

WEEK 12 PRACTICE PLAN

Repertoire:	Movement:
Ravel Sonata No. 2 in G Major	Complete
Sibelius Violin Concerto	Allegro, ma non tanto (III): m. 207 - end
Brahms / Schumann F-A-E Sonata	Intermezzo (II): Complete, Allegro (III): Complete

[Click here for marked parts](#)

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

RAVEL:

- Refresher course, mvt. 1:** The main focus for the first movement this week is the overall sense of smoothness, unhampered by any difficulties of the bow or the left hand.
 - This involves a smooth bow stroke, continuing without break and free of “consonant” sounds in the bow change (except for when they’re called for, of course, like in measure 36!).
 - The motion of the left hand should also be as smooth as possible, taking care not to interrupt the track of the bow. Try fingering a passage without using the bow – you should hear minimal left-hand noise.
- Refresher course, mvt. 2:** The first area to revisit in the second movement is the various flavors of pizzicato that appear throughout – the unaggressive resonance of the chords in the beginning, contrasted with the articulation of the passage at measure 94.
 - The second element in this movement is the characteristic slides that lend it its distinctive bluesy character. Review the various ways you’ve decided to play these slides – the timing, finger pressure, dynamics, and whether you lean away from or into any particular goal note.

- Here again, the left hand determines the course of the slide without interrupting the track of the bow. The bow will determine the shaping and emphasis.

for more...

[Shifting; It's the Pizz!](#) (YouTube)

- Refresher course, mvt. 3:** In the last movement, the task will again be conserving energy, both physical and mental.
 - Again, one key to this is mentally separating the movement into large groups of similar gestures, as opposed to just considering it measure by measure.
 - These groups of gestures will also each have their own musical shape, with one motion flowing naturally into the next. This will make the movement not only easier to play, but easier to listen to.

for more...

[Four Ways to Play Two Notes](#) (WO30)

SIBELIUS:

- Double the double-stop action:** The double-stop-heavy section at measure 207 will require a steady hand frame and a knowledge of when and by how much your fingers are reaching.
 - For example, to practice measure 207, you'll have a sixth in the middle in third position. Practice reaching back by a half step with the first finger, making an octave with the third finger. Then the fourth finger will extend upward by a half step, making an octave with the second finger. Alternate between the reaches, and then between the sixth and the tenth.
 - Practice the other double-stops in this section using the same method, taking out the open strings for the time being.
 - Measure 212 is basically octave work – the only real variable is whether it's a major or minor sixth between the octaves.
 - Measure 214 is all in first position; simply reach the first finger back as necessary.

- In general, this section of the movement is all about moving the hand as little as possible, being aware of what position you're shifting to and where you're extending the fingers.

for more...

[6ths; Octaves;](#)

[Building Tenths from the Ground Up](#) (WO11)

- Stop! Octave time:** Thankfully, the sequence of slides in octaves at measure 235 isn't as difficult as the one in the first movement. Still, it wouldn't hurt to review the principles in the "[Never miss a violin shift again](#)" video.
 - The trick, of course, is to listen as you're shifting all the way up to the point of arrival to ensure you don't go past it. You can also practice by fingering both notes while only playing one – practice this both ways, playing just the top octave and then just the bottom. You're listening for that moment just *before* the moment of arrival.
 - The octaves at measure 238 are marked all with the first and third finger, but it's also possible to use fingered octaves (though it's advisable to use the first and third fingers when the movement is in half steps, and for the last three notes of the scale).
 - Keep in mind that the higher up on the strings you go, the less bow pressure you need.

for more...

[Octaves](#) (RTR)

- The shape of scales:** The scales from measure 248 to the end of the piece have definite dynamic shapes to them, so you'll need to plan your bow distribution accordingly.
 - You'll start with a slow bow for the beginning of each scale, getting faster as you near the top and the dynamic gets louder. Practice this slow-to-fast distribution from the beginning so you don't get caught with not enough bow! By the last beat of the measure, you should still have more than half the bow remaining.

- You can also practice just the last beat's worth of scale, starting from about the midpoint of the bow.
- For the final run, make sure the bows are connected smoothly, with equal commitment on every stroke. That way, the focus will be on the separate bows instead of unintentionally accenting the beginning of each beat.

BRAHMS/SCHUMANN:

- F-A-E: final aspects of expression for ample enjoyment:** This week, the focus is really on enjoying the discovery of a lesser-known work by favorite composers. Some things to consider as you close out your work on this piece:
 - Definitely spend some time playing each movement through if you're in a position to do so. The pieces are short enough that once a day this week wouldn't be too big an ask! See how the process changes with each play-through.
 - Stay aware of your body and what it's telling you when you play these pieces. Do all the motions feel natural, or are you accumulating tension at any point? Are you expending more effort than you need to? When you set up to play the scherzo, especially, take care that you're not storing up tension even before you begin to play. Technical difficulties often align with physical difficulties, so if you solve one, you'll often end up solving the other.

for more...

[Practice Mistake 6: Not Practicing for Performance](#) (YouTube)