

INCORPORATING SIGHT-READING INTO THE PRIVATE VIOLIN LESSON

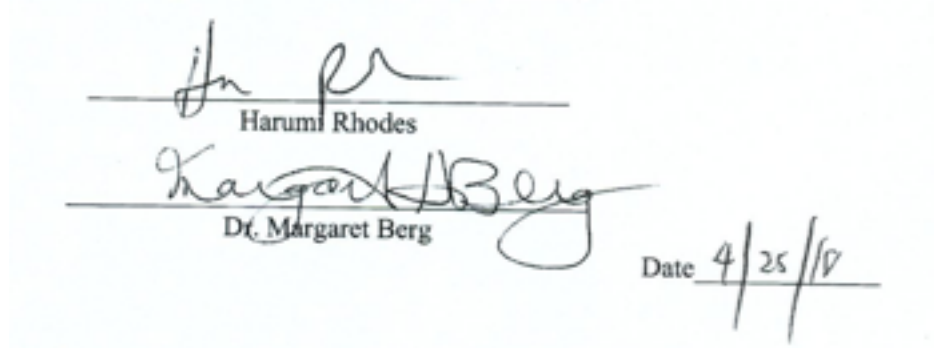
by

KAREN ANNE VAN ACKER

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Harumi Rhodes
Dr. Margaret Berg
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Van Acker, Karen Anne (String Department-College of Music)

Incorporating Sight-Reading Into the Private Violin Lesson

Thesis directed by Professor Harumi Rhodes

ABSTRACT

Sight-reading is a necessary skill for violin students of all ages. Whether a student is in a school orchestra, preparing for an audition, interested in playing chamber music at a wedding or special event, or aspiring to be a professional orchestral musician, the ability to sight-read well and comfortably is invaluable. Many students tend to cringe at the thought of sight-reading, especially in an audition or in a public setting, and the initial reading of a new solo piece can be daunting. Therefore, it is necessary to teach sight-reading in the private lesson environment. More specifically, it is important to focus on developing particular musical skills necessary for sight-reading. Chapters 1 and 2 will include a list of core sight-reading skills, a review of existing string sight-reading method books, and information from three private violin teachers about their methods, philosophies, and resources. Supported by research about best practices for teaching sight-reading, current method books on the market, and interviews of the three private teachers, Chapter 3 contains a one-year plan for integrating sight-reading into the private lessons for an eighth grade violin student.

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INTRODUCTION

Incorporating sight-reading into the private violin lesson is an important decision that can highly impact students of all ability levels and with various musical aspirations. Developing sight-reading skills with a beginning student who is learning how to read notes is beneficial so that they can easily and quickly learn new pieces. According to Saxon (2009), many students may feel frustrated and impatient when learning new pieces, and sight-reading skills help overcome that frustration.

For an intermediate student, the ability to sight-read well can boost their confidence and thus increase their interest in playing and enhance pleasure and fulfillment (Saxon, 2009). A high school or college music student who is skilled at sight-reading is a better leader in an orchestra and a more reliable chamber musician (Sariti, 2005). Also, many auditions require sight-reading. If students are confident in their abilities, they will experience success and most likely demonstrate those skills under pressure. A college-level or professional musician is rewarded for sight-reading abilities with more opportunities such as pit playing, studio recording, and contemporary ensemble membership (Sariti, 2005). Sight-reading is considered one of the most vital job skills in music (Saxon, 2009).

Parncutt and McPherson (2002) acknowledge that the skills required to be an excellent performer are not the same set of skills necessary for being an excellent sight-reader. Sight-reading abilities are not necessarily correlated to talent on an instrument (Parncutt & McPherson, 2002). Rather, becoming a fluent sight-reader necessitates developing specific sight-reading skills. Gathered from various articles, books, and interviews, the following list of core skills are important for sight-reading ability: rhythmic competency, understanding keys and finger

patterns, sight-singing, reading ahead/chunking, deciphering fingerings and bowings, understanding tempo, style, and phrasing (musical literacy), and not stopping.

In order to incorporate sight-reading into private lessons, a steady and consistent approach is most effective, reserving a short segment of each lesson for developing sight-reading skills (Saxon, 2009). In a thirty-minute lesson, five minutes at the end of each is adequate time for a short sight-reading exercise, game, or mini lesson. It is best to strategically increase the difficulty of the sight-reading exercises for the student (Parncutt & McPherson, 2002).

CHAPTER I

REVIEW OF EXISTING STRING SIGHT-READING MATERIALS

There are various string method books on the market that are geared toward improving sight-reading. Some of these books can be used in a string orchestra setting, while others are geared toward private instruction. Regardless, most can be used in the private lesson, or as a practice resource at home.

Presented are three in-depth reviews of sight reading method books that can be used in the private lesson: *Sight-Read It for Strings* by Andrew Dabczynski, Richard Meyer, and Bob Phillips (2016); *Habits of a Successful String Musician - Violin* by Christopher Selby (2014); and *Right @ Sight: A Progressive Sight Reading Course - Violin* by Caroline Lumsden (2006). The books were chosen due to the fact that they were published recently and because their content is aimed toward developing core sight-reading skills. Following the in-depth reviews is a list and description of four additional method books and/or sight reading procedures.

***Sight-Read It for Strings: Improving Sight-Reading in the String Classroom or Studio* by Andrew Dabczynski, Richard Meyer, and Bob Phillips**

This particular book can be used either in a string orchestra setting or in a private violin lesson setting, as there are matching parts for violin, viola, cello, and bass. The book begins with a “sight reading checklist.” This list includes all the important steps to take before reading a piece for the first time.

Sight Reading Checklist

1. Title (May hint at style or mood)
2. Composer (May hint at style)
3. Tempo and Tempo Changes
4. Key Signature and Key Changes
5. Time Signature and Time Changes
6. Road Map
(If time)
7. Beginning and Ending Dynamics
8. Accidentals
9. Articulations

Following the checklist, the book lays out three common counting systems: beat numbers, syllables, and a combination of beats and syllables. There are three rhythmic examples following the explanation about counting. These examples use whole, half, dotted half, quarter, and eighth notes and rests. They also use ties and slurs.

The book is divided into seven units. Each unit has a theme and starts with a “pre-test” piece that uses the unit’s concepts. Then, there are a series of shorter exercises that develop the theme and give the student a chance to isolate concepts related to the theme. Following the

exercises in a given unit, there is a “post-test” piece, and a “special” which introduces another unrelated, but important note-reading concept, such as subdividing, accidentals, or special bowings and articulations. Finally, there is a longer ensemble piece with an accompaniment line, which the teacher can use to play as a duet.

Units:

1. Dotted Quarter and Eighth Notes: Explores the dotted quarter-eighth rhythm and includes dotted rhythms in slurs as well as hooked bowings
2. Long Notes: Contains exercises with many half, dotted half, and whole notes, but no rests.
3. Rests: Contains quarter, half, and whole rests, and many bow lifts as well.
4. Ties: Explores ties across the bar line and tying various note lengths together
5. Note Values: Long to Short and Short to Long: Contains long-short and short-long patterns, including dotted rhythms
6. Conjunct (Stepwise) Interval Patterns: Explores scalar patterns on the D and A string only; encourages reading the shape of a phrase and seeing the pattern of ups and downs as a tool for sight reading.
7. Disjunct (Skipping) Interval Patterns: Focuses on learning tonic, sub-dominant, and dominant seventh arpeggios, recognizing them in the pieces, and remembering the finger pattern and interval patterns.

In order to use this book, the student must be comfortable with reading notes in C, G, and D Major. All of the exercises are in first position, and none of the exercises, with the exception of the last page, use the E string. Rhythms and bowings are the most complicated aspect of the book with dotted rhythms syncopation, hooked bowing, etc. The units are not necessarily sequential; therefore, one need not use this book in the order of the listed units. For example, Unit 1 focuses on dotted rhythms, dotted slurs, and hooked bowings. Unit 6, however, focuses on stepwise interval patterns in the left hand, which might be a logical place to start with a student first beginning to sight-read.

Almost all of the rhythms are simple eighth note and quarter note patterns. A teacher might start with Unit 6, the simplest unit, and choose which units to move to next depending on the needs of the student. For example, if your student were struggling with sight-reading rests

and counting internally, Unit 3 would be a helpful tool to incorporate into the weekly assignment or sight-reading activity.

The pre-test, exercises, and post-test of each unit do not contain familiar tunes but rather are etude-like in style. The ensemble pieces are mostly arrangements of classical pieces or folksongs. Themes from Mahler's Symphony No. 1, Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, Bach's concerti, and the traditional "Old Joe Clark" are among the more interesting pieces to sight-read in this book. There are no fingerings in the book, which promotes students being able to read the notes on the staff as opposed to the numbers. Other strengths are that the exercises are short and focused on one technique. The Pre-Tests, Post-Tests, and Ensemble pieces incorporate various techniques and can be used as a broader assessment of various skills.

Of the seven core skills listed in the introduction, this resource would best help students develop rhythmic competency as evidenced by the first five units, which are rhythm-focused.

The last two units are focused on understanding keys and finger patterns as it explores interval patterns, and various arpeggios.

***Habits of a Successful String Musicians: A Comprehensive Curriculum for Use during Fundamentals Time - Violin* by Christopher Selby, Scott Rush, and Rich Moon**

This book is a thorough resource for an intermediate or advanced violinist. It can be used in either a group or individual lesson setting. The book is divided into eight sections, each focusing on a different technique or skill. Though only the last section directly references sight-reading, the entire book is full of exercises that could be used to practice sight-reading. Each section of the book focuses on improving a technical skill that is important and necessary. Throughout the book, there are checklists that guide practice and definitions of terms.

Sections:

1. Tone and Articulation
2. Lower Positions: Finger Patterns, Intonation and Velocity
3. Shifting Exercises
4. Higher Positions and Alternate Clefs
5. Scales, Arpeggios, and Thirds
6. Chorales
7. Rhythmic Study in a Musical Context
8. Sight-Reading by Level

In the first section on tone and articulation, there are several one-measure bowing variations given. There are basic strokes, full bow exercises, hooked bowings, syncopated patterns, off-the-string strokes, and more. Seeing the bowing variations written out with different rhythms and articulations is helpful in learning to sight-read. One of these variations can be chosen per day and used in a scale warm-up or open string warm-up. The second section focuses on finger patterns. This is a great tool for developing the hand frame in a given key signature and developing the dexterity and comfortability in many keys. Finger patterns include: natural and sharp patterns (low twos), flat patterns (low ones), dominant seventh patterns, and mixed finger patterns (with accidentals).

The section on scales, arpeggios, and thirds is particularly helpful. A teacher can use this section with various students of different skill levels due to the fact that there are one, two, and

three octave scales written out in all major and minor keys. It is important to note that in order to improve sight-reading, the student needs to look at the music, as opposed to the fingers or the instrument. Therefore, for the purposes of learning how to sight-read more efficiently, when playing the scales, arpeggios, and thirds, it is important to read while doing so. Each key contains a tuning canon (can be played with a private teacher), tuning chords, scales, dominant arpeggios, and broken thirds in both the lower and upper octave of two-octave scales. Positions are shown with Roman numerals. There are also sections on chromatic, mixolydian, and blues scales.

The Chorales section contains both a first and second violin part, making these conducive to duet playing in the lessons. There are ten total chorales, each of which increase in difficulty. Many of the chorales are melodies from orchestral works by Brahms, Mozart, Elgar, Holst, and other traditional hymns. These chorales can be used as a sight-reading exercise at the beginning or end of a lesson.

The rhythm section is sequenced starting with simple quarter notes and rests and progresses to irregular meters. One unique thing about this rhythm resource is that each one-line exercise is written out as simply a rhythm with no pitches. Underneath, there is a corresponding melody with the exact same rhythm but with notes on the staff. Therefore, the student can practice the rhythm in and out of the context of a short musical piece.

Finally, in the final section of the book, there are sight-reading exercises. Most of these are one or two lines long. The exercises are divided into twelve categories:

1. Quarter notes and rests; eighth notes
2. Ties, dotted quarter notes and eighth rests
3. Syncopation
4. Intermediate triple meter
5. Triplets
6. Simple sixteenth notes

7. Dotted eighth notes and sixteenth rests
8. Cut time and 3/2
9. Advanced Triple Meter
10. Irregular Meter
11. Mixed Meter
12. Alternate Clefs

Exercises have no fingerings but do contain bowings and various articulation markings and dynamics. Key signatures range from zero to four sharps and flats and only occasionally have accidentals. Therefore, the focus of these sight-reading exercises is on rhythm, rather than on left hand dexterity.

To use this book best, it would be helpful to skip around or choose multiple sections to play from each week. For example, each week, a student might be assigned a few bowing patterns, a key signature, a chorale, a rhythm, and/or a sight-reading exercise that corresponds to the particular rhythm that is being worked on that week. Each exercise is only about one line long, which makes it more possible to simultaneously work on many aspects of violin technique.

Of the seven core sight-reading skills, this book is dedicated to improving keys/finger patterns and deciphering fingerings in the sections on keys, scales, and arpeggios, as well as the finger pattern and shifting sections. This book also has extensive exercises that help develop rhythmic competency, exploring rhythm in and out of a musical context. Finally, this book can be used to develop musical literacy. More specifically, in the Chorales section, the student can work on understanding phrasing and musical line.

Right @ Sight: A Progressive Sight Reading Course – Violin – Grade Two. (With accompaniment CD) by Caroline Lumsden, Peters Edition

This series is meant for the beginning and intermediate violin or cello student. There are three violin books in the series: Grade One, Grade Two, and Grade Three. Each book contains 80 pieces. Included is a CD with accompaniment and metronome clicks to help students practice sight-reading at home and encourage them to keep playing without stopping. Lumsden advises students to use the CD in multiple ways. The student can start by clapping the rhythm and/or saying the rhythm or note names aloud with the CD and then play the track again and play the excerpt with the CD.

This book stresses the use of the mnemonic device TRaK. Before reading any new piece, the student is advised to “follow the TraK.”

Time Signature: Check the time signature before playing.

Rhythm: Clap the rhythm while saying the “time names” (see below) or singing the note names.



















and

Key Signature: Check the key and check what finger pattern is necessary before playing.

In her series, to help with intonation, Lumsden encourages the student to sing the pieces using letter names before playing them. She recommends putting an “s” on notes that are sharps and an “f” on notes that are flat. For example, if the piece contains the notes: D E F# G Bb, the student would say “D, E, Fs (pronounced ‘efs’), G, Bf (pronounced ‘beef’).”

She also recommends saying the “time names” in order to say rhythms aloud. The time names are as follows (Example 1):

Example 1: Lumsden, C. (2006), *Right @ Sight: A Progressive Sight Reading Course, Violin Grade 2*, p. 2.

Time names	Symbols	Time names	Symbols
slow		quick-er	
ssh!		quick-e-ty	
quick quick		sh!	
semiquaver		snap-py	
quick-semi		compound time names	
semi-quick		slow	
slow-ow		slow-ow	
slow-ow-ow		quickety	
slow-ow-ow-ow		qui-cker and	
slow-er and			

Each set of two pages in the book contains a theme and four pieces. The left page has two solos, and the right page has two duets, which can be played with a friend or a private teacher. The themes vary and are not necessarily increasingly difficult. Themes are generally based on meter, rhythm, key (following the TRaK theme), and sometimes on bowing patterns. For example, themes include: A Major - two octaves, G melodic minor-lower octave, C Major-5/8 time, dotted quavers, etc. With the exception of the last ten pieces, each piece includes at least one hint or helpful question to consider before playing the piece. The hints vary from “Watch out for the low C#” to “Notice that the top part comes in a bar after the second part, and in canon.” The questions vary from “Where do the semitones come?” to “How does cantabile differ

from pesante?” Additionally, for each solo, Lumsden includes the TRaK reminder with piece-specific questions and suggestions relating to time signature, rhythm, and key.

Overall, the book is very specific and thorough. If a student were to read the reminders and follow all instructions on the page, he or she would be set up to succeed. In addition, the CD provides a great opportunity for students to keep studying at home and practice pieces in time and in tempo without stopping. One drawback of the method is that the “time names” are numerous and not necessarily intuitive. Adaptations could be made with a different counting system or syllable system of the teacher’s choice.

Of the seven core sight-reading skills, this book has a strong focus on sight-singing, reminding the student to always sing first and providing a system for singing pitches and rhythms. Additionally, Lumsden puts an emphasis on understanding keys and finger patterns. She promotes musical literacy by the various hints throughout the exercises. The hints explore terminology, musical form, style characteristics, etc. Finally, playing with the included CD helps the student work on reading ahead and not stopping while practicing at home.

Other Resources:

***Pattern Play for Strings: A Sequential Introduction to Reading Music* by Winifred Crock, Forrester Press**

Pattern Play is a series of books that sequentially guide students in learning how to read music. Throughout the series, Crock focuses on pattern recognition, chunking, and aural skills (singing and counting aloud). Her series can be used in private lessons, group classes, or at home with a parent guiding the student. There are three volumes to the series, each with a different focus:

Parent/Teacher Volume: Introduces rhythmic notation, connects pitch names to left hand placement, and introduces notation on both the five-line and two-line staff. This book is intended to be used in-lesson with the teacher guiding the student, or at home, where the parent facilitates the reading activities.

Student Volume 1 for Violin: Contains sequential sight-reading practice for rhythm and pitches on the D and A string.

Student Volume 2 for Violin: Introduces pitch patterns for the G and E strings and contains sequential rhythmic and note-reading exercises.

Crock emphasizes development of aural skills and inner hearing by stressing that students sing, and if unable to sing in tune, practice by listening to many recordings. The books encourage having a theory-based vocabulary so that students can quickly see and discuss patterns emerging from the music. For example, a student should be able to recognize common rhythms, triads, scales, arpeggios, etc. in the music.

Before each exercise in the book, there is a “To Do” section describing the task and pointing out a specific pattern to look for, a hint at what the student should keep an eye out for, or a specific instruction about how to play the excerpt (i.e. play it first slowly, then quickly).

There are many new musical vocabulary words and symbols presented in the “To Do” section. The “To Do” instructions before every lesson help the student develop “holistic,” “layered,” and “transfigured” preview strategies before playing each piece. Holistic previews scan the entire piece for rhythmic and melodic patterns, deviations, and general structure of the piece. Layered previews involve choosing one aspect of the piece on which to focus (i.e. bowing, but not pitches). A transfigured preview involves adding a more challenging aspect to the piece. These additional tasks, intended to challenge the student further, are called “overlays.” An example of an overlay would be adding a more complex bowing or playing the rhythmic subdivisions throughout the exercise.

In general, the series is meant for beginning students and is a great resource for young students who are first learning to read and already have a basis of technique on the instrument. Each mini lesson is designed to be about 2-3 minutes long, which is perfect for incorporating into a private lesson.

***Violin Sight Reading I: A Fresh Approach* by John Kember, Schott-Hal Leonard**

This is a sight-reading book for use in beginning-intermediate students’ daily practice. Brenda Brenner reviews this resource in a *Strings Magazine* article. She points out that the exercises in the book are not very musically interesting, but the duets and pieces that include piano accompaniment are more. At the beginning of each chapter, there are helpful reminders about what to look for in the piece. Additionally, there is a focus on new terms and learning musical vocabulary.

One way of using this book would be to assign students the exercises for sight-reading at home, and then “perform” the related duets and accompanied solos in the following lesson as a

sight-reading challenge. Brenner also recommends this book as one that would be helpful for an adult player who is brushing up on sight-reading techniques.

Essential Elements: STARS Method

Essential Elements for Strings - Violin Book 2 by Michael Allen, Robert Gillespie, and Pamela Tellejohn Hayes, Hal Leonard

In the *Essential Elements for Strings* book, STARS is presented as an acronym that is helpful for remembering what to think about before sight-reading a piece. Similar in content to the Dabczynski, Meyer, and Phillips checklist, the acronym is simpler and easier to recall.

S - Sharps and flats (Key signature)

T - Time signature and Tempo Markings

A - Accidentals

R - Rhythms (Scan the piece for tricky rhythms)

S - Signs - This refers to any articulation marking, dynamic, bowing, repeat, D.C. marking, or anything else out of the ordinary in the piece.

***Violin Sight-Reading Book One: One Hundred Melodies for Grades 1 to 5* by Doreen Smith, Oxford University Press**

***Violin Sight-Reading Book Two: Sixty Melodies for Grades 6 to 8* by Doreen Smith, Oxford University Press**

Smith's sight-reading books are excellent resources for private teachers and students.

Book One contains one hundred different short melodies, each two to three lines long. The pieces are divided by grade. Book One starts in first position and ends in third and fifth. Book Two explores higher positions in grades 6 through 8. Each of the pieces includes either a tempo marking or a word indicating style. There are dynamics and various articulations. Book One has exercises in both major and minor keys up to five sharps and flats. Most of the tunes are musically interesting and melodious, yet not recognizable, despite their traditional style.

Therefore, these pieces are useful for developing musical literacy, practicing recognition of musical styles, and interpreting musical words.

One potential downside to this series is that there are fingerings marked in, especially at shifting points. This is helpful for students in the moment, but it is also important for them to figure out their own fingerings and plan out shifts during their initial scan of the music. Therefore, it is a good idea to white-out these fingerings when practicing sight-reading.

In a lesson, both of these books can be used for students of varying abilities. Additionally, they are great resources for daily practice at home and are rich with musical exercises. With the exception of the opening page, which contains a brief reminder about what to scan for (key, tempo markings, etc.), there are no additional hints or teaching points. This allows the students to focus on being conscientious and intentional in applying their skills.

CHAPTER II

PRIVATE TEACHER INTERVIEWS

Interview #1

This interview was conducted through FaceTime and was approximately thirty minutes in length. The following questions were asked to Teacher #1 and given to her ahead of time:

1. Do you think that sight-reading is important to incorporate into the private lesson? Why or why not?
2. When in the process/at what level do you start to incorporate sight-reading into the curriculum?
3. What are some of your ideas about how you can incorporate sight-reading into the lesson?
4. How do you teach about sight-reading? What system or plan (i.e. STARS), if any, do you use?
5. What do you find to be the most challenging aspect of sight-reading for your students?
6. Do you have favorite resources that you use for sight-reading?
7. What are ways that you encourage students to sight-read on their own (not in the lesson)?
8. What difference have you seen in your students' levels of musicianship after they start to work on sight-reading?

Interviewee: Teacher #1

Teacher #1 is a violin and viola instructor who has over fifteen years of experience teaching students of all levels, ages three through adult. She has training in various pedagogical styles and is a certified Suzuki teacher in Units 1 and 2. She introduces note reading into lessons starting from age five.

On sight-reading: *"It's definitely something that string teachers put on the backburner, because we're so focused on tone quality, and playing in tune, and how to move the bow correctly."*

General Approach

When students are first learning, usually at age five, Teacher #1 incorporates many note-reading exercises. Unfortunately, when students reach Suzuki Book 2, the sight-reading activities and note-reading games tend to diminish, which she admits is something she should

potentially change. When students are learning Book 3, she starts to incorporate it once again. Currently starting in fifth or sixth grade, she leaves five minutes at the end of each lesson for sight-reading practice. She believes it could be helpful to incorporate that process at an earlier age as well.

Sight Reading System/Routine

With her middle and high school students, Teacher #1 has them follow a simple 4-5-step process as they scan the piece of music before reading it for the first time.

1. Check key signature
2. Check time signature
3. Look for rhythmically difficult measures and count them out internally (tap or clap in the beginning)
4. Scan for shifts and figure out fingerings for shifting up and down
5. Shadow-bow the passage (for less experienced/younger students)

Most Challenging Aspect of Sight Reading

Teacher #1 believes that teaching students to group rhythms and helping them “zoom out” their focus in order to see a whole measure at a time is the most challenging aspect of sight-reading. Students have difficulties seeing and hearing a whole measure as one word. They want to look at every black dot, and when they start to zoom out, they do not trust themselves with the pitches. Trust is a huge issue, and students struggle to trust themselves.

“I didn’t used to do as much with rhythms until I really realized how big of an issue it was.

About ten years into my teaching [I realized], whoa, rhythms are really hard for everybody.”

Rhythm also is a huge obstacle to many string students. She expresses that often, her students have no problems reading pitches, but their knowledge and competence at reading rhythms is far behind. She has not yet found a counting system that works for everyone. Throughout her teaching career she has used both the Kodaly method of counting and the

traditional “1 and 2 and 3 and” system. She has also tried using common words and singing song-like phrases. For example, she uses “Colorado” for four sixteenth notes. Unfortunately, students often are hung up on the syllables and lose their sense of steady beat and rhythm. She continues to try new approaches in order to cater the system to the individual student.

When asked about whether her more recent sight-reading and rhythm reading exercises have made an impact on her students’ progress, she explains that for some students they have. With certain students, it is like a big click, but with others, it is a slow process, and they make gradual progress.

Sight Reading Resources

5-7-Year-Old Students:

Songs for Little Players by Evelyn Avsharian: This series is meant for very young learners who are learning to read notes for the first time. Teacher #1 especially loves this series because of the extremely large notes on the page and the simplicity of the beginning pieces, which often only use two notes.

ABC Notespeller - Workbook 1 for Strings by Evelyn Avsharian: This is a workbook for young students and gives them practice writing out the notes on the staff. Again, the staff is especially large and clear.

8-10-Year-Old Students:

Essential Elements for Strings by Michael Allen, Robert Gillespie, and Pamela Tellejohn Hayes: The exercises and pieces in the book also use a slightly bigger staff than normal.

Early Start on the Violin by Kurt Sassmannshaus: This series has bigger font and often works on one string at a time.

With the above resources, students take the books home and are assigned pieces to learn on their own. As opposed to their Suzuki pieces, which Teacher #1 will play for them and encourage them to learn by ear, she instructs students to use this process when learning the pieces at home:

1. Clap through the rhythms while counting aloud.
2. Hold violin in rest position and say letter names while fingering the notes.
3. Play the piece as written, and come back, ready to perform it the next week.

10-12 Year Old Students

Sight-Read It for Strings: Improving Sight-Reading in the String Classroom or Studio by Andrew Dabczynski, Richard Meyer, and Bob Phillips: Starting in fifth or sixth grade, Teacher #1 gives a sight-reading exercise to the student in the last five minutes of the lesson from this resource.

Middle School and High School Students:

Rhythmmasters.org: This is a free online resource for students. This resource explores rhythms of all difficulties and provides many rhythm worksheets, theory lessons, sight-reading activities, ideas for how to count aloud, and melodic adaptations of the rhythmic exercises. She finds this resource especially valuable because it helps students understand how rhythms are grouped and teaches them to block rhythms and view rhythm patterns as one word.

Sight Read Any Rhythm Instantly by Mark Phillips: Similar to the above online resource, this book aids in teaching musicians how to chunk rhythms and see blocks rather than individual dots on the page. Teacher #1 uses it not only for her students but also as a great resource to help her in her own playing and rhythm sight-reading.

Sightreadingfactory.com: This online resource allows students or teachers to customize a sight-reading excerpt. Parameters can be set such as key signature, time signature, range, rhythms, articulations, and accidentals. After customizing the excerpt, or choosing the “random” feature, the computer generates a piece. At that point, the student can decide whether they want to turn on a timer (in order to simulate a live audition), a metronome click track, a cursor to follow the notes, and/or a feature that causes the measures to disappear as they are playing them (in order to help students learn how to keep their eyes reading ahead). Teacher #1 says that one downside to the system is that the excerpts are not always musically realistic. However, the random nature of the melodies increases the difficulty of the sight-reading, so it can be a positive attribute to the online resource. She assigns this website for her high school students to use at home in order to prepare for All State and Youth Symphony auditions.

Interview #2

This interview was conducted in person and was approximately forty minutes in length.

The following questions were asked to Teacher #2 and given to her ahead of time:

1. Do you think that sight-reading is important to incorporate into the private lesson? Why or why not?
2. When in the process/at what level do you start to incorporate sight-reading into the curriculum?
3. How do you incorporate sight-reading into the lesson? How much of each lesson is dedicated to sight-reading, and what types of exercises do you use?
4. What do you find to be the most challenging aspect of sight-reading for your students?
5. Do you find it challenging to motivate students to sight-read, especially when their ear is so well trained? If so, how do you help motivate them?
6. Do you have favorite resources that you use for sight-reading?
7. What are ways that you encourage students to sight-read on their own (outside the lesson)?

Interviewee: Teacher #2

Teacher #2 is a renowned Suzuki violin teacher who has over twenty-five years of experience teaching students of all ages. She is a certified Suzuki teacher in all units and has studied with both Shinichi Suzuki and William Starr. She usually introduces note-reading into lessons at the end of Suzuki Book 1, but she begins preliminary note-reading exercises as soon as the student is old enough to read words.

“Sight-reading is important, and it has to be done in the lessons, or they won’t do it at home...If you don’t something on a weekly basis in the lessons, then it’s not important to the parent and the child.”

General Approach

Teacher #2 believes that sight-reading is a very important skill that needs to be incorporated into the weekly private lessons. It is imperative that the parent be involved in the process of note-reading and sight-reading. She acknowledges that if a teacher fails to do

something in the private lesson, it sends the wrong message: that the skill is not important enough to work on at home.

Note-reading prep begins as soon as the student is capable of playing “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star.” Teacher #2 uses scales to work on preliminary note-reading. The student plays a one octave A, D, or G Major scale in first position while saying the note names aloud. This helps solidify note names in first position. Then, when the student is able to do that, she asks them to play all the A’s in first position and asks them to spell words like “dad” on their instrument. She has the students come up with a list of words that they can spell in first position.

Near the end of Suzuki Book 1, the student begins learning note-reading. Together, the parent and the student make flashcards at home. Making the flashcards, as opposed to buying them, helps the student better understand the staff and location of the notes. When using the flashcards, the student has to say the name of the note and its location on the instrument. For example, the student might say, “B, 1 finger on A string.” Again, it is important to stress that the parent needs to understand note-reading alongside the student.

Sight Reading System/Routine

Teacher #2 stresses the importance of thinking before playing. She often reminds her students: When seeing a piece for the first time, the first thing to do is to think without playing the instrument. She says that knowing about theory, especially understanding key signatures, is essential. The first thing to check is the key; then a student can scan through the piece and find elements that look out of the ordinary, such as challenging shifts. They must also be sure to check the time signature.

For young students, Teacher #2 uses a systematic approach for reading a piece for the first time. With exercises from William Star's *Adventures in Music Reading*, the following 5-step process is performed:

1. While keeping the eyes tracking on the page, say the note names aloud.
2. Say the location on the fingerboard for each note. For example, "Open D, 1 on D," etc.
3. Say the basic interval pattern. For example, "Step, skip, same, step, step."
4. With feet, step the beat, and with hands, clap the rhythm.
5. Play the exercise with the violin.

Most Challenging Aspect of Sight-Reading

Teacher #2 believes that the most difficult aspect of sight-reading is convincing both the student and parent that it is important and making it clear that it is essential to practice sight-reading at home. In order to overcome this, she encourages her students to play regularly out of various books (such as those listed below), orchestral music excerpts, hymn books, etc. She encourages students to join chamber ensembles and youth symphonies and to be involved in their school orchestra regardless of their ability level.

As far as various sub-skills of sight-reading, Teacher #2 believes that there are strengths and weaknesses of each individual, and she is not aware of a particular pattern of strengths or weaknesses in her students. She makes a point to ask them after reading a piece, "Do you think you were stronger in rhythm or pitch?" She incorporates about 3-4 minutes of sight-reading into a half hour lesson, and more for longer lessons, and she stresses that it is up to the student to be motivated at home to want to get better at the skill. It is also necessary that the parent encourage sight-reading skill building.

Sight Reading Resources

I Can Read Music by Joanne Martin: There are two volumes in this series. The note heads are large which is a key feature of these books. The left side of each page focuses on pitches, and the right side of the page has rhythm exercises. The exercises start with just two different pitches, and rhythms begin with quarter and half notes. What this book lacks is a clear guide for parents and students with explanations on how to read music, terminology, and music theory-related information.

Adventures in Music Reading by William Starr: This book has a few pages at the beginning that are geared toward breaking down the music theory-related components and vocabulary. These pages are a great resource for parents who do not know how to read music. The exercises start in the key of D Major, and they are all duets. When the teacher or parent plays the duet with the student, it forces the student to keep tracking with their eyes on the music, since what they are hearing is not exactly what they are playing. During the lesson, Teacher #2 has the parent point to the notes to help the student track with their eyes. One negative aspect of this book is that the note heads are not particularly large. Volume 3 has an introduction to minor scales and describes the three types of minor. After finishing Volume 3, it is helpful to return to Volumes 1 and 2 and do the exercises in second or third position.

Rounds and Canons: For Ready Recreation and Performance by William Starr: This book is full of rounds and is great for sight-reading practice in the private lesson or group class. Rounds are helpful when sight-reading because the student has to watch the page and know where they are in the music in order for the harmony to work. In a round, the student is forced to keep playing and not stop.

Interview #3

This interview was conducted in person and was approximately thirty minutes in length.

The following questions were asked to the interviewee:

1. Can you tell me about your philosophy regarding incorporating sight-reading into lessons on a university level? Why is it important?
2. How should students incorporate sight-reading into their practice?
3. What are some of your favorite sight reading resources (i.e. pieces, books, collections)?
4. What do you find to be the most challenging aspect of sight-reading for your students?

Interviewee: Teacher #3

Teacher #3 is a renowned violinist and teacher. She is currently a violin professor at a university, an active soloist and chamber musician, and was recently appointed as a member of a world-renowned string quartet.

“When you see a piece of music, you recognize the gestures on the page, and they translate into something in the moment on the violin, immediately...something that is not only accurate but attractive and contagious...these are the skills that make you more literate, holistic, and confident.”

Teacher #3 learns a lot about her students by observing them in contexts outside of the lesson. After hearing her students sight-read during auditions and watching them sight-read new works in orchestra rehearsal, she decided to incorporate sight-reading into private lessons, even at the university level. When asked about her philosophy behind this, she explained that her goal is deeper than simply helping her students sight-read music more accurately. In fact, the topic is much broader. She stresses the importance of being musically literate and fluent when sight-reading and having the confidence to read both contemporary and classical works. Having these skills will lead to more enjoyment and a more sustainable future as a musician.

Musical Literacy

Teacher #3 points out that many violinists at the college level are good players and accurate note readers, but there is a disconnect between their ability to play and general music literacy. To describe the concept of music literacy she uses the example of reading in another language. Someone who is not fluent in a language but knows how to sound-out words can “read,” but they are not necessarily successful at pronunciation, syntax, punctuation, inflection, flow in speaking, and understanding the general context of a phrase or word. Similarly, someone who can play notes and rhythms but is not literate in the style and is not aware of the context of a phrase or gesture is going to be paralyzed and unable to sound musically fluent. Developing musical literacy is what she strives to work on with her students. She argues that this is the skill that will make a violinist marketable, fun to listen to, and desirable to play with.

Understanding the Landscape of a Piece

Teacher #3’s emphasis is on helping students look at a piece of music and automatically decode it, “connecting the dots” between what the students know about music, history, theory, and style and being able to translate it in the moment. For example, when a student sees “Minuet and Trio” and notices that Haydn is the composer, a certain style and flavor should come to mind. Similarly, when scanning the page, a student should look at certain gestures, tempo markings, and ornamentations and intuitively know what to stress and what style to convey.

She mentions having “street smarts” when looking at a piece of music for the first time. She explains this with an example: When a student sees the tempo marking “presto” and a line of dotted rhythms, immediately they should think “hooked bowing!” Similarly, if there are many string crossings, one should intuitively use less bow. Furthermore, if a piece has many

ornamentations, prioritize that the main notes are conveyed. She stresses that her goal is to help her students feel that the music is part of their body rhythm. Even if they miss a note, they are still reading fluently without stopping/stuttering.

Acquiring Literacy

Of course, many of these skills are acquired with practice and experience playing different composers' music. Sometimes it requires knowing theory and history of different genres. For that reason, she suggests that her students visit the library, choose a composer that is fairly unfamiliar, listen to their works, gain an understanding of style, and then check out the scores and take time to read them. Then, when the time for sight-reading comes, it is not as if they have never played or heard the style. Instead, they know what sort of sound to play with, they have an idea of the character or tempo, and they can relate it to something that they have already experienced. At that point, they come to a new piece with familiarity. As Teacher #3 describes, the "new" piece is like an "old friend," or at least a cousin of that friend. She recommends sight-reading with friends in a comfortable relaxed setting. This not only helps with increasing familiarity of different works but also helps eliminate the stigma that sight-reading is scary and difficult.

Most Challenging Aspect of Sight Reading

According to Teacher #3, the biggest barrier for her students is fear. She has found that when a student is sight-reading, their previous knowledge and experience often vanishes. The fear of messing up and not feeling confident blinds them from expressing what is on the page. Instead of seeing the broad landscape of the piece, they see individual black dots, and their vision

is clouded. In order to counter this fear, she stresses building confidence that they can “succeed in a beautiful, human way.”

She describes real confidence as knowing that one might miss a few notes but trusting that the meaning of the music will nevertheless be conveyed successfully. Striving to understand style and gesture builds this kind of confidence. There needs to be less emphasis on getting every note. Perfection is not the end goal; rather. The objective is to strengthen musicality, literacy, and confidence to create a strong, flexible, and holistic musician. Teacher #3 explains that when it comes time to perform, even if someone misses a note, no one can take away the fact that he or she said something meaningful. She wants her students to feel as though they can be their best in the moment, even when sight-reading.

Resources for Sight Reading

With her students, Teacher #3 uses Haydn and Mozart Quartets, Mozart Quintets, and orchestral excerpts for sight-reading. These works help students develop “street smarts” and challenge students to think about the other parts in the ensemble and their role in supporting those parts. Like Teachers #1 and #2, she believes that duets are helpful when sight-reading, since they inspire the student to keep playing even when they make mistakes. She uses Rolla and Mazas duos with her students. She also teaches a unit devoted to rhythm in order to increase rhythmic competency in her students which helps build confidence when reading contemporary works.

Discussion of Interviews

All three interviewees incorporate the following core sight-reading skills into their teaching: rhythmic competency, understanding keys and finger patterns, sight-singing, reading ahead/chunking, deciphering fingerings and bowings, understanding tempo, style, and phrasing (musical literacy), and not stopping. However, each interviewee has a particular focus for their students.

Teacher #1 emphasizes reading ahead/chunking and not stopping. She encourages her students to practice sight-reading with a click track and to use sightreadingfactory.com tools such as the “disappearing measures” feature to compel students to keep playing. Her focus is on seeing the whole picture when sight-reading by reading music in terms of words and phrases (musical chunks) and not fixating on individual notes. Teacher #1 believes that rhythm is particularly challenging for her students. In order to increase rhythmic competency, she assigns exercises from various rhythm etude books and teaches her students to see rhythms as words, using the chunking strategy to learn difficult rhythms. She also emphasizes deciphering fingerings with her students, especially those who are shifting to higher positions.

Teacher #2 integrates many sight-reading skill builders into in-lesson exercises and home practice assignments. In her five-step process for reading, she instructs her students to say aloud the location of the notes as well as the intervals. This enables her students to understand finger patterns, get to know the fingerboard, and begin to recognize the contour of the line at a glance. She stresses thinking before playing and places a strong emphasis on knowing the theory behind key signatures and quickly recognizing keys. Though less focused than Teacher #1 on rhythm reading, she is more focused on left hand technique when sight-reading. Similar to Teacher #1, she finds that students struggle with tracking notes and tend to rely on their ear instead of their

eyes. Therefore, she stresses that parents track the notes with their fingers when their child is practicing, and she recommends that the student say the note names while tracking with their own finger. Like Teacher #1, she uses duets to help students stay focused on the page and encourages students to keep playing without stopping.

Teacher #3's approach to sight-reading substantially differs from the other interviewee's approaches due to the fact that her student population consists of undergraduate and graduate-level music majors who are aspiring professionals. On a macro level, her philosophy behind incorporating sight-reading is centered on the idea of developing musical literacy, increasing the skills necessary to find one's musical voice, and performing fluently and confidently. Like Teachers #1 and #2, she believes that continuing to play despite mistakes is a key skill. Taking that concept further, she stresses the importance of maintaining the integrity of the musical style and connecting technique to what the student already knows about the particular genre or musical gesture. Her reasons for incorporating sight-reading into the lesson are less focused on helping her students become better note-readers and more focused on developing confidence in expressing musicality, style, and fluency when reading a piece for the first time.

CHAPTER 3

ONE-YEAR SIGHT-READING PLAN FOR VIOLIN STUDENT

Introduction

The following plan is for a hypothetical fourteen-year-old student. This student began playing violin in fifth grade and has been taking private lessons for about four years. The student is playing in Suzuki Book 4, has experience playing in major and minor key signatures up to four sharps and flats, and has the ability to read notes. She can shift to third position comfortably and is working on shifting to higher positions as well. The student's weekly lesson exercises and repertoire include scales (she is starting to work on three octave scales but is well versed in two octave scales up to four sharps and flats), solos from Suzuki Book 4 and various etudes and shifting exercises.

The student currently plays in a school string orchestra and would like to audition for a youth symphony in one year. The student is planning to continue studying her instrument and play in high school orchestra next year. She also hopes to play for weddings/gigs and join a chamber ensemble through a youth symphony program. As far as sight-reading experience, the student has not had any formal training. She learns well by ear but has a hard time with new rhythms and melodies if she does not hear them first from her teacher or from a recording. She dreads the day in school orchestra when new music is passed out; she feels behind and unable to sight-read effectively.

Of course, each student is different. There is not one plan or series of techniques that will work for all students. However, throughout the following one-year plan there are ideas, exercises, techniques, and resources for students of different skill levels and backgrounds. Plans will include a mixture of duets, solos, etudes, and chamber music. Etudes minimize the number

of variables to consider in the piece and are therefore used to isolate techniques, while duets and solos serve as more comprehensive assessments. It is important that the student is able to technically play what they are trying to read. It is best to practice sight-reading with pieces and exercises that are one grade below the current technical level of the student (Miles, 2008). Using slightly easier music, but insisting on playing it at a steady tempo and not stopping, is most important. Increasing tempo is an effective way of making simple exercises more difficult and combining familiarity with challenge (Watts, 2008).

For every six weeks, the student will have a specific sight-reading focus. During the six-week unit, the student will build on the previous unit's theme and continue to expand her confidence in sight-reading. That being said, each main theme is somewhat present in every week's work, since sight-reading necessitates using a variety of skills. The six-week units are chosen based on the core sight-reading skills presented in the Introduction.

Units:

Weeks 1-6: Rhythm, Meter, and Counting

Weeks 7-12: Key Signatures and Finger Patterns

Weeks 13-18: Singing and Shadow Bowing

Weeks 19-24: Reading Ahead and Chunking

Weeks 25-30: Fingerings, Bowings, and Articulations

Weeks 31-36: Dynamics and Phrasing

Weeks 37-42: Musical Literacy: Understanding Tempo, Style Markings, and Form

Weeks 43-48: Audition Prep: Not Stopping and Developing Confidence

Eat and Read Sight Reading Parties: Playing chamber music is a great time to practice sight-reading in an atmosphere that is social and fun (Sariti, 2005). Approximately twice a year, the private teacher will host an informal gathering of the studio. Middle and high school students are invited for an evening of socializing, pizza, ice cream, and sight-reading. The teacher will divide the students into chamber groups based on playing ability, and the teacher will prepare a

variety of chamber music binders with level-appropriate pieces ranging in style. Each group will start with the first piece in the binder and work on it for fifteen minutes, or until they hear a bell. Then they will move on to the next piece. This fun way of sight-reading with friends will encourage students to keep playing no matter what, and the time constraint will help them overcome the tendency to fixate on measures or go back and fix mistakes. Furthermore, this game will help the students to familiarize themselves with various styles and to acquire a taste for playing certain genres and works by particular composers. After experiencing these exciting evenings, sight-reading is bound to improve, and the negative stigma attached to sight-reading is sure to diminish.

Weeks 1-6: Rhythm, Meter, and Counting

Rhythm is widely considered one of the most important musical factors in sight-reading, and many consider it the most important. In Elliott's (1982) study on wind players and their sight-reading abilities, it was determined that the ability to read rhythm was the most accurate predictor of the students' sight-reading scores. Alexander and Henry (2014) state that the major sight-reading fault of both beginners and experienced musicians is an inability to read rhythms. Therefore, the first area that is addressed in the sight-reading sequence is rhythm.

In Week 1, it is important to establish a counting system that is consistent, if one is not already in place (Maclin, 2014). It is imperative for the student to count out loud daily as part of their practice routine (Maclin, 2014). During lessons for the first three weeks, the student will perform one or two rhythmic exercises in three ways. For each of these exercises, the student will first count the pulse aloud in the given meter. For example, if the exercise is in 4/4, she will continually say "1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and" while simultaneously clapping the written rhythm (Miles, 2008). The second way of performing the exercise is to say the written rhythms on the syllable "ta" while the metronome is keeping the pulse (Maclin, 2014). The third and final way is to play the rhythm with *detaché* bowing on any one note with the metronome.

In counting rhythms, there are many philosophies about which syllables or counting systems to use. In Mark Phillips's *Sight Read Any Rhythm Instantly*, he concludes that a student should only verbalize the main beats, i.e. "One, two, three four" and should refrain from using the word "and" or "one e and uh" to subdivide eighth or sixteenth notes. His reason is that it is helpful for the brain to process entire chunks of notes that fit into one beat as opposed to processing each individual note. When verbalized, the underlying beats move from the subconscious mind to the conscious mind, and thus it is difficult for the student to see a group of

notes as one beat. A teacher should consider different counting systems and decide which to use based on the student's needs.

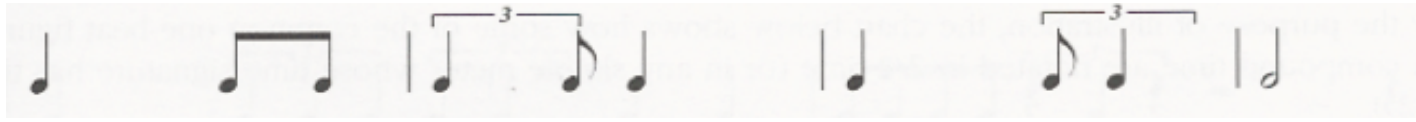
For the first three weeks, the above process is performed in the lesson for one or two rhythmic exercises. Throughout the week, the student is assigned one rhythmic exercise per day in order to practice this three-step process at home. Ingraining these habits of vocalizing and maintaining an internal pulse is the foundation for keeping steady and accurate rhythm while sight-reading. In general, when sight-reading complicated rhythms coupled with challenging notes, it is better to drop a note and continue with the rhythm, keeping a steady pulse. Remind the student that playing the right note at the wrong time is still a wrong note (Sariti, 2005).

During Weeks 3-6, in-lesson sight-reading challenges are more advanced, incorporating the left hand and exploring different key signatures in addition to rhythms with the bow. The following exercise is added as part of the sight-reading challenge:

Rhythm Flashcards - Rhythm patterns with varying amounts of beats are put on flashcards.

Each week the flashcards are mixed up and placed on the stand. The student must perform the stream of rhythms in the given order on any note. To make the exercise more challenging, pick a scale and ask the student to sight-read the rhythms, moving up or down the scale on every new beat or note (Reel, 2007). Flashcards can be made for various time signatures. Below (Example 2) are four measures in 2/4. Each measure is a different flash card. There are also cards with time signatures on them. The teacher can insert a time signature card to change the meter followed by rhythm cards in the new meter.

Example 2: Phillips, M. (2002), *Sight-Read Any Rhythm Instantly*, p. 37, Exercise B-1.



In their study, Alexander and Henry (2014) sought to provide a detaché rhythm hierarchy for string sight-reading. They measured the ability of string players to successfully sight-read various types of rhythmic patterns. Their findings, not surprisingly, indicate that even divisions of the beat are more easily sight-readable than uneven divisions. Below is the hierarchy of rhythmic patterns in order of most sight-readable to least sight-readable (Alexander & Henry, 2014). Given this rhythmic hierarchy, the sequence of in-lesson exercises will reflect this order of difficulty.

1. Even Divisions



2. Whole Beat



3. Even-Uneven Divisions



4. Uneven Divisions:



5. Uneven-Uneven Divisions



6. Multi-Beat:



Another aspect of the latter three weeks is to introduce reading in complex and mixed meters. According to Sariti (2005), the meter provides a clue to the inflection of the piece, the

general feel of the piece, and the tempo. In general, it is good to stress that when sight-reading, the tempo is not nearly as important as preserving the style and feel of the piece. Understanding meter can help with both, however (Sariti, 2005).

In-Lesson Exercises:

Week 1: Even Divisions and Whole Beat 2/4, 3/4, 4/4

E.L. Ayola - *Winning Rhythms*, #4 and #14

Week 2: Triplets

C. Selby, S. Rush, and R. Moon - *Habits of a Successful String Musician*, #228-231, "Triplets"

Week 3: Ties and long notes, and 2/2, 3/2, 4/2

M. Phillips - *Sight Read Any Rhythm Instantly*, G-2, G-3, and G-4, p. 17

Week 4: Dotted Rhythms and Syncopation

E.L. Ayola - *Winning Rhythms*, #9 and #17

Week 5: Triple Meter 3/8, 6/8, 9/8

C. Selby, S. Rush, and R. Moon - *Habits of a Successful String Musician*, #249-251, "Advanced Triple Meter"

Week 6: Mixed Meter and Irregular Meter 5/8, 7/8

E.L. Ayola - *Winning Rhythms*, #26

Weeks 7-12: Key Signatures and Finger Patterns

In the words of Kato Havas, “A thorough knowledge of the fingerboard is of course absolutely indispensable to overcome sight-reading difficulties” (Sariti, 2005, p.45). Here Havas confirms the importance of knowing the fingerboard as well as understanding finger patterns and key signatures. Sight-reading relies on having strong basic skills (Parncutt and McPherson, 2002). For string players, these basic skills involve having both the dexterity to play with different finger patterns and the knowledge of keys, scales, arpeggios, and intervals.

The importance of practicing scales and encouraging students to incorporate them into their daily practice cannot be stressed enough. According to Watts (2008), when practicing scales, the hand trains to automatically produce the most efficient fingering. Having knowledge of scales is akin to having the necessary vocabulary to read (Kuzmich & Waggoner, 2013). Furthermore, knowing key signatures not only involves finger patterns but also the auditory memory of knowing how the instrument rings in a particular key and the ability to detect whether the instrument is sounding in tune in that particular key signature (Sariti, 2005).

This unit will focus on developing dexterity in the left hand and creating a relaxed and informed left hand shape, in congruence with the key signature. It is important to focus on the shape of the left hand as a unit rather than on individual finger placement. This knowledge of keys, scales, and arpeggios helps with reading groups of notes as one unit as opposed to individual notes (Kuzmich & Waggoner, 2013). Keys with more sharps and flats are more difficult for string players to sight-read; therefore, the Week 7-12 lesson plans will gradually increase in difficulty starting with the simplest key signatures (Alexander & Henry, 2012).

For each week, the student will focus on 2-4 key signatures, using a combination of major and minor keys. The student will practice scales, arpeggios, and broken thirds in those

keys. In addition, the student will choose one key and complete one Sightreadingfactory.com excerpt per day in that key. During the last five minutes of the lesson, the student will be given a sight-reading exercise in the key of the previous week. An additional in-lesson activity will be the Flashcard Finger Pattern Game (Kuzmich & Waggoner, 2013).

Flashcard Finger Pattern Game: Flashcards will consist of one measure of music with four different notes and a key signature. The student will have to create the finger pattern above the string and then set their fingers down together in that pattern. The goal will be to successfully complete as many flashcards as possible in one minute. Variations on the game could include creating a chain of flashcards or hopping back and forth between two finger patterns. An added challenge that incorporates the rhythm blocking from the previous unit involves creating cards with various rhythmic patterns and asking the student to perform the cards with both the correct hand frame and rhythm.

In-Lesson Exercises:

Week 7: CM, GM, Am, Em

Dabczynski, R. Meyer, & B. Phillips - *Sight Read It For Strings*, p. 9, #9 “Post Test”

S. Applebaum - *Duets for Strings*, Vol. 2, #27, “The Bluebird” by J. Reinagle

Week 8: DM, FM, Bm, Dm

D. Smith – *Violin Sight-Reading Book One*, p. 13, #11

Week 9: AM, BbM, F#m, Gm

S. Applebaum - *Beautiful Music for Two String Instruments*, Vol II, #15 “The A.B.C.”
by W.A. Mozart

Week 10: EbM, Cm

D. Smith – *Violin Sight-Reading Book One*, p. 17, #11

Week 11: EM, C#m

D. Smith – *Violin Sight-Reading Book One*, p.11, #6

Week 12: AbM, Fm

D. Smith – *Violin Sight-Reading Book One*, p. 18, #16

Weeks 13-18: Singing and Shadow Bowing

Weeks 13-18 will focus on hearing intervals, sight-singing, and shadow bowing. A common problem among instrumental sight-readers is misjudgment of melodic and harmonic intervals (Parncutt & McPherson, 2002). Most sources agree that singing is very beneficial for students who are learning to sight-read. Alexander and Henry (2012) point out that sight-reading instrumentalists *should* hear the pitches they are about to play in their head before playing. Sight-singing vocalists, on the other hand, *must* hear the pitches in their head before singing. Therefore, by singing before playing, instrumentalists can practice the necessary skill.

Singing can take on many forms. For example, a student can sing with solfege syllables, letter names, made up words, or other tonal syllables, but the key is to sing with a clear pitch and with a full voice (Miles, 2008). To practice being able to recognize intervals and scales, use flashcards, identifying intervals by name in addition to singing them. There are also various computer drills and apps that can help with interval recognition (Parncutt & McPherson, 2002).

One exercise to implement into the lesson, and to encourage students to implement at home, is the tuning exercise. Once the student has her A-string in tune, ask her to match the pitch of the A-string with her voice. Then, ask her to sing a fifth below (D) before attempting to tune her D-string. Continue that process of singing each string's pitch before tuning it (Maclin, 2014).

According to Alexander and Henry's (2012) hierarchy of pitch skills, certain pitch skills are more or less difficult. The following order of pitch skill categories is from least to most difficult. Therefore, in the following six-week plan, the sight-singing exercises will increase in difficulty according to the order of pitch skill categories.

1. Conjunct, Tonic, Modulatory
2. Subdominant and Cadential
3. Dominant, Chromatic, and Larger Leaps

Each week, 5-7 minutes will be reserved at the end of the lesson for interval practice, sight-singing, and sight-reading. Due to the challenging nature of singing and hearing intervals, this unit's exercises will be technically simpler, allowing the student to focus more on pitch and internal hearing. Research shows that musicians fixate on the space in between notes far more than the notes themselves, therefore, a lot of attention is given to intervals (Saxon, 2009).

Interval flashcards are used throughout the unit. Each flashcard shows two notes. The intervals between the two notes range from unison to a tenth. The student should be able to identify the interval, sing it, and play it on the violin.

“Shadow bowing” is a technique coined by Paul Rolland in which a student moves his or her bow back and forth on the shoulder, or in a plastic tube placed on the shoulder (Rolland & Mutschler, 1986). Without the violin, the students bow with the correct rhythm and bowings of the excerpt or piece. One adaptation that does not require a plastic tube or require the student to touch the bow hair to their clothes would be to hold the bow out in front of the body and shadow bow vertically. This also helps the student think concretely about bow direction as being either up or down. Shadow bowing is helpful because it takes away the added challenge of getting a good tone with the bow and coordinating the left hand fingers with the right hand. It can be done in a group as well as individually, and a student can count or sing aloud the correct rhythm or pitches while shadow bowing in the air. This unit's exercises will include shadow bowing while singing note names.

Each week, there will be an in-lesson challenge that will include shadow bowing while counting and singing followed by playing the exercise.

In-Lesson Exercises:

Week 13: Conjunct Melody

Dabczynski, R. Meyer, & B. Phillips - *Sight Read It for Strings*, p.24, #2 “Conjunct Pattern No. 1”

Week 14: Conjunct Melody

Dabczynski, R. Meyer, & B. Phillips - *Sight Read It for Strings*, p. 24, #3 “Conjunct Pattern No. 2”

Week 15: Tonic Arpeggios and Conjunct

D. Smith – *Violin Sight-Reading Book One*, p. 4, #10

Week 16: Subdominant Arpeggios

Dabczynski, R. Meyer, & B. Phillips – *Sight-Read It for Strings*, p. 28 #3 “Sub-Dominant Arpeggio G-B-D”

Week 17: Dominant Seventh Arpeggios and Larger Leaps

C. Lumsden - *Right @ Sight -Grade 2*, #64

Dabczynski, R. Meyer, & B. Phillips - *Sight Read It for Strings*, p. 28, #4, “Dominant Seventh Arpeggio A-C#-E-G”

Week 18: Large Leaps and Accidentals

D. Smith – *Violin Sight-Reading Book One*, p. 20, #5 (no ornaments when singing)

Weeks 19-24: Reading Ahead and Chunking

Reading ahead is a skill that is necessary in becoming a fluent sight-reader. Just as one fluently reads text as a whole and does not fixate on individual words, music is read with the eyes moving slightly ahead of the fingers so as not to fixate on every note (Sariti, 2005).

According to Parncutt and McPherson (2002), better sight-readers scan the music more efficiently and have fewer fixations on the music, taking in more information per fixation.

“Chunks” refer to “a vocabulary of commonly occurring note groups that can be rapidly encoded and processed in reading” (Saxon, 2009, p.24). In other words, chunks are groups of notes that are seen and processed as one unit (Saxon, 2009). In order to perceive chunks as opposed to individual notes, students will need background in music theory and must be able to recognize finger patterns, arpeggios, and rhythm blocks (Parncutt & McPherson, 2002). The previous three units provide a solid base for recognizing rhythmic patterns (Weeks 1-6), keys, arpeggios, and finger patterns (Weeks 7-12), and intervals (Weeks 13-18). This unit will focus on reviewing those skills, practicing scanning ahead, and focusing on patterns and chunks rather than single notes and rhythms.

Different in-lesson challenges and assigned home challenges will include the exercises below:

1. **Circled Notes:** First, choose a simple etude or exercise. Next, circle small groups of notes. Then, play the etude with a metronome, but only play the circled sections, resting for the correct number of beats in between each circled section. Use correct bowings, fingerings, and articulations (Watts, 2008).

2. **Every Other Measure:** Play every other measure of an etude or piece, keeping a steady pulse with the metronome (Sariti, 2005). This helps engage the eyes as opposed to playing by ear.
3. **Sightreadingfactory.com:** Assign the student to visit this website three times per week. Select: Violin-Level 4-Random Time Signature-Random Key Signature-Metronome track-Disappearing Measures. The disappearing measures feature will encourage the student to keep their eyes focused ahead of their fingers since the measures will disappear after the beats have gone by.

In-Lesson Exercises:

Week 19: Sightreadingfactory.com: Show the student how this website works and what the steps are in order to create a randomized sight-reading exercise:

1. Choose “Violin”
2. Randomized Key Signature and Time Signature
3. Grade 3 or 4
4. Check “disappearing measures” and “metronome track.” Do a practice exercise in the lesson.

Week 20: Play as a duet, encouraging the student to not stop

S. Applebaum - *Duets for Strings*, Vol. II, #12, “Bourée” by J.S. Bach

Week 21: Using the “Every Other Measure” exercise

H.S. Whistler - *Preparing for Kreutzer*, Vol. 1, Excerpt from “Etude in Eb” by De Beriot, p. 14

Week 22: Play as a duet

S. Applebaum - *Beautiful Music for Two String Instruments*, Vol II, #26, “The Bavarian Dance” by F. Wohlfahrt

Week 23: Using the “Circled Notes” exercise

H.S. Whistler - *Preparing for Kreutzer*, Vol. 1, Excerpt from “Etude in D” by Kayser, p. 9

Week 24: Play as a duet

S. Applebaum - *Duets for Strings*, Vol. 2, #23 “A Rondo Theme” by I. Pleyel

Weeks 25-30: Fingerings, Bowings, and Articulations

According to Teacher #1, interviewed above (see Chapter 2), a crucial step in sight-reading is scanning for shifts and planning for fingerings. Being able to decide when and where to shift, or which fingering to use in first position, is a skill that can be daunting for someone who is new to shifting. Practicing scales daily is an important strategy that will ensure that the student is naturally shifting to the high positions. This unit will focus on deciphering fingerings, particularly in regard to shifting to third and fifth position.

Bowing patterns and articulations are the secondary focus of this unit. Though different bowings and techniques are used in the previous units, the sight-reading exercises in this unit include a study of the following bowings:

- Detaché
- Accents
- Slurs (2-8 notes)
- Staccato
- Hooked bowing
- Bow lifts
- Martelé
- Spiccato

For the first three weeks, the exercises involve deciphering challenging fingerings in first position and deciding when and where to shift. From now on, higher position fingerings are expected from the student during sight-reading exercises. The last three weeks' exercises challenge the student to explore various bow strokes and decide where in the bow and with what technique the stroke is played.

In-Lesson Exercises:

Week 25: Shifting to Third Position

D. Smith – *Violin Sight-Reading Book One*, p.16, #10 (need to white out fingerings)

Week 26: Decisions about whether to shift or not

- S. Applebaum - *Beautiful Music for Two String Instruments*, Vol III, #25 “The Robins”
by C. Hohmann (need to white out fingerings)
- Week 27: Shifting to Fifth Position
D. Smith – *Violin Sight-Reading Book One*, p. 21, #11 (need to white out fingerings)
- Week 28: Accents, hooked bowing, and slurs
Dabczynski, R. Meyer, & B. Phillips - *Sight Read It for Strings*, “Noel’s Galliard” by A.
Holborne, p. 23
Lightness of stroke, bow lifts to the frog
S. Applebaum - *Beautiful Music for Two String Instruments*, Vol II#, 20 “The
Vagabond,” by M. Gebaur
- Week 29: Martelé and Spiccato
H.S. Whistler - *Preparing for Kreutzer*, Vol. 1, Excerpt from “Etude in Bb” by Kayser, p.
11
H.S. Whistler - *Preparing for Kreutzer*, Vol. 1, Excerpt from “Etude No. 1 in D” by
Kayser, p. 20
- Week 30: Hooked bow-dotted rhythm with long-short in the stroke, and long slurs with extended
fourth fingers
H.S. Whistler - *Preparing for Kreutzer*, Vol. 1, Excerpt from “Etude No. 2 in Eb” by
Kayser, p. 29
H.S. Whistler - *Preparing for Kreutzer*, Vol. 1, Excerpt from “Etude No. 1 in Eb” by
Spohr, p.28

Weeks 31-36: Dynamics and Phrasing

Though one might be tempted to overlook musicality, a student should get in the habit of observing dynamics and phrase markings even when sight-reading. Not only will the student more accurately sight-read what is written, but the student will also be more inclined to naturally create beautiful phrases, understand musical sentence structure, and develop an expressive voice.

During this unit, the student will focus on finding musical phrases and following dynamics. Exercises are chosen with an expressive purpose in mind. This unit will include many duets in order to help inspire the student to phrase together with the teacher. Singing is another effective technique for learning how to naturally shape phrases. Home practice assignments for the week will include listening to opera arias, chorales, and classical string quartets in order to develop the student's musical understanding and voice.

In-lesson and home practice techniques for helping students develop musicality:

1. Play a passage with overly dramatized dynamics (Sariti, 2005).
2. Sing through the passage and see what phrasing comes naturally with the voice (Sariti, 2005).
3. Slow the tempo of a piece, take out the rhythm, or take out pitches in order to eliminate factors, allowing the student to focus more on phrasing (Parncutt & McPherson, 2002).
4. Listen to professional recordings of violinists, singers, ensembles, and various professional musicians.

In-Lesson Exercises:

Week 31: Play as duet

S. Applebaum - *Duets for Strings*, Vol. 2, #17 "A Stately Dance" by G. F. Handel

Week 32: Play as duet

S. Applebaum - *Duets for Strings*, Vol. 2, #28 "Minuet" by W.A. Mozart

Week 33: Ask student to create natural phrasing and dynamics for the chorale, sing first

- C. Selby, S. Rush, and R. Moon - *Habits of a Successful String Musician*, #193 “Chorale #2”
- Week 34: Observe all printed dynamics- first sing only the rhythm with the correct phrasing, next play slowly, and finally increase the tempo
D. Smith – *Violin Sight-Reading Book One*, #19, p. 23
- Week 35: Ask student to create natural phrasing and dynamics for the chorale, sing first
C. Selby, S. Rush, and R. Moon - *Habits of a Successful String Musician*, #199 “Chorale #8”
- Week 36: Play as a Duet
S. Applebaum - *Beautiful Music for Two String Instruments*, Vol. 2, #39 “A Celebrated Duet” by I. Pleyel

Weeks 37-42: Musical Literacy: Understanding Tempo, Style Markings, and Form

In the interview with Teacher #3 (see Chapter 2), the interviewee stresses the importance of understanding the style, genre, and landscape of a piece. She stresses becoming musically literate and understanding how to interpret various gestures and tempo markings. Watts (2008) describes that one's ability to understand music is directly related to his or her ability to predict what comes next in the music and to have expectations of what is to come, based on previous experience with similar music.

Similarly, Sariti (2005) explains, "Once the student becomes fluent with the basic tonal and rhythmic building blocks, sight-reading becomes the ability to recognize from previous experience the basic and familiar technical and musical components, the mental capacity to recombine them as they appear in a given piece, and the technical skill to perform them instantly on the instrument in their new combinations" (Sariti, 2005, p.47). When looking at a piece of music for the first time, the student should recall similarities from their past experiences with solo, chamber, and orchestra pieces. Examples include knowing that generally one should use an "up bow" when playing an "upbeat" and understanding the mood and style of a "scherzo" (Reel, 2007).

In order to achieve this familiarity and literacy it is important to understand various musical terms. Students must have a well-informed musical vocabulary (Kuzmich & Waggoner, 2013). Encourage the student to use the music dictionary and look up any word with which she is not familiar. Italian tempo markings such as *allegro*, *largo*, and *presto*, and style/character words such as *con sentimento*, *grazioso*, and *con brio*, are two important categories of terms. Give the student a list of important words to know and encourage her to add words to the list as she progresses. It is also important to understand basic musical forms such as minuet/trio, rondo,

and theme and variations. Teach these concepts as they arise in the music, ensuring that the student has experience either hearing or playing a piece with each musical form.

It is essential to encourage and assign that the student listen to pieces of varying styles. This helps the student become a more fluent reader, broadening her musical knowledge and expectations (Watts, 2008).

The unit's in-lesson sight-reading exercises consist of various chamber music pieces from the classical repertoire and exercises that have a distinct tempo marking or style. Listening assignments throughout the week will aim to expose the student to various styles and composers.

In-Lesson Exercises:

Week 37: Discuss the term "mazurka" and why the dotted rhythm merits a hooked bowing.
D. Smith – *Violin Sight-Reading Book One*, p. 13, #14

Week 38: Discuss the Baroque gigue dance and the style in which to play Bach's music.
D. Kelley – *Music for Four*, Gigue from Suite #3 in D Major, Violin 1, by J.S. Bach

Week 39: Discuss the term "marcato."
D. Smith – *Violin Sight-Reading Book One*, p. 22, #13

Week 40: Discuss the minuet/trio form and how to choose an appropriate tempo.
Menuetto and Trio from Quartet No.8, Op. 9, No 2, Violin 1, by F.J. Haydn

Week 41: Discuss the Argentine tango, the importance of rhythm, and the style in which to play the piece.
E. & K. Sassmannshaus - *Early Start on the Violin*, Vol 4, Excerpt from "Tango" by B. Hummel

Week 42: Discuss the idea of a slow movement in a Haydn quartet and the marking "cantabile sostenuto."
Excerpt from Quartet No. 64, op. 64, no. 4 Adagio cantabile sostenuto, Violin 1, by F.J. Haydn

Weeks 43-48: Audition Prep: Not Stopping and Developing Confidence

In order to prepare the student for school and youth symphony auditions, it is important to practice with mock auditions, simulating as many potential factors as possible. Stress that, when sight-reading, moving forward and not stopping in the middle of the piece is essential. This is true whether or not mistakes are made (Watts, 2008). Parncutt and McPherson (2002) state that the most common error in sight-reading is stuttering: in other words, going back and correcting errors or creating unnecessary pauses. They suggest working on this by playing every other measure, only playing on certain beats, and covering up measures that have already been played (Parncutt & McPherson, 2002). A teacher or parent can help with this during the lesson. At home, a helpful resource is sightreadingfactory.com (recommended by Teacher #1-see interview in Chapter 2). There is an option to select “disappearing measures” which will force the student to not back up. Another way to help a student develop the habit of not stopping is to play duets with them, or encourage them to play with a recording, back-up music, or metronome. These electronic resources are included in sight-reading method books such as *Right @ Sight* (see Chapter 1) as well as online resources such as sightreadingfactory.com.

In addition to the ability to keep playing despite wrong notes or missed rhythms, it is important to develop a sight-reading game-plan when preparing for auditions. Though the plan can involve an acronym such as TRaK or STARS (see Chapter 1), it can also be unique to the student.

Here are important things for the student to think about in the moment:

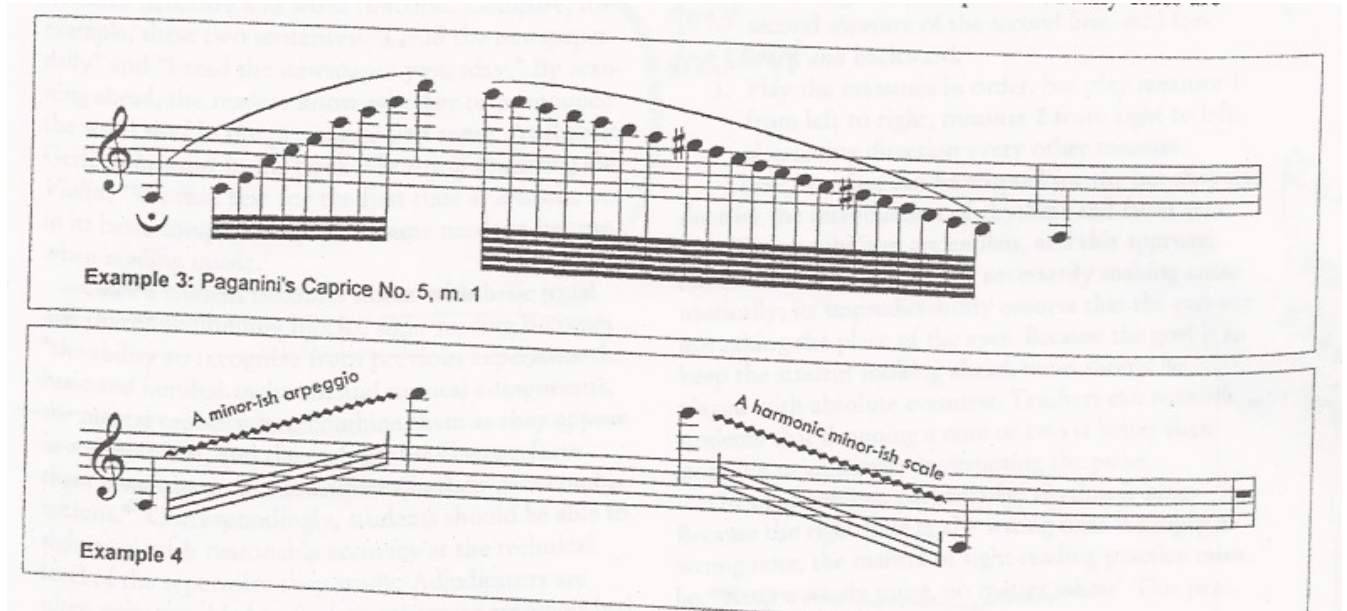
1. Scan the piece and look for red flags and hints as to what the style and general feel of the piece should be. Read tempo markings and other words pointing to style. Have an idea of the skeleton of the piece (Teacher #3 Interview-Chapter 2).

2. Identify the key and time signature, and check to see if there are key signature or tempo changes.
3. Plan out important downward and upward shifts (Teacher #1 Interview- see Chapter 2).
4. Mentally sing and/or silently finger or shadow bow through particularly tricky moments (Maclin, 2014).
5. Have an exit plan for tricky passages (Sariti, 2005), and know which notes are important and which are less important (Sariti, 2005).

When the above process is done thoroughly, the student's mental rehearsal should give her a sense that the piece has already been played. The first performance is only revisiting what was already mentally rehearsed (Maclin, 2014).

Sariti's (2005) example of "ghosting," or glossing over notes and understanding the "skeleton" of a passage, is crucial to overcoming passages that seem daunting and impossible to sight-read. He refers to this process as "informed fakery." Below is Sariti's example of what this process often looks like if notated (Example 3).

Example 3: Sariti, D. (2005), Three steps to sight-reading success, *American String Teacher*, p. 46.



As Teacher #3 points out in her interview (see Chapter 2), one of the biggest challenges in the moment is overcoming fear. Sariti (2005) agrees that one of the biggest obstacles for students is self-doubt. Throughout the year, the student has focused on certain skills necessary for sight-reading and developing musical literacy. In addition to daily practice and weekly sight-reading in the lesson, the student has had an opportunity to play with peers in a relaxed and fun setting (Eat and Read Sight-Reading Parties, see p. 33-34). These experiences have hopefully set up the student to feel confident and comfortable reading new music. Now the fun begins, and the student has the opportunity to share what she has to offer (Teacher #3 interview). Simulating the audition setting will increase the student's familiarity with the process, each time strengthening the strategies she has learned, becoming more efficient with the process, and thus overcoming fear and mistrust.

In-Lesson Exercises:

- Week 43: Understanding the road map (D.S. al Coda) and understanding swing style
A. Dabczynski, R. Meyer, & B. Phillips- *Sight Read It for Strings*, p. 31, “Bugle-Call Blues,” by R. Meyer
- Week 44: Understanding the purpose of ornamental figures and focusing on the skeleton of the melody
H.S. Whistler - *Preparing for Kreutzer*, Vol. 1, Excerpt from “Trill Etude in Bb” by Weiss, p. 39
- Week 45: Play as Duet, not stopping
S. Applebaum - *Beautiful Music for Two String Instruments*, Vol III, #23 “Meditation” by I. Pleyel
- Week 46: Prioritizing main notes, keeping a steady pulse
D. Kelley – *Music for Four*, Excerpt from “Spring-Song” from Song Without Words, Op. 62 #6, Violin 1, by F. Mendelssohn
- Week 47: “Ghosting” fast runs and keeping time
S. Applebaum - *Beautiful Music for Two String Instruments*, Vol IV - First three lines of #10 “Sonatina” by C.P.E. Bach
- Week 48: Synthesizing technical skills and continuing to play despite missed notes or accidentals
Excerpt from Quartet No 13 op. 77. No. 1- Allegro Moderato, Violin 1, by F. J. Haydn

CONCLUSION

Reserving a small amount of time during the private lesson in order to work on sight-reading skills is a worthwhile investment into a student's musical future. As evidenced by the interviews and existing research, increasing the ability to sight-read well requires the development of the following skills: rhythmic competency, understanding keys and finger patterns, sight-singing, reading ahead/chunking, deciphering fingerings and bowings, understanding tempo, style, and phrasing (musical literacy), and not stopping. Acquiring these skills allows the student to successfully sight-read during orchestra, at auditions, or for various gigs. There are many string sight-reading resources on the market, online resources, and sight-reading games/activities that are challenging and fun to incorporate into private violin lessons. Working consistently in the lesson and at home with the various strategies and resources described in this thesis, a private teacher can enable students to develop sight-reading fluency and confidence.

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APPENDIX

Weeks 1-6 Exercises


Week 1: E.L. Ayola - *Winning Rhythms*, #4 and #14

4.

The image displays six musical exercises, labeled A through F, each on a single staff in 4/4 time. Exercise A consists of a sequence of eighth and quarter notes. Exercise B features a mix of eighth and quarter notes with some rests. Exercise C uses eighth notes and quarter notes with occasional rests. Exercise D includes eighth notes, quarter notes, and rests. Exercise E is composed of eighth notes and quarter notes with rests. Exercise F combines eighth notes, quarter notes, and rests.

14.

Sixteenth Notes



= 1 beat

— — — —

Write in counting.

Remember! If you can count it, you can play it.

A. 

B. 

C. 

D. 

E. 

F. 

Week 2: C. Selby, S. Rush, and R. Moon - *Habits of a Successful String Musician*, #228-231, "Triplets"

228a. and b.

Musical notation for exercise 228a and b. It consists of two staves in 4/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The exercise features continuous eighth-note triplets in both hands, with some rests interspersed. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps, and a 4/4 time signature.

229a. and b.

Musical notation for exercise 229a and b. It consists of two staves in 4/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The exercise features eighth-note triplets in both hands, with some eighth notes and rests interspersed. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps, and a 4/4 time signature.

230a. and b.

Musical notation for exercise 230a and b. It consists of two staves in 4/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The exercise features eighth-note triplets in both hands, with some eighth notes and rests interspersed. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps, and a 4/4 time signature.

231a. and b.

Musical notation for exercise 231a and b. It consists of two staves in 4/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The exercise features eighth-note triplets in both hands, with some eighth notes and rests interspersed. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps, and a 4/4 time signature.

Week 3: M. Phillips - *Sight Read Any Rhythm Instantly*, G-2, G-3, and G-4, p. 17

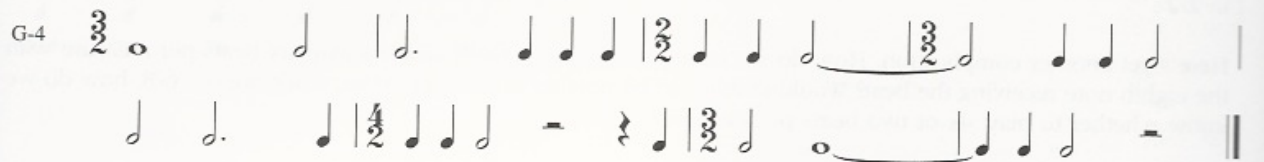
In the following examples, label each beat if necessary.

G-2 

In $3/2$ time, each measure contains three beats, with the half note receiving the beat. (Since the half note receives one beat, the whole note receives two beats, and the dotted whole note, being equivalent to a whole note tied to a half note, receives three beats.)

G-3 

Watch for the changing meters.

G-4 

Week 4: E.L. Ayola - *Winning Rhythms*, #9 and #17

10

9.

Those who count together, play together!

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

F.

G.

H.

I.

17.

Sounds alike

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

F.

W6

Week 5: C. Selby, S. Rush, and R. Moon - *Habits of a Successful String Musician, #249-251,* "Advanced Triple Meter"

J. Advanced Triple Meter

249a. and b.

250a. and b.

251a. and b.

Week 6: E.L. Ayola - *Winning Rhythms*, #26

26.

Know what each time signature tells you.

Musical exercise 26 consists of 11 staves, each with a different time signature and rhythmic pattern. The staves are labeled A through K. The time signatures are: A (4/4), B (C), C (6/8), D (2/4), E (2/2), F (3/4), G (3/8), H (6/8), I (C), J (3/4), and K (9/8). The patterns include quarter notes, eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and triplets, often with rests and phrasing slurs.

Weeks 7-12 Exercises

Week 7: Dabczynski, R. Meyer., & B. Phillips - *Sight Read It for Strings*, p. 9, #9 "Post Test"

Post-Test

1.

S. Applebaum - *Duets for Strings*, Vol. 2, #27, "The Bluebird" by J. Reinagle

27. The Bluebird

Moderato (Key of C)

J. REINAGLE

2 1 0 3

1 0 3

3 1 0 3

2 3 0

3 2 3 3

3 1 0 3

2 3 0

3 2 3 3

(MELODY)

Week 8: D. Smith – *Violin Sight-Reading Book One*, p. 13, #11

Allegro
mf
rit.
f
a tempo
mp
cresc.

This musical score consists of three staves of music in 2/4 time. The first staff begins with a violin bow (v) and a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The second staff features a forte (f) dynamic and a ritardando (rit.) marking. The third staff starts with a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic and a crescendo (cresc.) marking, ending with a fermata over the final note.

Week 9: S. Applebaum - *Beautiful Music for Two String Instruments*, Vol II, #15 “The A.B.C.” by W.A. Mozart

15. The A. B. C. W. A. Mozart
Lively-playfully (Key of A)
p
cresc.
f
p
f
p
cresc.
f
p
f

This musical score is for a two-staff piece in 3/8 time, key of A major. It is marked 'Lively-playfully'. The score includes dynamic markings of piano (p), forte (f), and crescendo (cresc.). It features various rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and includes circled measure numbers 5, 9, and 13. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Week 10: D. Smith – *Violin Sight-Reading Book One*, p. 17, #11

17

Andante

11 *mp* molto legato

cresc.

dim. e poco rit.

Week 11: D. Smith – *Violin Sight-Reading Book One*, p.11, #6

Vivace

6 *f*

4 V

Week 12: D. Smith – *Violin Sight-Reading Book One*, p. 18, #16

Andante cantabile

16 *mp*

cresc. *p*

poco dim. e rit.

Weeks 13-18 Exercises

Week 13: Dabczynski, R. Meyer, & B. Phillips - *Sight Read It for Strings*, p.24, #2 “Conjunct Pattern No. 1”



Conjunct Pattern No. 1

2. *mf*

V

The image shows a musical score for "Conjunct Pattern No. 1". It consists of two staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a dynamic marking of *mf* and contains a sequence of eighth notes. Above the first few notes, there are two diagrams showing the fingering for the notes: the first diagram shows fingers 1, 2, 3, 4 for the first four notes, and the second diagram shows fingers 2, 3, 4, 5 for the next four notes. The second staff continues the pattern, featuring a fermata over the first note and a 'V' marking above the second note. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Week 14: Dabczynski, R. Meyer, & B. Phillips - *Sight Read It for Strings*, p. 24, #3 “Conjunct Pattern No. 2”

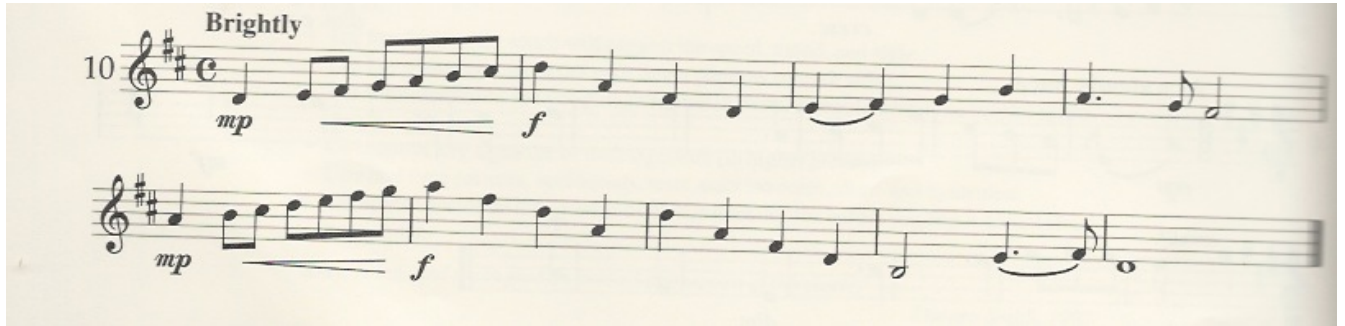


Conjunct Pattern No. 2

3. *p*

The image shows a musical score for "Conjunct Pattern No. 2". It consists of two staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a dynamic marking of *p* and contains a sequence of eighth notes. Above the first few notes, there are two diagrams showing the fingering for the notes: the first diagram shows fingers 1, 2, 3, 4 for the first four notes, and the second diagram shows fingers 2, 3, 4, 5 for the next four notes. The second staff continues the pattern with a similar sequence of eighth notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Week 15: D. Smith – *Violin Sight-Reading Book One*, p. 4, #10



Week 16: Dabczynski, R. Meyer, & B. Phillips - *Sight Read It for Strings*, p. 28 #3 “Sub-Dominant Arpeggio G-B-D”



Week 17: C. Lumsden - *Right @ Sight -Grade 2, #64*

Dolce

30

mp

mf

p

Dabczynski, R. Meyer, & B. Phillips - *Sight Read It for Strings*, p. 28, #4, “Dominant Seventh Arpeggio A-C#-E-G”

Dominant Seventh (V7) Arpeggio A-C#-E-G

4.

p

1.

2.

Week 18: D. Smith – *Violin Sight-Reading Book One*, p. 20, #5 (no ornaments when singing)

Allegretto grazioso (ornaments optional)

5

p

cresc.

Weeks 19-24 Exercises

Week 19: Sightreadingfactory.com - Random exercise with “disappearing measures” feature

Week 20: S. Applebaum - *Duets for Strings*, Vol. II, #12, “Bourée” by J.S. Bach

12. Bourée

Allegretto (Key of F) J. S. BACH

The image displays a page of musical notation for a piece titled "12. Bourée" by J.S. Bach. The tempo is marked "Allegretto" and the key signature is "Key of F". The score is written for two staves, likely representing a duet for strings. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, slurs, and accents. Dynamics like *p* (piano) and *f* (forte) are indicated. There are also markings for *rit.* (ritardando). The score is divided into measures, with some measures circled and numbered (5, 9, 13, 17, 21). Fingering numbers (1-4) are present throughout the piece. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Week 21: H.S. Whistler - *Preparing for Kreutzer*, Vol. 1, Excerpt from "Etude in Eb" by De Bériot, p. 14

The musical score is written in E-flat major (two flats) and 2/4 time. It consists of five staves of music. The notation includes various fingering and bowing techniques:

- Staff 1: Measures 1-4. Measure 1 has a square symbol above the first eighth note and a '4' above the second. Measure 2 has a 'V' above the first eighth note and a '4' above the second. Measure 3 has a '(3)' above the first eighth note. Measure 4 has a slur over the last two eighth notes.
- Staff 2: Measures 5-8. Measure 5 has a square symbol above the first eighth note and a '4' above the second. Measure 6 has a 'V' above the first eighth note and a '4' above the second. Measure 7 has a '(7)' above the first eighth note. Measure 8 has a slur over the last two eighth notes.
- Staff 3: Measures 9-12. Measure 9 has a square symbol above the first eighth note and a '4' above the second. Measure 10 has a 'V' above the first eighth note and a '4' above the second. Measure 11 has a '(11)' above the first eighth note. Measure 12 has a slur over the last two eighth notes.
- Staff 4: Measures 13-16. Measure 13 has a square symbol above the first eighth note and a '0' above the second. Measure 14 has a 'V' above the first eighth note and a '0' above the second. Measure 15 has a '(15)' above the first eighth note and a '0' above the second. Measure 16 has a slur over the last two eighth notes.
- Staff 5: Measures 17-20. Measure 17 has a square symbol above the first eighth note and a '0' above the second. Measure 18 has a '(b)' above the first eighth note and a 'V' above the second. Measure 19 has a '(19)' above the first eighth note and a '0' above the second. Measure 20 has a slur over the last two eighth notes.

Week 22: S. Applebaum - *Beautiful Music for Two String Instruments*, Vol II, #26, "The Bavarian Dance" by F. Wohlfahrt

26. The Bavarian Dance

In moderate time-with energy (Key of B \flat) F. Wohlfahrt

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system begins with a forte (f) dynamic and includes a circled measure number 5. The second system includes a crescendo (cresc.) marking and a circled measure number 9. The third system includes a circled measure number 13 and a '(Melody)' marking. The score features various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and fingering numbers (1, 2, 4, 0). The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Week 23: H.S. Whistler - *Preparing for Kreutzer*, Vol. 1, Excerpt from "Etude in D" by Kayser, p. 9

Also practice with a separate bow for each note, using (1) détaché bowings, as well as other basic variants, (2) selected staccato variants, and (3) selected spiccato variants.

(1) (5) (9) (13) (17) (21) (25)

23. A Rondo Theme

Allegretto (Key of G) I. PLEYEL

p

cresc.

f

(MELODY)

(MELODY)

(MELODY)

Weeks 25-30 Exercises

Week 25: D. Smith – *Violin Sight-Reading Book One*, p.16, #10 (need to white out or fingerings)

Musical score for Exercise #10, *Allegretto*, 6/8 time, key of D major. The score consists of two staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), and a 6/8 time signature. The tempo is marked *Allegretto* and the dynamic is *mp*. The piece features a melodic line with various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1, 2, and 3. The word *cresc.* appears twice, indicating a crescendo. The second staff continues the melody and includes a trill-like figure at the end.

Week 26: S. Applebaum - *Beautiful Music for Two String Instruments*, Vol III, #25 “The Robins” by C. Hohmann (need to white out fingerings)

Musical score for "25. The Robins" by C. Hohmann, 3/4 time, key of F major. The score is for two string instruments and consists of three systems of staves. The tempo is marked "In moderate time-cheerfully (Key of F)" and the composer is C. Hohmann. The piece begins with a dynamic of *mf*. The first system includes fingerings (1, 1, 3, 4, 2, 4, 3, 2, 4) and a circled measure number 5. The second system includes a dynamic of *p*, a *cresc.* marking, and circled measure numbers 9 and 13. The third system includes a dynamic of *mf* and circled measure numbers 18 and 22. The piece concludes with a dynamic of *p* and the word "(Melody)" written below the final staff.

Week 27: D. Smith – *Violin Sight-Reading Book One*, p. 21, #11 (need to white out fingerings)

Waltz
11
mf
mp cresc.
p
cresc.
p
cresc.

Week 28: Dabczynski, R. Meyer, & B. Phillips - *Sight Read It for Strings*, “Noel’s Galliard” by A. Holborne, p. 23

Noel's Galliard
Melody
Moderato
Anthony Holborne (?)
Arr. by Andrew Dabczynski
f
mf
p
cresc.
mf
f
dim.
p
cresc.
f

S. Applebaum - *Beautiful Music for Two String Instruments, Vol II#*, 20 "The Vagabond," by M. Gebaur

20. The Vagabond

Moderately fast-with spirit (Key of C) M. Gebaur

The image shows a musical score for "The Vagabond" by M. Gebaur. It consists of two staves of music in 4/4 time, key of C. The tempo is "Moderately fast-with spirit". The score includes various musical notations such as accents, slurs, and fingering numbers (1, 2, 3, 4). Dynamics include piano (p) and mezzo-forte (mf). There are also circled numbers 5, 9, and 13, likely indicating measure numbers or specific techniques. The word "(Melody)" is written below the first staff in the second system.

Week 29: H.S. Whistler - *Preparing for Kreutzer, Vol. 1*, Excerpt from "Etude in Bb" by Kayser, p. 11

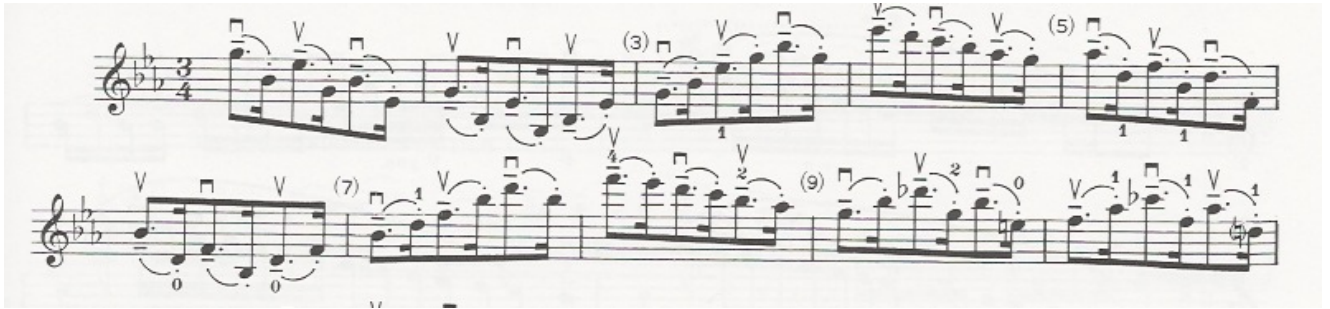
The image shows an excerpt from "Etude in Bb" by Kayser. It consists of two staves of music in 4/4 time, key of Bb. The music features complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and various fingering techniques. There are also circled numbers 5 and 13, likely indicating measure numbers or specific techniques.

H.S. Whistler - *Preparing for Kreutzer, Vol. 1*, Excerpt from "Etude No. 1 in D" by Kayser, p. 20

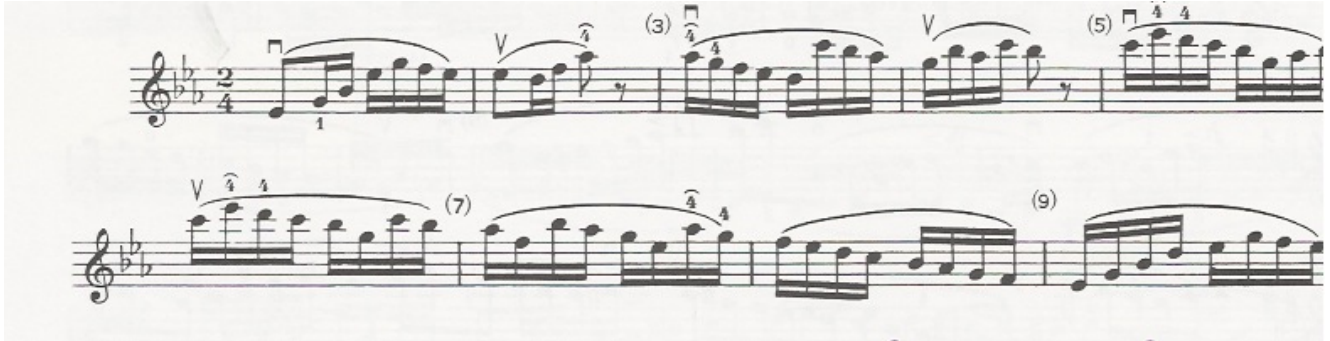
variants.

The image shows an excerpt from "Etude No. 1 in D" by Kayser. It consists of two staves of music in 4/4 time, key of D. The music features complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and various fingering techniques. There are also circled numbers 5, 7, and 13, likely indicating measure numbers or specific techniques.

Week 30: H.S. Whistler - *Preparing for Kreutzer*, Vol. 1, Excerpt from "Etude No. 2 in Eb" by Kayser, p. 29



H.S. Whistler - *Preparing for Kreutzer*, Vol. 1, Excerpt from "Etude No. 1 in Eb" by Spohr, p.28



Weeks 31-36 Exercises

Week 31: S. Applebaum - *Duets for Strings, Vol. 2*, #17 "A Stately Dance" by G. F. Handel

17. A Stately Dance

Allegretto (Key of C) G. F. HANDEL

The score is written for piano and includes a melody. It is in 3/4 time and the key of C major. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto'. The score consists of three systems of music. The first system starts at measure 1 and ends at measure 8, with a circled 5 above measure 5. The second system starts at measure 9 and ends at measure 16, with circled 9 and 13 above measures 9 and 13 respectively. The third system starts at measure 17 and ends at measure 24, with circled 17 and 21 above measures 17 and 21 respectively. The piano part features a steady bass line with various fingering numbers (1-4) and dynamic markings of *f* and *p*. The melody part features a series of eighth notes with dynamic markings of *f* and *p*, and a *cresc.* marking. The score concludes with a first ending (labeled 1) and a second ending (labeled 2). Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4 below notes. Breath marks (V) and repeat signs (//) are present throughout the score. The copyright notice 'E. L. 2018' is located at the bottom left.

(MELODY)

E. L. 2018

Week 32: S. Applebaum - *Duets for Strings*, Vol. 2, #28 "Minuet" by W.A. Mozart

28. Minuet

Allegretto (Key of F) W. A. MOZART

The score is written for piano and violin. The piano part is in the lower register, and the violin part is in the upper register. The key signature is one flat (F major), and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto'. The score is divided into three systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 8, with a circled measure number '5' above the fifth measure. The second system contains measures 9 through 16, with circled measure numbers '9' and '13' above the first and eighth measures respectively. The third system contains measures 17 through 24, with circled measure numbers '17' and '21' above the first and eighth measures respectively. Dynamics include *f* (forte), *p* (piano), and *f* (forte). Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4. The violin part is marked with 'V' and 'MELODY'. The piano part includes fingering numbers and some 'MELODY' markings.

Week 33: C. Selby, S. Rush, and R. Moon - *Habits of a Successful String Musician*, #193 "Chorale #2"

193. Chorale #2

Violin I

The score is for Violin I in 3/4 time. It consists of three staves of music. The first staff starts with a repeat sign and contains measures 1 through 8. The second staff contains measures 9 through 16. The third staff contains measures 17 through 24. The key signature is one flat (F major). The tempo is not explicitly marked but is implied by the title 'Chorale #2'. The score includes fingering numbers (1-4) and dynamic markings (*f* and *p*).

Week 34: D. Smith – *Violin Sight-Reading Book One*, #19, p. 23

Allegro con brio

19 *mf* *mf*

cresc. *mp* *cresc.*

Week 35: C. Selby, S. Rush, and R. Moon - *Habits of a Successful String Musician*, #199
“Chorale #8”

199. Chorale #8

Violin I

11

22

Week 36: S. Applebaum - *Beautiful Music for Two String Instruments, Vol. 2, #39 "A Celebrated Duet"* by I. Pleyel

39. A Celebrated Duet I. Pleyel

Moderately fast-with spirit (Key of G) (5) (9)

ff *(Melody)* *p* *(Melody)* *cresc.* *f* *(Melody)* *p* *(Melody)* *mf* *(Melody)* *ff* *pp* *(Melody)* *cresc.* *f* *pp* *(Melody)* *p* *(Melody)* *cresc.* *f* *ff*

E. J. 1224

Weeks 37-42 Exercises

Week 37: D. Smith – *Violin Sight-Reading Book One*, p. 13, #14



Mazurka

14

mf

cresc.

The image shows a musical score for a Mazurka exercise. It consists of two staves of music in 3/4 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a 3/4 time signature. The music starts with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The second staff continues the melody and includes a *cresc.* marking. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Week 38: D. Kelley – *Music for Four*, Gigue from Suite #3 in D Major, Violin 1, by J.S. Bach

2:15

Gigue

from Suite #3 in D Major

Johann Sebastian Bach

Allegro Vivace

5 *mf* **A** *f*

10

15 *p* **B**

20 *f*

Week 39: D. Smith – *Violin Sight-Reading Book One*, p. 22, #13

Andante

f marcato

cresc.

dim. e poco rall.

13

f marcato

dim. e poco rall.

f

Allepreto grazioso

Week 40: Menuetto and Trio from Quartet No.8, Op. 9, No 2, Violin 1, by F.J. Haydn

10 $\text{♩} = 126$ Menuetto.

p dolce

cresc.

p

cresc.

Trio.

f

p

f

p

f

tr

v

Menuetto D. C.

The image shows a page of musical notation for the first violin part of a string quartet. It is divided into two sections: a Minuet and a Trio. The Minuet section starts at measure 10 and is in 3/4 time with a tempo of 126. It begins with a piano (*p*) and dolce marking. The Trio section starts at measure 14 and is marked *f* (forte). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like *cresc.* (crescendo) and *p* (piano). The piece concludes with a *tr* (trill) and a *v* (vibrato) marking, followed by the instruction *Menuetto D. C.* (Da Capo).

Week 41: E. & K. Sassmannshaus - *Early Start on the Violin*, Vol 4, Excerpt from "Tango" by B. Hummel

Tango ♩ = 112 Bertold Hummel

The score is written for piano and violin. It consists of five systems of music. The first system shows the piano introduction with dynamics *p* and *mf*, and the violin part with *mf* and *espr.* dynamics. The second system continues the piano part with dynamics *f*, *sf*, and *p*, and the violin part with *f* and *sf*. The third system features the piano part with *mf* and *f* dynamics, and the violin part with *f*. The fourth system includes tempo markings *poco rit.* and *a tempo*, with the piano part starting at *p* and the violin part at *mf (espr.)*. The final system shows the piano part with *f*, *p*, and *mf* dynamics, and the violin part with *f* and *p* dynamics. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Week 42: Excerpt from Quartet No. 64, op. 64, no. 4 Adagio cantabile sostenuto, Violin 1, by F.J. Haydn

Musical score for Violin 1, Adagio. Cantabile sostenuto. The score is in 2/4 time. The tempo and mood are indicated as Adagio. Cantabile sostenuto. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score includes dynamic markings such as *dolce* and *sf* (sforzando). Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4. Bowing and breath marks include *v* (vibrato), *tr* (trill), and *A* (accents). The score is divided into two systems, with the second system starting with a double bar line and the marking *II sf*.

Weeks 43-48 Exercises

Week 43: A. Dabczynski, R. Meyer, & B. Phillips- *Sight Read It for Strings*, p. 31, "Bugle-Call Blues," by R. Meyer

Bugle-Call Blues

Richard Meyer (b.1957)

Melody

Swing

f *p* *f* *p*

f

to Coda

f

p *D.S. al Coda*

Coda

p *f* *ff*

Week 44: H.S. Whistler - *Preparing for Kreutzer*, Vol. 1, Excerpt from "Trill Etude in Bb" by Weiss, p. 39

The musical score is written in B-flat major (two flats) and 3/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a trill on G4, followed by a slur over a quarter note G4 and a quarter note F4. The second staff continues with a slur over a quarter note E4 and a quarter note D4, followed by a trill on C4. The third staff features a complex rhythmic pattern with slurs and trills, including a trill on B3. The fourth staff concludes with a trill on A3 and a final note on G3. The score includes various musical notations such as trills (tr), slurs, and fingering numbers (1-4) to guide the performer.

Week 45: S. Applebaum - *Beautiful Music for Two String Instruments*, Vol III, #23
"Meditation" by I. Pleyel

23. Meditation

I. Pleyel

Slowly-with warmth (Key of G)

The score is written for piano and violin in G major, 3/4 time. It consists of six systems of music. The piano part is in the lower register, and the violin part is in the upper register. The score includes various dynamics such as *p*, *mf*, *f*, *p*, and *pp*, as well as performance instructions like *cresc.*, *rit.*, and *a tempo*. Circled numbers (5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25, 29, 33, 37) indicate specific measures. Fingerings and bowings are indicated throughout the score.

5

9

13

17 (Melody)

21 (Melody)

25 (Melody)

29

33 (Melody)

37

p

mf

f

p sweetly

cresc.

rit.

a tempo

pp

Week 46: D. Kelley – *Music for Four*, Excerpt from “Spring-Song” from *Song Without Words*, Op. 62 #6, Violin 1, by F. Mendelssohn

Spring-Song

from *Songs Without Words*, Op. 62 #6

Felix Mendelssohn

Allegretto grazioso
play gently
p (only one grace note need be played)

1
6
12
17
23
28
34

p *mf* *mp* *f* *p* *p dolce*

Week 47: S. Applebaum - *Beautiful Music for Two String Instruments*, Vol IV - First three lines of #10 "Sonatina" by C.P.E. Bach

10. Sonatina

Moderately fast-with spirit (Key of G) C. P. E. Bach

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "10. Sonatina" by C.P.E. Bach. The score is written for two string instruments, likely violin and viola, in the key of G major and 3/8 time. The tempo is marked "Moderately fast-with spirit". The score is divided into three systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and features a triplet of eighth notes. The second system includes a fortissimo (*f*) dynamic and a *spicc.* (spiccato) marking. The third system concludes with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *spicc.* marking. Circled numbers 5, 9, 13, and 16 indicate specific measures throughout the piece. The notation includes various rhythmic values, slurs, and articulation marks.

Week 48: Excerpt from Quartet No 13 op. 77. No. 1- Allegro Moderato, Violin 1, by F. J. Haydn

Quartett N^o 13.

Op.77 N^o1.

♩ = 69
Allegro moderato.

3. *f* *p mezza voce* *f* *p* *mezza*

voce *sf* *p* *sf* *p* *sf* *sf*

f *mezza voce* *f*

mezza voce

cresc.