, but that pressure shouldn't be mirrored in the left hand.
 - At the end of the measure, as with the previous arpeggios, keep the first finger down for the downward shift.
 - To practice the flourish at measure 105, take each position individually as a "sprint," dropping and peeling off all four fingers as quickly as possible.
 - After the fingers are loosened up and used to the positions involved, use note grouping to practice the run. The key is to play each group as quickly as possible, in a single gesture.

for more...

[Finding Your MVP](#) (YouTube)

[Note Grouping](#)

BEACH:

- Glissandi:** Review the recent live session on choosing and using glissandi. This will help you make all your informed glissando decisions for this piece to best serve the character of the music.

for more...

[Choosing and using glissandi](#) (WO25)

- To mute or not to mute?:** The main concern with whether or not to use a mute with the *Berceuse* is that it limits the possible dynamic range. Using a mute will therefore necessitate an understanding pianist, among other things.
 - This week, play around with using the mute and make the decision for yourself. Try various sections and registers to find the limits of your mute and instrument. If your goal is to play unaccompanied, it might make this decision easier, as you won't be competing with a louder instrument.
- Vibrating with an extended hand frame:** If you're using Nathan's fingering, the beginning of the piece starts with an extended fourth finger. Moving the hand and arm to accommodate the vibrato for this note can cause intonation problems.
 - Instead, practice playing with all four fingers down, and see what vibrato is possible.
 - In performance, you may well release the first and second fingers, but the idea is to get used to what you can do with all the fingers down in this position.
 - Test this concept out in measure 21 as well. Intonation problems can similarly occur in places like this, though the fourth finger is not extended.
- Some of the larger slides:** For the shift in measure 18, keep in mind that because the shift goes upward, making the string shorter, and also involves changing to a higher string, you'll need less bow pressure on the high note.
 - Also, to ensure the right moment of arrival, because it's both a new-bow and new-finger shift, the bow change actually happens *before* the second beat.
 - For the shift between measures 34 and 35, it could all be done on the new bow. But this is something of a rare case that could justify a sort of hybrid

between new-and old-bow shifting. Experiment with this shift, trying out various speeds and various places to put the bow change.

for more...

[Never Miss a Violin Shift Again](#) (YouTube)