

WEEK 4 PRACTICE PLAN

Repertoire:	Movement:
Ravel Sonata No. 2 in G Major	Allegretto (I): reh. [7] - reh. [11]
Sibelius Violin Concerto	Allegro moderato (I): cadenza (mm. 223 - 276)
Brahms / Schumann F-A-E Sonata	Allegro (III): mm. 113 - 149

[Click here for marked parts](#)

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

RAVEL:

- Bow arm levels:** The first area to focus on for this week's material is the level of the bow arm.
 - In a string-crossing-heavy passage like the one starting in measure 136, the goal is to find the appropriate double-stop level for the arm – in this case, on the level of a double-stop on the D and A strings, while the string changes are accomplished with the right hand.
 - The bowings throughout this section are intended for the most comfortable movement going in an upward direction – that is, from the lowest string to the highest. Your mileage may vary, though, so experiment at will.

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[String Crossings](#)

- Shift vs. extension:** The second concept to keep in mind this week is where to shift and where to extend a finger out of the hand frame. For instance, the marked fingering in measure 136 is a bit unorthodox – a quick same-finger shift with the first finger. The other option would be to extend the fourth finger to reach the F#. This may or may not be comfortable for you.
 - Measures 140 and 144 contain extensions, to keep the sixteenth notes on the same string.

- In contrast, the extension of the fourth finger facilitates a shift to fourth position.

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Reaching and Shifting

- Tremolo:** The section from rehearsal [9] to rehearsal [11] is marked tremolo, but it can also be effective if you play some of it measured, as thirty-second notes. Give this a try to start, with four even notes per eighth note.
 - The complicating factor here is endurance – you have two full measures of fortissimo, and then a gradual diminuendo for another eighteen measures of tremolo.
 - Tensing the muscles on either side of the elbow can help at the higher dynamics. But since this isn't sustainable through the entire passage, release the tension as the dynamic decreases. This means that, practically, this tremolo won't end up measured.
 - 👉 The trick is not to get stuck with so much bow tension that the bow more or less ceases to move horizontally, so after the initial fortissimo, release tension wherever you can.

SIBELIUS:

- You've got rhythm:** The most important thing to keep in mind in the cadenza is the rhythm, even though you're completely unaccompanied for most of it. The rhythms are so idiomatic and surprising that it would be a shame to let them be imprecise or approximate for the sake of convenience.
 - For the cross-bowed figure starting in measure 224, you'll have to essentially decouple the left and right hands – they move at opposite times, so that's important for evenness.
 - The pulse should remain steady in measure 231. Also, this figure, as in measure 239, shouldn't fall into a triplet rhythm.
 - Rushing measures 237 and 238 will result in less contrast between those sixteenth notes and the thirty-second notes in the subsequent run.

- Resist the urge to stop between gestures in measure 243 et seq.
- Keep the tempo in measure 272 moderate as marked.
- Fluency and ease:** In general, in this cadenza, notes that are grouped together should be played in gestures, to avoid a feeling of slowness or stodginess in the cadenza as a whole.
 - Don't be afraid to let the runs starting in measure 267 to really pour out, torrent-like. Pay attention to where the sixteenth notes are in this section.
- Pace yourself:** A sense of dynamic pacing is important for this cadenza, as opposed to a pedal-to-the-metal, all-loud-all-the-time approach, which is far less interesting for the listener.
 - If you play the dynamics as marked, the section starting in measure 243 will be very exciting.
 - Note the dynamics and hairpins marked for the molto moderato at measure 252. In particular, the three-note chords in measures 255 and 259 are not accented, but crescendo into the fourths.
 - Bringing the dynamic down in the middle of measure 263 can give you a slight reset on the crescendo, allowing you to grow more effectively to the end of the passage.

BRAHMS/SCHUMANN:

- Direction of the dots:** Here again, at the poco piu moderato, you'll find dots under slurs, as well as plenty of bowing suggestions from Nathan. The printed slurs in this section really aren't bowings so much as phrasing indications, so you have some decisions to make with regard to direction and articulation of the phrases.
 - First, get a sense of how you want to phrase this section using harmony and analysis. For example, do you want to phrase toward the measure lines? And if so, which ones, and how often?
 - Harmonically, you can determine which of the notes are chordal and which are decorative, and let that inform your phrasing as well.

- Structurally, take note of repeated motives. Will you intensify with each repetition, or diminish?

- Dots, two ways:** The other way to solidify your idea of what direction you want the notes to take is to try playing the section using all separate bows for the dotted notes, preserving marked slurs. With this approach, you'll likely find you have to exaggerate your desired direction via bow distribution to bring it out.
 - Then play the section entirely slurred. Often, a natural idea of phrasing will reveal itself just through this process – it's easier to hear when you're making a shape this way.

- Figure out the slides:** Starting in measure 127, there are quite a few leaps of large intervals, and much like you did last week, you'll determine what sorts of slides to apply. New finger, or old? Old bow, or new?
 - The slide in measure 128, for example, is marked as new finger, new bow. In measure 133, on the other hand, the slide actually precedes the octave jump.
 - The next two, in measures 137 and 139, are reaches.
 - Continue analyzing the fingerings for this section and decide, for each of the leaps, which type of slide you'll use.

for more...

[Introduction to Shifting](#)