

WEEK 7 PRACTICE PLAN

Repertoire:	Movement:
Ysaÿe Sonata No. 3 in D Minor, "Ballade"	Line 45 - end
Bruch Scottish Fantasy	Andante sostenuto (III): Beg. - m. 41
Kreisler Recitative and Scherzo-Caprice, Op. 6	Recitative: Complete

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YSAÿE:

- ☐ **How much, how soon?:** In this last page of the piece, it's easy to get too fast, loud, and/or intense too soon, and thereby work harder than you need to. So it's important to make a plan for pacing this final section.
 - ☐ You can take the mezzoforte at the top of the page with a grain of salt so you don't get ahead of yourself dynamically. Another good way to start this page is by being generous with the bow, so you don't start with too concentrated and intense a sound.
 - ☐ The first instance of forte comes at the beginning of line 47 – another reason to start the page a little below mezzoforte, so there's room to grow.
 - ☐ Starting on line 47, there are groups comprising four broken chords each. Rather than aiming for resolution on the downbeats, shape these progressions so the most tension comes before the resolution. You can practice shaping this section by just playing the roots of these chords.
 - ☐ The final push to the end starts on line 50, so it's worth backing off slightly there to allow room to grow. The rising register will also take care of some of the crescendo.
 - ☐ In this section, be aware of where the accents are!

- ☐ As above, it's also worthwhile to practice pacing and dynamics starting on line 51 by just playing the top line. If you get this sort of thing in your mind and in your ear early on, it's much easier than trying to add it after you've already learned all the notes!
- ☐ **Smooth hands:** In lines 45 and 46, the goal is to get both hands working as smoothly as possible.
 - ☐ For the left hand, **keep fingers down wherever it's possible**. In fact, the first place you'll need to pick any fingers up is at the end of line 45 for the open A string, but once you're on the E string, you can and should leave them down again.
 - 👉 The left hand should move as smoothly as if you were just playing the moving line slurred.
 - ☐ The right hand has a simpler job: alternating between the strings involved. If you position the arm at the correct double-stop level, the hand can take care of the string crossings. The elbow will hardly move at all.
 - ☐ The right arm will have to move somewhat more when three strings are involved on line 46. It's acceptable to accent the higher notes here, since complete smoothness isn't possible.
 - ☐ For the chord at the beginning of line 47, it's helpful to place the fourth finger first and reach back with the first finger. Also, remember that with the difference in string length between the open G string and the note up high on the E string, you'll need much less bow weight on the E string. So lighten the bow as you roll the chord.
- ☐ **Finger the four-note chords:** For lines 47 through 49, practice by fingering this section as four-note chords, without worrying about the bowing, as much as possible.
 - ☐ If you can learn the section this way, getting the correct finger spacing in your hand initially, it's much easier to add the correct bowing later than trying to tackle it the other way around. Let the bow follow with the fingers already placed instead of allowing the left hand to be dictated by the bow.

- ☐ In actual performance, you won't really be placing all the fingers simultaneously. The important thing for now is to get the hand used to opening up in the right way for every chord.

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[Dont #1](#)

BRUCH:

- ☐ **A theme less ordinary:** You might be compelled to play the folk song melody at the beginning of this movement perfectly smoothly, but that kind of playing in this context misses the fact that this is an actual song with words, and therefore wouldn't be sung like that.
 - ☐ For this reason, don't take the "sempre piano" marking too seriously. Instead, imagine how the melody might be sung and phrase it accordingly. What kinds of contours and shapes can you discover within even so simple a melody as this one?
 - ☐ Keep this in mind through the entire movement – don't just rely on the printed markings, but rather find what shapes you can within the melodic material.

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[Tabuteau Method](#)

- ☐ **Voices of the violin:** Speaking of the opening of the movement, you'll notice that the first phrase stays entirely on the G string, and the second is marked all on the A string, etc. This is in keeping with a core component of how Nathan chooses fingerings, which is treating the violin's four strings as distinct voices when appropriate.
 - ☐ Even though there's a forte marked in measure 11, you'll likely end up playing louder in measure 13, since it's on the E string and in a higher register.
 - ☐ Use this type of consideration to hone your own fingering choices in this movement and make the most of the different strings. Practically speaking, remember that the higher the string you use, the less bow pressure you need.

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The Three Bow Variables

- ☐ **(Con)tour guide:** The section starting in measure 20 will require some thought as to the contour of the melodic line.
 - ☐ To begin with, in general, it's a good idea to lean into non-chord tones like appoggiaturas and neighbor tones, as well as accidentals. The G in measure 21 and A-natural in measure 22 are good examples of the type of note to be stressed.
 - ☐ Since this section stays around A-flat major, you'll probably feel the urge to correct some intonation along the way. But resist the urge if you can, as you're specifically working on melodic contour, and it doesn't help to try and fix two things at once!
 - ☐ For practice purposes, keep it to a measure at a time (or even one beat at a time!), and a bit under tempo. Keep up the vibrato and the connection between the notes.
 - ☐ The idea is to reach a level of comfort with the bit you're practicing. If you find you're unable to, then decide how many times to repeat it before moving on – you don't want to keep repeating a section when any anxiety or self-doubt is involved. If a segment feels comfortable and easy and nicely contoured under tempo, repeat it maybe between seven and ten times, and then let it be instead of increasing the tempo and introducing discomfort.

KREISLER:

- ☐ **Release the sounds:** It's possible to play a given note with a good vibrato and the correct combination of the three bow variables and still produce a sound without much character. In these cases, the sound needs release and development.
 - ☐ Take the opening of the piece as an example. As is so often in these instances, the answer can be found in singing, so sing the opening at least once (and maybe as many as five times). What do you find yourself doing naturally? What sort of consonants do you start the notes with, and where does the sound release or grow?

- ☐ For any consonant sounds you're producing, take note of the specific attack and release of those consonants, and then try to replicate them on the instrument.
- ☐ Singing and imitating in this way is a good way to approach any long note in the piece (or any piece, really), so don't be afraid to experiment!

for more...

[Finding Character](#) (WO14)

- ☐ **Parlando lines and slurs:** Since you're back to the beginning of the piece this week, it's a good time to revisit the "parlando" articulation of lines under a series of slurred notes, such as at the end of measure 3. Once again, it's up to you to decide what combinations of consonants and vowels these might indicate.
 - ☐ Taking the example from measure 3, start by playing the figure simply slurred. Make it as compelling as you can – maybe you'll change the pacing or the dynamics to drive the point home.
 - ☐ What does the parlando add to the slurred version? Here again, singing the gesture is a good place to start. Try to imitate the way you naturally sing the line, and don't let the bowing dictate the phrase.
 - ☐ You may find you don't even need to stop the bow; your desired phrasing might just require a little pressure of the thumb into the leather of the bow as the arm remains smooth.
 - ☐ Use this approach wherever this articulation happens: measure 8, measure 12, and so on.
- ☐ **You're not done with singing yet! Now it's time for singing double-stops:** Specifically, it's time to look at the left arm and hand setup required to produce them.
 - ☐ Take the sixths in measure 4 to begin with. These notes will need time for vibrato. This may mean getting the left arm over to the right so that the first finger of the left hand isn't stuck against the neck. There may still be contact; the finger will just be able to move freely.

- ☐ The vibrato doesn't necessarily need to be wide to produce singing double-stops. A narrow vibrato can be quite effective in this context.
- ☐ It may seem more difficult to vibrate if one of the notes involved is an open string, but there's always the option to cover a fifth with the vibrating finger on an unplayed string to move it out of the way.

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[Singing Double-Stops](#) (WO16)