

WEEK 2 PRACTICE PLAN

Repertoire:	Movement:
Ysaÿe Sonata No. 3 in D Minor, "Ballade"	Page 1
Bruch Scottish Fantasy	Einleitung: Beginning - reh. [F]
Kreisler Recitative and Scherzo-Caprice, Op. 6	Recitative: m. 12 - end

[Click here for marked parts](#)

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

YSAÿE:

- ☐ **On the level:** The most important foundational technical element this week involves the balance of the bow on the strings. First, it's important to know the position and level of the right arm for every individual string.
 - ☐ In addition to those four levels, there are three levels corresponding to the three possible double-stop combinations of two strings.
 - ☐ With your eyes closed, **see if you can find all seven of these foundational string levels.** Try finding these in various parts of the bow, e.g. the D string at the tip. Be aware of the feeling of the arm at all of these levels, as well as the weight needed in the bow.
 - ☐ This awareness is important for gauging the position and weight of the bow in facilitating the many double-stops in this piece – you'll need to be able to adjust them when your fingers are pressing the strings down in various combinations.

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[Right Arm Setup](#)

- ☐ **Gesture average practice technique:** When you're practicing this piece (or really *any* piece), try to practice not just the large individual challenges, but small phrases. See if you can make a gesture out of them instead of a collection of notes. This will ultimately help to play a given passage not just correctly, but musically.

- ☐ In the second measure of the fifth line, for example, you may need to practice the shift in isolation – but don't neglect practicing the first three beats as a whole musical gesture.
- ☐ Take the double-stop triplets on the sixth line in groups of six. Once you're comfortable with two or three of these groups, see if you can chain them together into a larger group.
 - ✨ Use this approach throughout the piece, never allowing a single technical challenge to stop you in your tracks.
- ☐ **Calibrate the intensity:** For the biggest double-stop moments on the page – starting with the last three notes on the first line – practice how you will produce and sustain the volume and intensity those passages demand.
 - ☐ For the end of the first line, you'll be high up on the top two strings. This means you can't use as much bow pressure, and the contact point will be the most important variable.
 - ☐ For the six-note chord on the third line, since it starts on the low strings and involves lower left-hand positions, you can use more bow weight than in the previous example.
 - 💡 Try switching between the two passages to get a sense of the differences.
 - ☐ The chord at the beginning of the sixth line is similar – starting on the lower strings and ending on the higher ones means the contact point will change within the same bow stroke.
 - ☐ The bow will be moving faster on the seventh line, which means it requires a contact point further from the bridge. The same holds true at the middle of the eighth line.
 - ☐ The last few notes of the page are in low position on the lower strings, so this is where you can use the most bow pressure.

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[The Three Bow Variables](#)

BRUCH:

- ☐ **Musical grammar:** Always be on the lookout for the musical gesture of any given passage. In linguistic terms, you can think in terms of syllables, words, sentences, and paragraphs.
 - ☐ The simplest shape, a “syllable” in this analogy, is the relationship between any two sequential notes. Even at this tiny level, it’s likely that one of the notes will have musical precedence.
 - ☐ As an example, take the passage at measure 23. The first note of the slur is clearly more important than the one following it. On a larger level, the motive (“word”) occurs three times, so it’s easy to imagine one of these occurrences (maybe the last one) as more important than the others.
 - ☐ In the same way, measures 23 and 24 could be said to constitute a musical “sentence,” which then repeats. As for which of these is more important, there are clues: the first is in a higher register, and the second contains longer slurs, both of which could point to the first as being the more intense.
-  Keep these sorts of relationships in mind throughout your work on the piece.

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Tabuteau Method

- ☐ **Hostile keys:** Some of the keys you’ll be working with in this piece are less violin-friendly, with few (or no) open strings available to guide you. In these cases, you’ll still have to be able to establish a tonal center.
 - ☐ The section starting at measure 34 is a good example. It begins in E major, which is not too uncomfortable, but you’ll still have to take care that the intonation doesn’t drift upwards with the shift up to C# and subsequent rising chromatic figure.
 - ☐ In this and in the following passage in E-flat minor, keep the accidentals right in the middle – don’t let them get too high. It may even be beneficial, when

you're shifting, to think in terms of B natural instead of C-flat or F# instead of Gb, for example.

- ☐ **Bedeviling double-stops:** With the first appearance of the theme at rehearsal [E] comes a notorious sequence of double-stops.
 - ☐ If you can, keep the left hand supple enough to introduce at least a little vibrato even as you start to get acquainted with this section.
 - ☐ The suggested fingerings include frequent slides to help facilitate legato.
 - ☐ To create enough space for these double-stops, your left arm may need to come around to the right more than you're used to.
 - ☐ Particularly when these double-stops include an upward shift, it's important to direct these slides with an extension of the fingers, instead of leading with the arm. If the arm drags the fingers with it, the fingers can roll over, resulting in an overly steep finger angle.

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[Double-Stop Introduction](#) (RTR)

KREISLER:

- ☐ **The open strings are lava!** There are some idiosyncratic double-stops in this piece, and some of their difficulty lies in needing to keep the working fingers away from the other strings. This can necessitate either a steep finger angle or covering notes on strings that aren't involved in the double-stop.
 - ☐ Measure 15 is a good example. The first-finger A on the G string will need to be steep, as will both fingers in the following tritone, to avoid interfering with open strings.
 - ☐ In the first double-stop of measure 20, use the second finger to cover both the F and a fifth below it on the G string. That way you'll avoid touching the open A.
 - ☐ To practice measure 26, which will involve a left-hand pizzicato, finger both notes of the double-stop while playing the D and A strings, keeping the fingers steep.

- ☐ **Perfect fourths and perfect fifths:** Among the double-stops of this piece are also a fair number of fourths and fifths, so you'll have to get used to the particular ways your hand will have to accommodate them.
 - ☐ Measure 14 starts with a perfect fifth, and to play it, the last joint of the second finger may need to be almost flat to the string. The fingernail should be pointing towards your face. For the fourths, keep in mind that there is always a whole-step space between the fingers involved.
 - ☐ In these double-stop passages, get used to feeling the finger spacing in advance, opening the hand and creating space before the fingers drop onto the string. A good exercise for this is to alternate playing an octave with various intervals within the same hand frame.

for more...

[Fifths](#)

- ☐ **Special techniques:** This week's material also contains a smorgasbord of extended techniques: left-hand pizzicato, double-stop trills, and harmonics.
 - ☐ For the left-hand pizzicato in measure 19, the key is to get the fourth finger in place. As you practice the double-stops without the pizzicato, also practice getting the fourth finger up and over the G string at the same time. From there it's no problem to add the pizzicato.
 - ☐ The same applies in measure 26 – practice getting the fourth finger into position over the A string as you play the double-stops (with steep fingers to avoid the open string, of course). It will also help to cover the bottom two strings with the first finger.
 - ☐ In measure 22, practice by fingering both notes but only playing the trill. Get the trill as fast as you can while still making sure the notes of the trill are both clear. Prioritize the contact point of the lower string, which may be further from the bridge than you'd think. When you add the held note, lean more into the bottom string with the bow.
 - ☐ For the harmonics in measure 27, the notation indicates what fingers to use, not the sounding pitches. You can either cross strings or slide up to the final artificial harmonic.