String Tech Tips – Daily Ten-Minute Warm-ups

Crazy Fox’s “Three T’s to Build Technique, Key Literacy, and Endurance”

1. Tuning
2. Three Scales a Day (two Major and one minor)
3. Technical Etude or Study

What is needed?
- SmartMusic, eTuner, or other standalone digital tuner
- Practice Guides or Contest Scales distributed in class or on Mr. Fox’s HS Teacher Pages
- Essentials for Strings (Grades 6-12) or Essential Elements 2000 for Strings Book 2 p. 44-45
- Violin or Viola Etudes: VIOLIN/Viola: Wohlfahrt Foundation Studies Book 1 or Wohlfahrt Foundation Studies Book 2
- Cello Etudes: Sebastian Lee or Alwin Schroeder
- String Bass Etudes: Simandl

Recommendations

1. Per daily warm-up, perform two Major scales and one minor scale.
2. Play one scale slow with focus on tone production, vibrato, and intonation.
3. Play one scale fast with emphasis on articulation or bowing style.
4. Play one scale using unique rhythmic, slurring, melodic patterns, shifting or in positions.
5. Play at least one of the above scales in a flat key (Major or minor).
6. Depending on level of achievement, two octaves is the norm; one octave for novices or playing new keys starting on D (violin), G (viola/cello) or A (bass) strings; three octaves for advanced students.
7. Check off the different keys you play on the Circle of Fifths. (The goal is that all string musicians should be able to play scales in keys of 1-5 sharps and 1 to 4 flats.)
8. Vary your workout to include a range of expressive elements including articulations (staccato, marcato, legato, spiccato, hooked bows, pizzicato) and dynamics (forte to piano).

Definitions

- Major Scale: Do-1 Re-2 Mi-3 Fa-4 Sol-5 La-6 Ti-7 Do-8 half steps between 3-4 and 7-8
- Natural Minor: Do-1 Re-2 Me-3 Fa-4 Sol-5 Le-6 Te-7 Do-8 half steps 2-3 and 5-6
- Harmonic Minor: Do-1 Re-2 Me-3 Fa-4 Sol-5 Le-6 Ti-7 Do-8 half steps 2-3, 5-6, and 7-8
- Melodic Minor UP: Do-1 Re-2 Me-3 Fa-4 Sol-5 La-6 Ti-7 Do-8 half steps 2-3 and 7-8
- Melodic Minor DOWN (same as Natural Minor)
- Speedy Rhythm Drill (looks like an upside-down pyramid): four sixteenth notes per scale note (up and down), three sixteenths, two sixteenths, and one sixteenth
- Speedy Slur Drill (looks like a normal pyramid): one quarter note (once up and down), two eighth notes slurred played twice, three notes (triplet) slurred played three times, and four sixteenth notes slurred played four times.
- Slow-Fast drills: four eighth notes followed by four sixteenths (or vice versa)
- The 2 + 1 Pattern (or 1 + 2): Triplets Do-Do-Re (or Do-Re-Re), Re-Re-Mi, Mi-Mi-Fa, etc. playing the entire scale using a steady beat in a moderate to fast tempo.
- The 3 + 1 Pattern (or 1 + 3): Sixteenths Do-Do-Do-Re, Re-Re-Re-Mi, Mi-Mi-Mi-Fa, etc. playing the entire scale using a steady beat in a moderate to fast tempo.

For more information, visit Mr. Fox’s High School Teacher Pages on www.uscsd.k12.pa.us
String Conditioning:  
Ten Minutes of Exercises  
2011-2013  
Daily Practice on the Violin, Viola, Cello or Bass to Build Technique, Key Literacy, and Reading

Building Technique & Endurance

- Repetitive drill (this means many revolutions/repeats)
- Consistent drill (this means every day for ten minutes)
- Creative drill (this means use variety and invention)
- Focused drill (this means no distractions or interruptions)
The Three T’s Basic Workout

- Tuning (SmartMusic, eTuner, or standalone digital tuner
  - Match the “A”
  - Open String Warm-up
  - Double Stops Warm-up
  - Harmonics Warm-up

- Three scales
  - At least two different Majors and one minor
  - Three different rhythms
  - Slurs from two to thirty notes (Are you kidding?)
  - Slow-Fast or Fast-Slow patterns, Speedy Rhythm or Slur Drill, etc.

- Technical Etude or Study

Millions of Scales to Try…

Resources for Written Scales

- Practice Guides (Mr. Fox’s HS Teacher Pages on the school web site)
- Contest Scales (distributed during PLAY BALL spring 2012 class lessons/extra copies back of classroom)
- Pages 44-45 in Essential Elements Book 2 (purple book – grade 5)
- Essentials for Strings by Anderson (brown book – grades 6-8)
Scale Variations

Your imagination should not be wasted!

- Word rhythms
  - Noodles
  - Strawberries
  - Watermelon (or Peanut Butter)
  - Hippopotamus
  - Pizza toppings
  - Ice cream flavors
  - Names, vacation spots, etc.

- Repeated notes (2 to 30 bows per note)

- Speedy Rhythm Drill

- Slurs (2 to 30 notes per bow)

- Speedy Slur Drill

- Slow-Fast patterns

- 2 + 1 and 1 + 2 (triplets)

- 3 + 1 and 1 + 3 (sixteenths)

- Hooked bowings (Wicked)

- Intervals
  - Scales in Thirds
  - Do-Re-Mi pattern
  - Do-Mi-Sol pattern
  - Do-Re Do-Mi Do-Sol, etc.

Circle of Fifths

How many of these can you play?
Technical Etudes

- VIOLIN/VIOLA: Wohlfahrt Foundation Studies Book 1 or
- VIOLIN/VIOLA: Wohlfahrt Foundation Studies Book 2
- CELLO: Sebastian Lee or Alwin Schroeder
- STRING BASS Simandl (string bass)

Be sure to vary the bowings
(slur-separate note combinations)