

WEEK 7 PRACTICE PLAN

Repertoire:	Movement:
Ravel Sonata No. 2 in G Major	Blues (II): reh. [3] - reh. [6]
Sibelius Violin Concerto	Adagio di molto (II): An overview
Brahms / Schumann F-A-E Sonata	Intermezzo (II): Complete

[Click here for marked parts](#)

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

RAVEL:

- More stylistic slides:** As with last week's assignments, this week's material contains more variously notated slides idiomatic of jazz style.
 - In measures 42 and 43 (as well as 49 and 50), the grace notes imply that these slides are meant to be clearly audible – think jazz clarinet here. The emphasis should still be on the main note, but the slides should start where they're notated.
 - Approach the grace notes in measure 45 the same way you did [last week in measure 12](#). Try to make all the notes sound, and start them on the beat.
 - The slide in measure 52 is longer, so it's probably more comfortable to use non-adjacent fingers, even though the smoothest slides are of the same-finger or adjacent-finger varieties.
 - The slides in measures 54 and 56 are notated rhythmically. This could indicate a slightly slower slide than with the grace notes in measure 42.
- Precise enough for jazz:** With all these slides, and especially with keyboard accompaniment, intonation will be very important. Practice these as you would using the tried-and-true [Never miss a violin shift again](#) method, slowing down as you approach the goal note. But with these slides, the approach may be even slower than you'd think.

- Use a metronome to place the arrival correctly. For example, with the slide in measure 45, assume the slide itself will occupy the space of one eighth note and time the arrival accordingly.
- In measures 49 and 50, try imagining the slides as 32nd notes in length. The slide up to the B in measure 52 could take up an entire eighth note.
- Pizzicato, three more ways:** Try playing the pizzicato at rehearsal [5] with no rolling at all, sounding all three notes at the same time. Use the middle finger, as flat as you can make it, brushing it across all three strings.
 - One thing that can help with these is to use your third finger to push the G string away from the D string, avoiding the necessity to bring your arm quite so far over.
 - For the quick pizzicato on the E string in measure 71, anchor the right thumb on the corner of the fingerboard. Pluck downward, just past the fingerboard, using the fleshy part of the finger.
 - For the slides in measure 74, roll the first finger of the left hand onto the tip, even just touching the string with the nail. The finger position for the other notes will be normal.

for more...

[It's the pizz!](#) (YouTube)

SIBELIUS:

- Purity practice (Sibelius version):** As will be the case with the F-A-E sonata this week, the goal is to practice the opening of the movement with the focus entirely on bow distribution as your means of shaping the line – no left-hand expressiveness whatsoever.
 - Watch this week's video for the Schumann on "purity practice," and apply the method outlined therein to the opening of the second movement.

for more...

[Purity practice](#) (YouTube)

- How about some arpeggios for a change?:** In the arpeggiated section starting in measure 37, be aware of when you're shifting relative to the bow changes.
 - In general, in a passage like this, you'll play the shift on the old bow, with the hand arriving in position before the bow change. As it happens, this will hold true for all the shifts in this section.
 - Practice these shifts as slowly as you'd like – just make sure you time them so the bow change happens exactly with the arrival of the shift.
 - The second step of the process is to let the right hand dictate the timing, fitting the left hand into that rhythm.
 - Finally, make the shifts happen later and later, so they don't draw as much attention.

for more...

[Arpeggios](#)

- Get the rhythms right:** The section from measure 32 to measure 36 is often played rhythmically inaccurately, turning the triplets into something of a 3 + 2 + 3 rhythm – it's easier that way!
 - Doing some quick math, you'll find that the lowest common multiple between the top line and the bottom line is 12, meaning that you'll have to divide the bow into twelve equal parts. Each triplet of the bottom line will therefore get four parts of the bow, and each eighth note of the top will get three.
 - Using these bow divisions, you'll be able to line up how each note changes relative to the others. The important thing is that the change of the triplet comes sooner after the change of the top line than you might think.

BRAHMS/SCHUMANN:

- Purity practice:** Play the first phrase of the Intermezzo, up to the downbeat of measure 12, using whatever fingering comes to mind. Use open strings if you'd like – the idea of this exercise is to remove the expression of the left hand entirely (including vibrato), making shapes only with the amount of bow you use.

- Take care not to use bow pressure to achieve your shapes – the quality of sound should remain the same throughout.
- Without the expressive power of vibrato, you may find you have to exaggerate the bow distribution. In any case, you'll really have to get creative with the bow speed to achieve interest without vibrato.
- More practice, slightly less purity:** After you've practiced sufficiently with your focus entirely on bow distribution as your method of phrasing, it's time to add back the glissandos. Still no vibrato for now, although using your intended fingerings and slides will get you closer to your final interpretation.
 - This is a good time to listen for any repeated instances of notes that don't quite match. Don't worry about correcting anything yet; just listen for inconsistencies. Also keep an ear out for any time you might slip back into using bow pressure instead of bow speed for shaping.
 - Finally, add back the vibrato, but keep your attention on the right hand. Insist on the same bow use you've been practicing, just allowing the vibrato to be an ornament.
 - If playing this passage feels freer now, with less tension in both hands, then you're on the right track. Continue playing through, keeping your focus on the right hand to achieve the shape you want.
- Feel flows:** After you've practiced sufficiently with the above two methods, it's time to really listen with an ear for the timing and flow of the passage. It's easy to let yourself luxuriate and end up playing too slowly, though what constitutes "too slow" is a matter of personal preference.
 - Play through the passage a few times again, making sure you achieve the shapes you've been practicing without lingering too much in any spot.
 - As always, singing the line first will give you a good indication of your desired pacing and shape. This kind of practicing should give you a fresh perspective on playing expressively without too much tension and effort.