

Training String Players for Rhythmic Mastery
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Rhythmic Elements in Daily Routine

- With metronome at 40-60, count all subdivisions from 1 – 10 and back, 1 -4 times each.
- Practice scales with various rhythms as in Galamian
- Apply same subdivisions to scales.
- Practice scales with metronome in cross-rhythms (2 against 3; 3 against 2, 3 against 4, etc.)
- Practice rhythmic studies such as those in Carothers.
- Students in pairs play scales with cross rhythm (e.g. 2 against 3, etc.)
- Internalize beat by tapping, marching, dancing, etc.

Strategies for Rhythmic Problem Solving

- Conduct while speaking rhythms; using words (e.g. “opportunity” for quintuplets) imparts natural feel
- Eliminate slurs and ties
- Use one bow per rhythmic unit (depends on context)
- Using metronome, work from smallest common denominator for precision to larger beats for musical continuity.
- With *Dr. Beat* or similar metronome, gradually work toward less frequent beats, e.g. at 60 beats/minute and 4 beats/measure, internal beats turned off, the beats will sound every 4 seconds, permitting check of tempo consistency.
- Practice with metronome click off the beat to develop greater awareness of the interior of the beat
- For gradual tempo change (example from Webern, *Vier Stücke*) record a click track using a rotary dial metronome

- Ensemble problems often solved speaking rhythms together (especially with all conducting)

Unusual rhythmic challenges in repertoire can be used as rhythmic exercises. Some notable examples in violin/chamber music/orchestral repertoire: Copland, Sonata for Violin and Piano; Ives, Piano Trio; Dvorak, Serenade (last movement); Bartok, Duos for 2 Violins, 1st Sonata, Six String Quartets, Concerto for Orchestra; Webern, *Vier Stücke*; Strauss, Sonata for Violin and Piano (before coda of last movement); Sibelius, Violin Concerto (slow movement, 3 against 4 double stops); Haydn Violin Concerti (first movements of both have extensive use of subdivision); Lalo, Symphonie Espagnole (numerous occurrences of 3 against 2); Berio, Violin Duos (especially No. 2).

Martinu Rhythmic Etudes – composed 1932, scored for violin and (one staff) piano. One of two sets of pedagogical works (the other being *Arabesques*) for violinists, the etudes exist also as chamber orchestra work. The seven studies contain myriad rhythmic challenges, especially displaced emphases and cross rhythms. In the absence of a pianist, they can be studied solo and/or with metronome. Essential elements of the piano part are generally playable on a second stringed instrument for instructional purposes.

Resources:

Martinu, Bohuslav. *Rhythmische Etüden für Violine (und Klavier)*. Mainz: Schott (catalogue #VLB0046), 1932 (renewed 1960).

Hall, Anne Carothers. *Studying Rhythm*. 3rd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2005.

Starer, Robert. *Rhythmic Training*. New York, NY: MCA, 1969.

Clark, Frances and Louise Goss. *Keyboard Musician for the Adult Beginner*. Alfred, 1980.

Galmian, Ivan and Frederick Neumann. *Contemporary Violin Technique*. Schirmer.

Wehner, Walter L. *Rhythmic Sightsinging*. Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1979.

Stevenson, John R. and Marjorie Porterfield. *Rhythm and Pitch: An Integrated Approach to Sight Singing*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1986.

Hindemith, Paul. *Elementary Training for Musicians*. 2nd ed., rev. New York, NY: Associated, 1949.

Ghezze, Marta A. *Solfege, Ear Training, Rhythm, Dictation, and Music Theory: A Comprehensive Course*. University, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1980.

DeZeeuw, Anne Marie and Roger E. Foltz. *Sight-singing and Related Skills. Revised*. Manchaca, TX: Sterling Swift, 1975.

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The music of the past fifty years has presented string players with many musical and technical demands not addressed in their training. The task of developing a sound technique – playing in tune with a beautiful sound – often relegates real-world musical considerations to distant second place in the pedagogical agenda. One of the most neglected requisites for successful music-making is rhythmic training to prepare the student for the myriad difficulties found in the modern repertoire, including frequent meter and tempo changes, polyrhythmic ensemble writing, unfamiliar subdivisions of the beat and rhythms borrowed from other styles (jazz, folk-tradition, etc.).

A staple in many studios is the application of a variety of rhythms to the scale or to a rhythmically homogeneous etude, an important and effective tactic for the development of mental facility and dexterity. This system has the strength and the shortcoming of predictability, whereas, in a complex work, a chief challenge rests in the need for abrupt conceptual changes.

This session will present suggestions for other approaches to the goal of providing a student with a secure rhythmic foundation for career-long confidence in facing challenging new works and using rhythmic flexibility to greater expressive effect in all repertoire. One of the resources presented for violinists will be the Bohuslav Martinu *Rhythmic Studies* (Edition Schott), which the presenter first encountered as a member of the Jascha Heifetz Master Class. Though scored for violin and piano, other string players will also find it of use. Selected etudes will be demonstrated, with pianist Mami Hayashida. Sub-division exercises, both with and without the instrument, will also be discussed, as will the use of some excerpts from chamber music, orchestral and solo repertoire as exercises.

Pedagogical works focusing on rhythm abound for wind players and percussionists. This session will seek to bring string players greater awareness of this important facet of musicianship.

1) Clark

Handwritten musical exercises for "Clark". The exercises are organized into four groups, each with four numbered staves. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth, sixteenth, and thirty-second notes, as well as rests and dynamic markings like *p* (piano) and *f* (forte). Some staves include repeat signs and first/second endings.

2)

Storer

The following eight exercises should not be begun without a glance at the smallest rhythmic values. In all music of this kind the maximum speed with which the smallest values can be performed determines the tempo for the entire piece.

Handwritten musical exercises for "Storer". The exercises are organized into two groups, each with four numbered staves. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth, sixteenth, and thirty-second notes, as well as rests and dynamic markings like *p* (piano) and *f* (forte). Some staves include repeat signs and first/second endings. The exercises are labeled with the number of measures: 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

3) Ann Carothers Hall - Studying Rhythm

won. 1 beat and pound for the dead. 1 blow through my em-bou-chures my
 loud-est and gay-est for them.

24. FOUR AGAINST THREE

As twelve is the common denominator of four and three, the rhythm of four sixteenth-notes against triplet eighths is measured in twelfths of a beat. The sixteenths are attacked on the first, fourth, seventh, and tenth parts of the beat, and the triplets are attacked on the first, fifth, and ninth parts of the beat. As with the performance of two against three, we may be aided by verbal phrases that we speak naturally in these rhythms:

Four against three:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

 When will he come a-gain?

To make a cross-rhythm of the four verbal accents sounding against three metrical accents, we write this as

When will he come a-gain? or one two-oo three uh-four
 When will he come a-gain? or one two-oo three uh-four

Similarly, three against four may be heard as

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

 Wash the car and wax it!

As a cross-rhythm of three accented syllables against four metrical accents, this is written

Wash the car and wax it! or one two ta three ta
 Wash the car and wax it! or one two ta three ta

The above patterns appear in Chapter 25 as a way of thinking four notes against three beats and vice versa, but practicing them quickly may help us learn to put four notes against three in a single beat.

It is important to practice the cross-rhythms slowly so as to ensure accuracy and quickly so as to arrive at the point where we hear not just the composite rhythm but each part independently. Finally, we should feel that we are performing two conflicting patterns at the same time and that, although they fit together correctly, neither one is based on the other. We don't think sixteenths and fit a triplet against them, or vice versa, we simply sing four sixteenths and clap three eighths, or sing a triplet and clap sixteenth notes, at the same time. We think two different thoughts simultaneously.

24. 1) ♩ = 40-72

SHLOMIT

Berio

Berio

2.

♩ = 84

5

8

poco vibr., alla punta

p

V

8

5

V

8

6

8

V

mf

(Siciliana) V

mf

mf

[45"]

