

WEEK 9 PRACTICE PLAN

Repertoire:	Movement:
Bach Sonata No. 1 in g minor	Fuga (II): mm. 64 - 80, Presto (IV): mm. 1 - 53
Vieuxtemps Violin Concerto No. 5	Allegro non troppo (I): mm. 308 - 321
Beach <i>Romance and Three Pieces</i>	Romance: complete

[Click here for marked parts](#)

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

BACH:

- Identifying harmonic changes:** As always, if you're aware of where the harmonic changes occur in a piece, you can use them to your advantage in shaping your performance. In the fugue, starting in measure 64, the harmonies initially come one to a measure, then two to a measure, and then with every beat.
 - ☀ Measure 68 is significant – the harmonic rhythm returns to one chord for an entire measure, and this harmony happens to be the dominant seventh chord in g minor, signifying a return to the original key.
- Continue to analyze the harmonic progression for this week's section.
- The pedal point:** We have four measures of a pedal point starting in measure 69, indicating a harmonic return is imminent. Since this pedal happens on the open D string, it's important that the string be allowed to ring.
 - To this end, **the fingers of the left hand will have to be more upright than usual to avoid touching other strings.** The arm should come around to the right a bit more, and the hand will sit slightly higher on the neck.
 - If you're successful in letting the string ring unencumbered through this section, you'll be able to crescendo to measure 80, re-upping the ring of the D string pedal whenever it occurs.

- The bow in the presto:** Pick a note on either of the two middle strings. Play sixteenth notes at the tempo you're using for the presto, and try different contact points until you find one at which the sound is purest. Change only the contact point to find this sound.
 - If you're having trouble finding your ideal sound, check the straightness of the bow. Make sure it stays straight and consistent.
 - If you're unhappy with the amount of ring you're getting, increase the amount of bow you're using. When you get a sound you don't like, adjust the contact point to compensate.
 - Use this exercise to zero in on the ideal bow stroke for this movement. Once you establish your baseline, you'll be able to adjust as necessary.

for more...

[The Three Bow Variables](#)

VIEUXTEMPS:

- Long arpeggios:** For the arpeggios in measures 309, 311, and 313, are you able to play them consistently and smoothly under tempo?
 - If not, take the arpeggio shift by shift, listening carefully for the moment of arrival as described in Nathan's [Never miss a violin shift again](#) YouTube video.
 - If you can play them well under tempo, it's time to build some speed. Get a sense of how fast you can play the entire arpeggio comfortably. When you hit a less-comfortable speed, keep the speed but reduce the amount of material. Start with one shift's worth of arpeggio at a time.
 - When you can get each piece of arpeggio comfortably up to tempo, start combining pieces – maybe two slides' worth at a time, and then three.

for more...

[Never miss a violin shift again](#) (YouTube)

- Avoid slapstick:** The sforzandi in measures like 308 should serve some sort of musical purpose. First, identify how to make the sort of sound you *don't* want these sforzandi to make.

😞 Is the bow coming down on these notes from off the string?

✅ It's better to keep the bow on the string and set the accent with the amount of weight you prefer (using the pinky). This also applies to the up-bow sforzandi, using the index finger to determine the desired weight.

- To create a dynamic progression to these sforzandi, it's just a matter of varying the weight you set the bow with, whether frog or tip. Practice this on a single string first until the contour becomes automatic.
- Double-stop quality control:** To maintain the sound quality for the double-stops in the above passages, or measure 316 et. seq., the main factor is using as little bow pressure as possible.
 - Establish the **least amount of bow pressure you could use** for a double-stop on the lower two strings, and then on the higher two strings.
 - Since it's difficult to practice this under tempo (you won't be able to move the bow as quickly as you'll need to), use this bow pressure as a reference point as you play at tempo.

BEACH:

- Finger angle of repose:** This week, pay close attention to the angle of the finger at the start of any expressive note in the piece. More upright fingers are better suited to fast passagework, but for an expressive note, the last joint of the finger should contact the string at a flatter angle.
 - Get used to setting the fingers at the correct angle throughout the piece wherever expression is required – if you set the finger first and then change the angle to vibrate, intonation will suffer.

for more...

[Finger Angles](#)

- Tapering four ways:** There are essentially two ways to develop an expressive note, and the first is tapering.
 - Practice tapering long notes in four ways:
 - 1) down-bow in the lower half of the bow,
 - 2) down-bow in the upper half,
 - 3) up-bow in the lower half (less natural, but valuable), and
 - 4) up-bow in the upper half.
- Growing four ways:** Now practice the four ways of letting a note grow, in the same ways as outlined above. Growing is, naturally, accomplished by increasing bow speed.
 - When you've developed all eight of these building blocks, play a few measures at a time and see what your natural inclinations are in using these bow shapes. If you run across any areas of flat expression, make some decisions on how the notes should develop.