

WEEK 2 PRACTICE PLAN

Repertoire:	Movement:
Ravel Sonata No. 2 in G Major	Allegretto (I): mm. 1 - 47
Sibelius Violin Concerto	Allegro moderato (I): mm. 1 - 75
Brahms / Schumann F-A-E Sonata	Allegro (III)

[Click here for marked parts](#)

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

RAVEL:

- All in the service of clarity:** Impressionism may have given rise to a popular misconception of a “French sound”... But, of course, no such thing exists. And even if it did, the opening of this piece needs clarity, not an amorphous flautando.
 - One way to promote clarity of expression is to **lift the fingers of the left hand with energy**. It might even do to use a tiny bit of horizontal motion in lifting the fingers – not to the extent of a left-hand pizzicato, but a little bit of that energy.
 - Any time you have descending quick notes in this movement, make sure they're heard by lifting the fingers energetically and quickly.

for more...

[2024Q2 Workout 9 – Simon Fischer Warming Up \(part 1\)](#)

- Sing it and shape it:** In a passage like the one starting in measure 23, it's easy to lose your concept of the phrase in the middle of all the bow changes.
 - With combinations of slurs and separate bows, it becomes a matter of bow distribution to make sure the shorter bows don't have accents or “consonants” at the beginning.

- Model your ideal phrasing for this line (and throughout the first two movements!) by singing it a few times first. Then adapt the bowing to match using the three variables.

for more...

[Mixing Slurs and Separates](#)

- Chromatic fingering:** The chromaticism of the phrase at measure 41 (as well as similar phrases throughout the movement) can make fingering it tricky. The key is to keep fingers down where you can – that is to say, the second-finger F# in measures 42 - 43 and the first-finger G# in measures 44 - 45 in particular.

SIBELIUS:

- Know your slides:** The first real slide of the piece is from measure 9 into measure 10. When you play this slide, is it an old-finger or new-finger slide? Old bow or new bow? Traditionally, this would be a slide on the new finger, which means it's best served by sliding on the new bow as well.
 - The same applies for the slide into measure 19, though depending on preference you may be able to make a case for executing this new-finger slide on the old bow.
 - It's very rare that a downward slide like the one in measure 21 would be on a new bow. If you want this slide to be less audible, shift at the last instant before the bow change.
 - Evaluate the rest of the slides in this week's material using the same criteria.

for more...

[Introduction to Shifting, Ševčík Op. 8](#)

- All up and down the G string:** The passage beginning at the end of measure 53 requires a lot of playing on the G string, which means it requires some consideration of the three bow variables to make sure all the notes speak clearly.
 - The contact point will need to change the further up the G string you get. But also, at the bow speed required by these quick sixteenth notes, you may need to be further from the bridge than you think in the lower positions.

- When you practice this section slowly, be sure to use the contact points you'll need when you play it up to speed. This means using more bow the slower you practice.

for more...

[The Three Bow Variables](#)

- Topic 3:** For the largamente in measure 59, the trick is to finger this passage as if it consists of three-note chords. Practice just playing the chords first, keeping in mind where the whole steps and half steps are between the fingers. Make the tritones as close as you can get them.
 - As much as you can, try to get all three fingers down at the same time – but be sure to get at least two of them down.

for more...

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

BRAHMS/SCHUMANN:

- Hairpins vs. accents:** The hairpins in measure 3 et. seq. will require the standard “banana bow”: increasing the speed of the bow towards the middle and then slowing it down again. The tempo is quick, so you'll need to move the bow quite fast, or else you'll get an accent in the middle of the bow.
 - Speaking of accents, the articulation at measure 8 should be a contrast with the hairpin motive. For these, the accent should be at the beginning of the note. You'll feel this in the pinky side of the hand on down-bows and the first-finger side on up-bows.
 - You'll have the choice to stop the bow between these notes or not; either way, you'll want a solid consonant sound to start each stroke.
- Harmony and pitch:** When you're working on pitch, it's important to know what you're tuning to – that is to say, **which notes are chord tones and which are not.**
 - The first part of the movement stays pretty firmly in the Bb - Eb area harmonically. So the Cb in measure 12 should make a tight half step with the Bb. Similarly, you'll bring the D's into close proximity with the Eb's.

- When you're switching strings for color, make sure the pitches on the first string match the corresponding ones on the second.
- There's an app for that:** Since you'd ideally be performing this piece with a keyboard, it's useful to acclimate your ear to something with a fixed idea of pitch. This way you'll be able to get a sense of how you shade pitches one way or the other.
 - Get a tuning app and make sure your A string is tuned to it. Then place your first finger on a Bb and notice how it registers with the app. Odds are your tendency will be to play it a bit low.
 - Then try the same thing an octave up. Make sure the A is in tune with the app, and place the Bb. Get used to where your tendencies are, and once you're familiar with the rules, you'll have license to bend them.