

WEEK 4 PRACTICE PLAN

Repertoire:	Movement:
Bach Sonata No. 1 in g minor	Fuga (II): complete
Vieuxtemps Violin Concerto No. 5	Allegro non troppo (I): mm. 107 - 156
Beach <i>Romance and Three Pieces</i>	Berceuse: complete

[Click here for marked parts](#)

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

BACH:

- Great sound for chords:** It's all well and good to produce a great sound with single-note passages, but it can be trickier with double-stops and chords. The typical reasons for sub-par sound in these cases are:

 Too much bow pressure, and/or

 A contact point that's too far from the bridge.

Of course, it's easier to play chords around a contact point of 4, where the string height is more similar across all four strings. But the further you are from the bridge, the less pressure you can use without distorting the sound and pitch.

-  By bringing the bow in to a contact point of 3, you'll have more possible pressure at your disposal.
-  Passages involving the top two strings, like the one at measure 14, can even be at contact point 2.
- For a section like measure 21, with many three-note chords, contact point 3 is advisable, but make sure you use the minimum pressure for that contact point.
 -  Stay vigilant and don't let the bow drift too far from the bridge in these passages! Start at a 3 (or 2 on the upper strings) as a default, and modify as needed.

for more...

[The Three Bow Variables](#)

- Interplay between the strings, part 2:** With so many double-stops and chords in this movement, it's important to get used to finishing on any single string within these groups.
 - Start by repeatedly playing the two open middle strings. Practice playing both equally, then finishing on the top string, and finally finishing on the bottom string.
 - Then play the beginning of the movement (or any similarly double-stop-laden passage), playing the voice containing the fugue subject slightly longer than the note on the other string.
 - Three-note and four-note chords, similarly, are just combinations of two strings + two strings. Most will finish on the top string, though the chord on the third beat of measure 5 finished on the middle string!
 - With these chords, be careful not to play the bass notes as grace notes. Play the bass notes on the beat with a good sound – Bach never wrote a boring bass line!
- Three notes at once:** To practice simultaneous triple-stops, start playing the middle string of your chosen three strings at a contact point no closer than 3. Be generous with the bow speed and make sure the bow doesn't drift closer to or further from the bridge than your selected contact point.
 - Maintain the bow speed and add weight fairly quickly until you end up hitting the surrounding strings.
 - After you've found your chosen speed and pressure, the goal is to be able to start the bow (in either direction) that way, hitting all three strings.
 - This is a good way to approach the last beat of measure 5, or the chords in measure 61.

for more...

[3- and 4-Note Chords](#) (2025Q3 Welcome Call)

VIEUXTEMPS:

- An unconventional bowing:** Measure 107 contains a series of long down bows alternating with quick staccato up-bows. The impetus for these up-bows will be from just above the right elbow.
 - Pressing up with the thumb into the bow will provide a bit of accent, but the action is really mostly from the arm.
 - Practice this section slowly, with a brief pause after the sforzando to feel the release of the muscle after the up-bow. If it doesn't release right away, then wait—you won't be able to start the down-bow with the tension still in the arm.
 - For those who feel like looking ahead, this stroke returns at measure 50 of the last movement.

for more...

[Popcorn and Bouncing](#) (WO23)

- Different ways of looking at arpeggios:** The figure in measures 113 to 121 is really just a standard arpeggio with some notes missing. Keep the first finger down as you would if you were playing the full arpeggio, and your fourth finger will be more likely to be in tune.
 - Once you're back in first position, in measure 115, the first finger will have to reach back, but the left hand won't change shape.
 - Using an F# drone on a tuner is a good way to practice measures 117-118. The first finger will be down nearly the entire time (but relaxed).
- There will be some awkward reaches:** The section starting at measure 150 will involve some reaching with the left hand. Practice this section as slowly as you need to, blurring the notes together, and don't be afraid to change bows.
 - Leave fingers down where you're able, especially the first and second fingers.
 - Whenever you shift, pay attention to whether the relationship between the first and second fingers is a half step or a whole step. Practice these shifts as double- and triple-stops, without the open G string.

- At measure 154, the first finger will always be on G, and it's only the fingers on the D and E strings that change. Practice this section as chords, as above. It may be more comfortable to release and replace the fourth finger after the third beat of measure 155.
- Keep the fingers as light as you can, and take care only to make one correction at a time.

for more...

[Arpeggios](#) (Road to Repertoire)

[Reaching and Shifting](#)

BEACH:

- Shaping lines with bow distribution:** A great player is able to shape a melodic line using bow speed, keeping the same sound quality. This week, you will be one of those great players.
 - Take the crescendo in measure 8 as an example. If the bow speed remains the same throughout the measure, the last note will only get the one-sixth of the bow nearest the frog, which could easily result in a crunch. Instead, start with a slower bow speed, saving nearly a third of it for the last note.
 - The diminuendo in measure 11 will require a similar approach, using more of the bow at the beginning of the measure.
 - Practice making simple crescendos and diminuendos throughout the movement using bow distribution, maintaining the sound quality.
- Growing toward the middle of a slur:** Though the dynamic markings in this piece tend toward the downbeats, often it's in the middle of a slur where the real interest is.
 - This is true even in the first measure – try phrasing toward or away from the A instead of toward the downbeat of the next measure.
 - Try this in measure 11 as well, instead of just having each note of the diminuendo softer than the previous.
 - Relaxing into the downbeat of measure 50 is another good option.

- Find a few spots in this piece where you'd like to phrase a line toward the middle of a slur, instead of simply following the marked dynamics.
- Marking the micro-dynamics:** Put on a recording of this piece – [Joseph Siverstein's is a good one to start with](#) – and mark the micro-dynamics of the first three lines. Imagine you'll have to communicate the performance to future generations, capturing all the nuances. Is the first note of the first measure more important than the second? Or the reverse? Does the long note grow, or diminish?
 - Mark accents, little hairpin dynamics, and whatever else you need to be as detailed as you can.
 - Once you've done that to your satisfaction, play what you've marked. The idea is to discover not only the nuances that go into a great performance, but which of those can come naturally in your own playing.