

Beginning CAP Monthly Outline:

Month 1: August-September

- Parts of the instrument, care of string instruments, achieving a balanced instrumentation for class, correct posture for playing, sight singing, correct cello/bass position, correct guitar/shoulder position, open string study with correct pizzicato application, counting in 4/4 time, group pulse.

Month 2: October

- Proper left hand position while developing skills in D Major, note reading basic exercises and tunes, violin/viola shoulder position, beginning bow hand.

Month 3: November

- Variable bow speeds, thumb to point bow strokes, D Major scale/method book study, lift bows, use of tonic pitch.

Month 4: December

- G string study, G Major scale.

Month 5: January (after holiday break)

- Slurs and ties, low 2 study, 3/4 time signature.

Month 6: February

- Three-note slurs, eighth notes.

Month 7: March

- Viola/cello-C string, violin/bass E string, eighth note scale/method book study, performance etiquette festival expectations.

Month 8: April

- Vln/vla fourth finger study, double stops, unblocked fingerings, crisscross fingerings, violin upper octave G Major scale, prepare for Spring Concert.

Month 9: May

- Five basic dynamics unit, prepare for Spring Concert.

Example key for this document:

1ta 2ta 3ta 4ta=a measure of eighth notes

"March Heroic" by E. Del Borgo

DDDD=four quarter notes

D2D4=two half notes

D234= one whole note

D23=dotted half note

RRRR=four quarter rest

Pieces referred to in this document:

"Cinnamon" from the book "Stringing Along by Stoutamire/Henderson

Concepts taught this month:

Parts of the instrument, care of string instruments, achieving a balanced instrumentation for class, correct posture for playing, sight singing, correct cello/bass position, correct guitar/ shoulder position, open string study with correct pizzicato application (ADG only), counting in 4/4 time using whole note, whole rest, half note, half rest, quarter note, quarter rest. The beginnings of group pulse.

Week 1: *The student will...*

- Identify the parts of the instrument
- How to care for string instruments.
- Choose an instrument for study according to preference, hand and body size, and balanced instrumentation guided by the instructor.

Procedures:

When students come to you, many of them have not chosen a particular instrument yet. It is our job to "guide" them to make an intelligent choice. Please consider hand size, body size, personality, grades (simply ask them what type of grades they made in Elementary school. This is important when choosing Basses! Always try to put your brightest students on the bass....) If at all possible, try to let the students have their first choice, some have their "heart set" on a particular instrument. Some students will be very flexible during discussions. After talking about all four instruments and demonstrating them, try to follow this example of a good balance for a class of approximately 30. (Example: 16 violins, 6 violas, 5 cellos and 3-4 bases)

Week 2: *The student will...*

- Sit with good posture on the edge of the seat with a straight back and flat feet. (Have the chairs in rows of 4-5 with no music stands.)
- Learn the open strings (emphasis on A, D, and G only, teach them the C and E string, but no initial concepts will be taught using these strings.)
- Sing basic rhythms in 4/4 as well as pizzicato them on the instrument.

Procedures:

Begin the Lesson with sight singing. (Example 1: Teacher sings D2D4 AAAA students echo these two bar patterns with their voices. Example 2: D234 ADD4 students echo singing. Continue this with other simple patterns singing A, D and G.) Identify the six note and rest values.

Have these rhythms written on the board, and explain the counting. Pizzicato demonstrate a whole note open D on your instrument with correct pizzicato position while singing D234.

Students will join you in singing and plucking the open D string. Do repetitions. Repeat this using half notes and quarter notes. No combinations, please. The next step would be to mix the six previously taught note / rest values using two bar patterns (keep very simple!) teaching by rote (before they read anything on the board...) (Example 1: Play DDDD A2A4) kids will echo, have students count FOUR RESTS OUT LOUD between repetitions. This helps with teaching group pulse (very important!!!) (Example 2: ARDR ADGG RRRR.) (You can now incorporate rests in the patterns. Use any pattern you like as long as it is kept simple.)

The next step is to write measures on the board. (Four lines, four bars each?) Students need to sight sing each line before pizzicato on instruments. Do repetition!

Week 3: *The student will...*

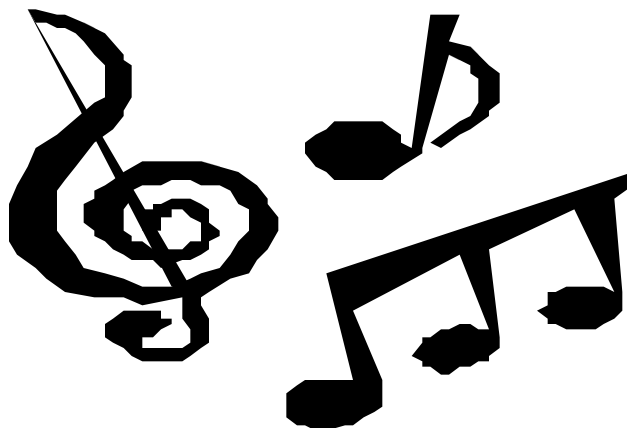
- Sight sing the six note and rest values in various combinations while performing pizzicato on their instruments as written on the board using A D and G.
- Begin method book study (first open string lesson.)

Procedures:

Each day continue the two bar rote patterns at the beginning of the period. Students will sing while playing!!! Each day, have three or four lines of open string rhythms on the board for the students to sight sing then play. Once this is mastered, it's time for the method book. (Please note: Have students sight sing each line in the method book before performing it on the instrument.)

Week 4: *The student will...*

- Be able to perform an entire lesson of open strings out of the method book with correct posture, position (pizzicato) while sight-singing.
- Continue rote, board work and one line at a time from Method Book. Consider a performance test on Friday out of the book for evaluation purposes. Include posture and position in your criteria when evaluating the students each week.



General Suggestions for this month:

Try to have the chairs in rows that are spread out with aisle ways for you to walk freely to the back of the room. Have students put their cases/ cellos / basses on the left side of the chair. Chairs should be set up in advance by the teacher. While kids are capable of setting chairs in rows, this will create an atmosphere of wandering throughout the room. Young students need a structured environment, heading directly to their chair. When starting method book work, students should not share a music stand. This will jeopardize the violin / viola position and angles. Constantly remind kids of posture and encourage kids to SING WHILE PLAYING for ear-training purposes.

Counting rests out loud is also extremely beneficial for group pulse and should be done on a daily basis. A strong rhythmic approach must be taken at these early stages. THE MAIN EMPHASIS THIS MONTH IS TO ESTABLISH A SOLID RHYTHMIC AND PULSE FOUNDATION WITH YOUR STUDENTS. Something else to consider: At this stage, students learn effectively by rote, followed by visual learning. Consider a routine of teaching 4 days with a performance test on Friday.

(Please note: Some teachers will have put the violin / viola on the shoulder weeks ago, and this is fine. Others will stay in guitar style until D major is mastered. Please insist on shoulder pads / rests / sponges)!!



Concepts taught this month: Proper left hand while developing skills in D Major, note reading basic exercises and short tunes in D Major, violin / viola shoulder position, beginning bow hand.

Week 5: *The student will...*

- Perform simple two bar rote patterns using E, F# and G pizzicato.

Procedures:

Begin with one note at a time, performing simple patterns for students to echo. (Don't forget to have students sing out loud as well as count 4 rests in between patterns) (Example 1: DDDD EEEE RRRR.) Do as many repetitions as you feel necessary, until their first finger is placed carefully and correctly on the string. Be careful and avoid a flat finger at all costs! (Example 2: DDEE DDEE RRRR.) Notice how simple these patterns are!

(Please note: Follow these examples for adding F# and G. (Example 3: DDEE F#F#F#F# RRRR.)

The next step would be to have some patterns on the board with basic rhythms using DEF# and G. Continue to have the students sing the written line from the board, then proceed with pizzicato. ALL OF THIS IS PREPARATION FOR THE METHOD BOOK!!! The following step would be to tie this in with a line or two from the method book toward the end of each period.

Week 6: *The student will...*

- Perform all of the notes in D Major, pizzicato with the correct left hand position.

Procedures:

Continue two bar rote patterns in a "drill style" having students count four rests in between repetitions. (Start simple, increasing difficulty as students become proficient.) (Example 1: DD F#F# AA F#F# RRRR.) Then proceed to varied rhythms on the board, and lesson in the method book in D Major. Left hand skills should be developing nicely if you are taking your time and doing lots of repetitions. Please emphasize and re-emphasize the proper left hand position many times throughout the class period. Once is not enough! Move up and down the rows, fixing fingers, elbows, wrists, etc. Manual assistance is a must during this time.

Curriculum Performance Objectives: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6
State Standards: 1, 2, 5, 6

Week 7: *The student will...*

- Be able to hold the bow correctly at the balance point.
- Learn variable bow speeds on a cake of rosin.

Procedures:

Have the students hold out the first finger of their left hand. Demonstrate how to find the balance point of the bow on that finger. Have them memorize the spot, this is where they will "form" the bow hand one finger at a time.

Now have the students find the balance point of the bow with their middle finger "scooped underneath" and the arm dropped and relaxed by their side. Make sure they have the horse hair parallel to the wood of the bow, not facing the ground. Time to add the thumb (always tricky.) Thumb must be bent and on it's side. Work carefully on this, and take your time. Students will then add third finger, first finger and pinky. (Remember, all of this is done with the bow by their side.) Have the students "watch" their own hand as they add fingers. It's time to show the hand to you, (have them stick their arm straight out in front of them with a flat wrist) as you walk up and down the rows fixing things. Repeat this exercise several times, pointing out the students whose bow hands look great. (Positive reinforcement goes along way.)

Follow up: Teacher directed finger exercises on the bow each day, lifting up each finger (except for the ring finger) 5 or so times while the kids count. Tell the students to pick up the finger (curved) and lift it up toward the ceiling.

The next step (after bow hands have been established) would be to bow on a cake of rosin for 10 or 15 minutes each day, before putting the bow on the string. Many, many skills can be taught on the rosin!

First reminder: When students hold the rosin with their left hand, make sure that they hold it stationary. It should not move one bit. The tendency is to move the rosin, and not the bow arm! (I'm sure you have seen this happen.) Violin / viola can hold the rosin at "nose level" with cello / bass lower at "belly-button" level.

When learning on the rosin, variable bow speeds are the focus. MOST IMPORTANTLY, IS THE EMPHASIS ON THUMB TO POINT BOW STROKES!! Students will use the entire bow (thumb-point when the bow hand is on the balance point) when teaching half notes, whole notes, and quarter notes. The pattern below work beautifully if taught in this order: (start with one measure patterns, then you can move to two measures)

Curriculum Performance Objectives: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6
State Standards: 1, 2, 5, 6

(Please note: Students may sing these patterns while bowing, this way ear-training can continue while teaching bow speed! Do these patterns in a "drill" style, while walking around the room. Students should function as their own metronomes at this point, counting and singing together)!

(Example 1: Patterns for Rosin work)

1. D2D4 RRRR (repeat as many times as necessary)
2. D234 D234 RRRR
3. DDDD RRRR (stress the fast bow speed)
4. D2DD D2DD RRRR
5. DDDD D2D4
6. D2 lift-rest D2 lift-rest

You could give a rosin test on Friday, with these criteria: Posture, bow hands correct, bow speeds appropriate, rosin perfectly still, sight singing the patterns.

Week 8: *The student will...*

- Perform with the bow on the string using open strings. (ADG only)

Procedures:

On the rosin, once students have a "feel" for the variable bow speeds, are bowing from thumb to point, and their bow hands are loose and graceful, they are ready to put the bow on the string.

Please teach them a half note first. They can control the bow and work toward straightening it when using a slower bow speed. If you start with a quarter note, many times students pull the bow fast, don't use enough of it, and it is somewhat crooked. Also their bow arm will look relatively stiff.

Once they get the "feel" of the half note speed, you can proceed to other note values. Here is a progression of drill patterns that you can use to develop bowing skills. Do lots and lots of repetitions for each pattern! Feel free to write these on the board.

(Please note: Students should continue to sing and count out loud, performing as their own metronomes.)

Example 1:

1. D2D4 RRRR
2. D2D4 D2D4 RRRR
3. A2A4 RRRR
4. A2A4 A2A4 RRRR
5. D2D4 A2A4 RRRR
6. D2A4 D2A4 RRRR
7. AAAA RRRR (discuss thumb to point and faster bow speed! Very important!!)
8. DDDD RRRR
9. DDAA RRRR
10. DDDD AAAA RRRR
11. D2DD D2DD RRRR (this is the “graduation pattern. Once the students are varying the bow speeds within a measure, they are ready to add their left hands!)

***While students play the above patterns, you must “guide” their bows in a straight direction, running from student to student!! (grab the frog with your right hand...) The next step would be to open the method book toward the last part of the period, and have the students read a line or two of an open string exercise. Remember, teach away from the printed page when introducing something new.

General Suggestions for this month:

When developing left hand skills, it is crucial to be extremely picky with your students and demand that the left hand position is correct. Continually move around the room fixing left hands. Verbal reminders over and over are also necessary. For violin/viola, elbows must be underneath the instrument, wrists straight and fingers “squared off” on their fingertips. Cello / bass, thumb under middle finger, fingers curved, never collapsed, elbows out slightly. When starting the bow work, teach a lesson, and re-teach the lesson the next day as if it has never been taught before. Don’t rush bowing skill development.

Please note: Violin/viola bows need to be tilted slightly away from the face, this brings up the wrist and helps keep the bow straight! Try to make lessons interesting / creative, by having different kids perform certain lines. (Example: boys / girls, by row, by instrument, by birthday months, etc.) For a large part of the class, you will be teaching without a book. This gives the students an opportunity to master some skills without the burden of reading notes.

(Please note: Demonstrate often on your instrument, students need to hear and watch the smooth, connected bow strokes!

Month 3: November Curriculum Performance Objectives: 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.9, 3.1, 3.3 State Standards: 1, 2, 5, 6

Concepts taught this month: Variable bow speeds, thumb to point bow strokes, studying D major scale with the bow using half notes, whole notes and quarter notes. Method book study in D major. Lift bows, and use of the tonic pitch.

Week 9: *The student will...*

- Perform patterns and exercises with the bow using D E F# G only.
- Perform out of the method book, using D E F# G.

Procedures:

Continue to warm your students up each day with simple open string patterns, (before left hand) you can expand to three or four measures, if needed, to keep interesting. This should take 6 to 8 minutes a day. (Example 1: D234 D234 D2D4 GGGG RRRR) This drill routine allows you to be “free” to move quickly around the room, pulling their bows in a straight direction. You have time to reach individual students and give manual assistance. (Please note: At this time, you may demonstrate and have the students perform some lift bows on open D)

Demonstrate for the class a D Major tetrachord using two half notes per pitch. Emphasize the smooth, connected bow stroke, and once again thumb to point bow strokes are essential. (Have one cellist bow half note open D tonic (while you play the tetrachord again.) We are beginning what is called tonic ear-training. Have all of the violins / violas play the tetrachord (D2D4 E2E4 F#2F#4G2G4) while the cello / bass play the tonic half notes. Switch parts as needed. If you would like to vary this a bit, you can have the tonic pitch played with pizzicato “pulse” open D quarter notes. Vary the rhythm of the tetrachord to keep interesting: four quarters or a half note and two quarters, etc. Continue these drills for 10-15 minutes, until you see and hear improvement.

The next step is to open the method book, choose a playable exercise or two using only DEF#G. (Example: At Pierrot’s Door.)

(Please note: Continue ear-training by singing the exercise before playing the exercise.)

Month 3: November

Curriculum Performance Objectives: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6
State Standards: 1, 2, 5, 6

Week 10: *The student will...*

- Perform the entire D major scale several different ways.
- Read and perform out of the method book using all of the notes in D Major.

Procedures:

Continue warming the students up with 8 – 10 minutes of open string work. This should be routine for them at the beginning of class. By this time, the students should be proficient using the slow bow whole note, half note and faster quarter note variable bow speeds.

The next step is the entire D Major scale using whole, half and quarter notes in combinations. Using tonic pitch as pizzicato quarter notes, or bowed half notes should still be part of the routine. You will start to see individuals adjust their little fingers to make the F# sound better! It truly works like magic. Spend the last half of the period in the method book, choose the lines / tunes that work well and are playable. Teach for 4 days, then a possible test on Friday using D Major scale, and a piece from the book.

Week 11: *The student will...*

- Become proficient in D Major (with the bow) using two bar patterns, scales, and continuation of method book study.

Procedures:

- Divide the class period into three parts:
 1. Open string warm-ups / two bar simple drill patterns.
 2. D Major scales using the tonic pitch. (Three different scales on the board each day?)
 3. Method Book study in D Major.

Week 12: *The student will...*

- Progress to memorization and learn additional repertoire from the method book.
- Add harmony parts to tunes in the method book.

Procedures:

At this time, your students should be performing their D Major scale with bowing skills that include: Thumb to point bow strokes, perfectly straight bow – parallel with the bridge, and three variable bow speeds (whole note speed, half note speed and quarter note speed.) For enrichment purposes, have students memorize a tune (Example: March Onward from Mueller Rush, or Lightly Row) that moves in step wise motion and includes all notes in D Major.

The next step is to apply a simple open string harmony part to make the piece more interesting! WE WANT THE STUDENTS TO FALL IN LOVE WITH THEIR SOUND!!! Harmony parts are very motivational and can make a very young orchestra sound great!! Feel free to write simple harmony parts for many of the tunes in the book. You can utilize harmony parts in several different ways. Example 1: Violin / viola play melody, cello / bass play harmony. Switch. Example 2: Entire class pizzicato the harmony, with a “soloist” playing the melody arco. Some teachers have chosen to “test” their students this way, which is a non-threatening way for a student to get evaluated for a grade.

General Suggestions for this month:

Your students will now be performing as a group with a continuous group pulse, they are their own metronomes. This strong rhythmic approach will be achieved if the students are vocalizing and counting out loud on a daily basis. Variable bow speeds are established, and bow strokes are smooth and connected. The students are proficient at reading the notes in D Major, and feel very comfortable playing in that key. (Please note: Continue to move about the room fixing hand positions! Never give up! The students need to “check” themselves MANY times during a class as part of their routine.) Around this time, start preparing for a December Demonstration / Holiday Concert!!

Concepts to be taught this month: G string study, G Major Scale

Week 13: *The student will...*

- Perform on the G string
- Perform the G major scale, one octave
- Play exercises out of the method book in G Major

Procedures:

Split the group in half with violin / viola sections playing a G major tetrachord, and Cello / Bass playing the open G. The students should start with two half notes per pitch, nice and slow.

(Please note: Violinists must concentrate on the right wrist on the G string level of the instrument. Often the wrist is down, which happens naturally. In reality the wrist should be slightly higher than the elbow. Please point this out, and demonstrate for the kids.)

Switch parts and have the cello / bass play the tetrachord with nice smooth half notes. Do this tetrachord a second way, with four smooth quarter notes (GGGG AAAA BBBB CCCC) on the violin and viola, with the cello/ bass pizzicato the open G string tonic "pulse". Switch. This will add variety to the lesson. Next, demonstrate the entire G scale, one octave, slowly and carefully with a tonic pitch going in the room. Proceed to teach the entire scale using 2 or 3 basic rhythms. Feel free to use a creative approach to the application of the scale. (Example: Row 1 plays the scale, the rest of the rows could pizzicato open G pulse.) Begin an exercise from the Method book, sight singing the line before playing the line.

Week 14: *The student will...*

- Learn additional repertoire from the method book in G Major

Procedures:

Divide the class period into two parts.

- A. G Major tetrachord / scales (do many repetitions and continue the tonic ear training!)
- B. Method book study, finish the G Major lesson. Students will now be comfortable reading G string notes, and performing on the G string.

Follow-up: "March of the Metronome," and "Two by Two", both by Fred Hubbel, are excellent beginning pieces that primarily use the G string.

Week 15: *The student will...*

- Prepare for the Holiday demonstration concert.
- Review all concepts taught in previous weeks.

Procedures:

Continue work in D Major and G Major at the beginning of the class period.

Suggestions for a Beginning Orchestra Demonstration Concert for parents.

1. Students demonstrate pizzicato with the conductor (students follow the baton)
2. Students demonstrate bow hold and bowing exercises.
3. Students demonstrate for parents how they keep pulse and count out loud.
4. Students play scales in rounds or with tonic pitch.
5. Students perform a tune out of the book with a simple harmony part written in (memorized?)
6. Students perform a holiday selection or two.

Concepts taught this month: Slurs and ties, low 2 study, 3/4 time signature

Week 16: *The student will... (after the Holiday break)*

- Perform two notes slurs on the instrument
- Learn a slurred tune by rote
- Count and play ties
- Perform slurs and ties from the method book
- Execute second finger exercises (in preparation of next week!)

Procedures:

A teacher demonstration of slurs is the first step to applying the concept. Play the following example and ask the students to identify what you played.

(Example 1: D E D E D2D4 slur the DE, DE together!) This simple pattern works very well when introducing slurs for the first time. The bow speed remains constant which creates a smooth connected sound. Have the students execute this pattern at least 5 times in a row. Repetitions!!

Teach the following slurred tune by rote (two measures at a time with rests in between.)

D E D E D2D4

E F# E F# E2E4

F# G F# G F#2F#4

E F# E F# D2D4

Have the students memorize this tune and perform it with big, beautiful, smooth bow strokes!! Please demonstrate frequently on your instrument throughout this lesson. Give students a verbal explanation of ties and have several examples of ties on the board for them. Have the students "search" throughout their method books for slurs and ties. Begin studying a line or two out of the method book. Please make sure that the exercise is basic and playable with no "curve balls" thrown in! Consider a playing test on Friday with various criteria involving bow direction and smooth bow stroke application. Test them on the rote tune above, and a line or two out of the method book.

(*Please note:* Students will learn slurs easily and effectively if taught by rote, followed by visual learning out of the method book.)

Follow-up lesson: Teach the students 2-note slurs on string crossings next. This can easily be taught by writing 3-5 two bar patterns on the board. Do lots of repetitions. (*Please note:* demonstrate on your instrument first before the students attempt a new pattern or concept.)

Curriculum Performance Objectives: 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.9, 2.1, 2.2,
2.4, State Standards: 1, 2, 5

Low 2 finger preparations: One week before you begin low two study, have the students begin some simple finger exercises. Violins / violas: second finger slides (silently.) The students will put all three of their fingers on the fingerboard. Instruct the kids to lift their middle finger up. Then put it down next to first finger. They must then slide the second finger up to touch three. Have them slide back and forth slowly and carefully. They MUST touch either first finger or third finger every time. Third finger must not move or collapse! Ten to twenty repetitions is recommended. This will "free" up the middle finger, which up until now has been stuck next to third finger! Cello / Bass: Finger hammers. Silently have the kids press down fingers in this order 0124 0124. Do several repetitions. It is tricky at first for the young cellos to skip their third finger. Check to make sure that thumb is underneath second finger.

Week 17: *The student will...*

- Continue to execute finger exercises
- Learn the "sad scale"
- Understand naturals
- Apply finger patterns

Procedures:

Start the class period this week with the finger slides/exercises from last week. Then have all students show you the low two. Walk quickly through the room, checking. (This is a silent exercise, no need to play the pitch at this time.)

Explain that it touches for violins and violas, and it is "skinny" space for cello and bass. (Please note: There is a tendency for cello / bass students to put the second finger too far apart from the first. Demonstrate on a cello and physically move each cello / bass's second finger closer together. The next step would be rote patterns using three notes only - DEF. Here is an example of a pattern progression that can be put on the board. Half notes first! Many repetitions, give manual assistance to kids who need their finger shoved back!

Example 1: D2D4 E2E4 F2F4 RRRR
D2D4 E2E4 F2F4 E2E4 RRRR
DDEE FFGG GGFF EEDD RRRR
DEFG DEFG RRRR careful!!

Add patterns as you see fit.

The next step would be to add the "Sad Scale" DEFGABCD. This "scale" is much easier, more playable scale to teach at this stage than the C Major scale. It starts on old familiar D. The sad scale reinforces the finger pattern close-wide very clearly and effectively for the students. It can be played many different ways with the tonic pitch, or in rounds. If you use the tonic, the F-naturals will be nicely in tune!!! So will the G's!!! Proceed to teach C Major scale after the low 2's are in place.

Curriculum Performance Objectives: 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.9, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4

State Standards: 1, 2, 5

Pull out the method book at this point, choose a line or two that coincides with the patterns, and with the "sad scale". Feel free to have a section play the tonic pitch when working out of the book. Plan on a performance test on Friday using strict criteria that was taught this week. (Please note: Set a very high expectation with the students, insisting on EXACT finger placement, nice high 3's for the violin / viola, nice low 2's for the cello / bass. Elbows underneath for violin / viola, and everyone has beautifully curved fingers.)

Week 18: *The student will...*

- Continue performing the low 2 finger patterns
- Become more proficient in C Major in the method book.

Procedures:

Re-teach, review last week's concepts as if you are teaching them for the first time!!! Divide the class period into three parts.

1. Warm up patterns on the board
2. Sad scales / C Major Scales
3. Add more lines to the method book study.

Feel free to use a creative approach to make scales and exercise more interesting. (Example: Have students perform one row at a time, by instrument, boy / girl, or even individually.) Test again on Friday on scales / method book exercises.

Follow-up: Integrate the F# and C# in the patterns now!

Example 1: DD EE FF F#F# GG, play, then reverse. Find an exercise from the book that enforces this. Many repetitions.

Week 19: *The student will...*

- Perform on their instrument in 3/4 time.

Procedures:

The first step is a very simple one. Have the students count out loud 1-2-3 several times, putting stress on the first beat. Establish a group pulse in the room! Explain / discuss three beats per measure. Have cello / bass sections pizzicato a quarter note pulse WHILE COUNTING TO THREE OUT LOUD. Demonstrate an open D dotted half note while cello / bass are keeping the pulse. Have violin / violas join you on the open D. Ask them to "choose" the correct bow speed for a dotted half note.

(Please note: You may want to do these initial 3/4 scales in good old familiar D Major, however, students need to be able to switch back and forth between the two keys successfully.)

The following scale sequence works very nicely:

Example 1:

1. Dotted half note
2. Three quarter notes
3. Alternate the two scales - D-2-3 EEEE, F#-2-3 GGGG, etc.
4. Half note followed by a quarter note (by far the most difficult...make sure to demonstrate!)

You can also use G Major, to keep this key on the surface.

The next step would be to integrate a few lines from the method book in three-four time. French Folk Song is present in almost every beginning method book. This piece is excellent! Make a rule when studying this piece: Students MUST count out loud 1-2-3 while playing the dotted half notes. For enrichment purposes, have the kids memorize this piece. They will love it! You could also write a simple harmony part in their method books or even ask the students to write one!!

General Suggestions for this month:

During slur study, do a great deal of demonstrating on your instrument. Emphasize and use words like "smooth" and "connected" and "full bow". The slur rote tune (from Week 16) can be used daily for several weeks. Try changing the tune incorporating F-naturals in place of F#'s. This will challenge your students.

Low 2 study should not be rushed. This concept should be taught carefully and correctly. This is so crucial, and will affect student's intonation and the entire orchestra's intonation for years to come. In general, don't forget to re-teach lessons, and to "spoon-feed" the students, setting them up for success at all times. Continued reinforcement of counting rests for group pulse, using big tone production, posture, and position should occur throughout your daily lessons.

Concepts taught this month: Three note slurs, eighth notes (in preparation for All-City Festival.)

Week 20: The student will...

- Perform three-note slurs on their instrument
- Vary bowings from standard exercises in the method book

Procedures:

Demonstrate a three-note slur on your instrument. Use a simple four-bar pattern in three-four time. An appropriate pattern to begin would be as follows: (Example 1: DEF# DEF#, D-2-3 D-2-3) using the 3-note slur and dotted half note. Ask students "What did I just do?" Have students repeat this pattern several times putting in RRR. Make the lesson more interesting by using some of the previous techniques such as arco open D (dotted half notes) or pizzicato open D pulse with certain sections of the orchestra. Another suggestion would be to do the above example on the G string and possibly the A string. (Example 2: DEF# G-2-3, DEF# G-2-3) a more difficult pattern after the simple ones are mastered would be as follows: (Example 3: DEF# G-2-3, ABC# D-2-3) Please use repetition. (*Please note:* All of these patterns can be increased in difficulty by changing the sharps to naturals.)

The next step would be to find some three note slurred exercises in the method book. Also look for exercises in other method books for supplementary study.

Follow up: Using French Folk Song again, have the students add three note slurs to this piece where appropriate. Performance test on Friday.

Week 21: *The student will...*

- "Sight say" eighth note rhythms in various combinations.
- Pizzicato eighth note rhythms in various combinations.
- Play eighth note rhythms with the bow in various combinations.

Procedures:

On the board, have these examples displayed for the students: (*please note:* feel free to use "and" instead of "ta" if you prefer. These two syllables mean the same thing.) Please add the musical notation and the up and down bow markings above these syllables.

1. 1 2ta 3 4 / 1 2ta 3 4
2. 1ta 2ta 3 4 / 1 ta 2ta 3 4
3. 1 2 3ta 4ta / 1 2 3ta 4ta
4. 1 2ta 3 4ta / 1 2ta 3 4ta
5. 1 2ta 3ta 4 / 1 2ta 3ta 4

When teaching eighth notes, first discuss the "math" behind the rhythm. Below is a sequence to effectively break down this concept and set your students up for success. (Please note: no clapping is involved in this sequence. With young musicians, clapping has a tendency to rush) Sight saying / speaking is very effective at this stage of learning, and truly helps to internalize rhythm.

Steps to eighth note success:

1. Students speak line one. Several times is best.
2. Students pizzicato line one on an open D WHILE SPEAKING THE RHYTHM. Repeat as necessary.
3. Students "air bow" (vertically) the rhythm, while speaking. Also have them say the bow directions.
4. Students bow line one on an open D string. Repeat as necessary.
5. Students play a tetrachord or a scale using the rhythm of line one.

(*Please note:* The thumb to point bow stroke will NOT be used for eighth notes. Students will need frequent teacher demonstrations to show the "shortened" eighth note bow stroke. Repeat these five steps for all five lines on the board. Take your time teaching this! Re-teach the above lesson on Day 2.)

As the week progresses, change the rhythms, or have students give you different combinations for the board. Also, students need to be taught how to play 2 or 3 lines of the board examples consecutively. The next step would be to find an exercise out of the method book that includes the above rhythms.

(Please note: It is very important that you "break down" the method book as well. Students can speak a line, pizzicato a line, bow the line on an open D, then play the exercise. The more steps you can put in, the better.)

Follow-up: A piece called "Cinnamon" from the book *Stringing Along- Stoutamire / Henderson* has some very basic eighth note rhythms as well as low 2's. This piece would "tie-in" some of the previously taught applications.

Week 22-23: *The student will...*

- Review previous concepts (D Major, D "sad scale", G Major, slurs, continuation of eighth note study)
- Prepare three selections for All-City Beginning Orchestra Festival on April 1, 2003.

General Suggestions for this month: Refer to the Orchestra List, Level one, for All City selections.

Concepts taught this month: C string study-violas and cellos, E string study - violins and basses, scales using eighth-note rhythms, performance etiquette and festival expectations.

Week 24: *The student will:*

- Perform drills on the C string, using CDEF only.
- Perform drill on the E string, using EF#GA only.
- Read and perform the new notes from the method book.
- Rehearse the All City Selections.

Procedures:

Demonstrate for the students on a viola and a cello, the C string notes. Pick a simple pattern, that can be repeated several times. (Example: C2D4 E2F4 RRRR) Violins and basses will join, playing the CDEF starting on violin G string, bass A string. Change the patterns accordingly, until the group is comfortable with these notes. Locate a lesson in the method book which contains the new C string notes.

Demonstrate for the students on a violin and a bass, the E string notes. Pick a simple pattern that can be repeated several times. (Example: E2E4 F#2F#4 G2G4 A2A4 RRRR) Have the violins play this pattern first, emphasizing NICE E STRING SOUND!! If your violinists use nice, swift bow speed on the E-string, the sound will be beautiful. Please note: Many times young violinists will bow to the side of their right leg when on the e-string. This will result in a crooked bow! Instruct young violinists to bow "straight down between their knees".) Once the violins sound nice and have a straight bow, add the basses to this pattern.

(Please note: basses must pull a very slow bow with added pressure on the E string) followed by the violinists and cellists joining in on the EF#GA.

Change the rhythm of the pattern, keeping the drill going in the class. Locate a lesson in the method book that contains the new notes on the e-string. A performance test on the new notes at the end of the week is recommended. Include TONE QUALITY in your criteria for grading this concept. Continue to rehearse the All-City pieces!!

Week 25: *The student will...*

- Develop proficiency on the C and E string.
- Play scales using various eighth note rhythms.
- Rehearse All-City selections.

Procedures:

Continue the C and E string warm up drills all week, while adding more lines from the method book to correlate.

In addition to C and E string, a concentrated eighth note study must be furthered during this time. We will use scales as an effective tool and an easy way to building a solid rhythmic foundation. On the board, write several eighth note rhythm combinations having the students tell you what syllables to write underneath the notes. The class will play a scale for each rhythm. Repeat. At this stage, students need to play lots of scales DAILY with eighth notes included. These rhythms need to be very solid and the “bow division” should be comfortable. (Small strokes for eighth notes, big strokes for the quarter notes.)

(Please note: Before playing the eighth note scale, have the class “count-off” twice speaking the rhythmic syllables together. This works beautifully! (Make a class rule for counting off-students must count off while the bow is ON the string!)

Other ideas for teaching eighth note scales:

1. Keep a pulse going in the room by having cello / bass pizzicato the quarter note tonic pitch, then switch having violin / viola keep the pulse. Other sections play the scale.
2. All sections play the scale pizzicato only. (Rhythms tend to solidify when heard pizzicato.)
3. Some sections count syllables out loud, while other sections play the scale.
4. Call on individual students to compose their own eighth note combination for the class to play.
5. Perform eighth note scales in tow part rounds.

Follow up: Teach the class “Are you Sleeping” by rote. (Two measures at a time, start on open D.) Review eighth note exercises out of the method book from Week 21. Performance test on Friday.

Continue to rehearse the All City Selections.

Curriculum Performance Objectives: 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.9, 2.1, 2.5, 2.7, 2.10,
3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 State Standards: 2,4,5

Week 26: *The student will...*

- Alternate between a measure of quarter notes to a measure of eighth notes.
- Learn concert etiquette and correct performance practices.
- Rehearse All City Selections

Procedures:

Have the class speak the following rhythms several times. (Example: 1-2-3-4 1ta 2ta 3ta 4ta RRRR) Once that is accomplished, demonstrate this rhythm on the open D string. Have students count while you play. Continue to include the RRRR counting. This RRRR pulse technique allows the students to “re-group” when learning a new rhythm / skill, and gives the teacher time to approach / help individual students during the drill. Have students perform the above rhythm on open D until it is mastered. Emphasis should be placed on the change of bow stroke. Very simply put: Full bows for quarter notes, shorter bows in the middle, for eighth notes. Keep working on ensemble pulse, pointing out to the students that bows should be moving together! Add left hand next, using a tetrachord or a complete scale.

Follow up suggestion: Have a “contest” by section on the above example. Which section’s bows move together the best? Which section has the best quarter and eighth note pulse? (Pass out Jolly Ranchers to the top section...)

Two weeks prior to the festival:

Detailed discussions on festival etiquette
Purpose and procedures of the festival
Permission slips / field trip forms
Overall festival expectations.

*****Teachers:** Don’t forget to invite administrators to see your group!

Curriculum Performance Objectives: 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.9, 2.1, 2.5, 2.7, 2.10,
3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 State Standards: 2, 4, 5

Week 27: *The student will...*

- Rehearse all aspects of the Festival Program to include: Appropriate uniform, equipment to bring, getting on the bus, behavior when entering the facility, where to put the cases, the warm up/ tuning room, walking on stage in an organized fashion, lighting on stage, standing up at the end of the performance and bus back to the school.

General Suggestions for this month:

Your beginning students are now playing and reading on all four strings. They can function in three keys, and two different time signatures. The group has an established pulse and can function as their own metronome. Bowing skills are improving each day! Students are playing with big tone, and smooth and connected bow strokes. Posture and position reminders are still necessary. Teacher manual assistance has definitely slowed down at this point, being that the students have established their straight bows and are comfortable with a shortened bow stroke when appropriate. Please continue to teach in all different areas of the classroom, walking up and down the rows. Some of the best teaching is done from the back of the room!

(Please note: After the All-City Festival, consider moving your students' bow hands from the balance point back to the frog area, if you have not done so already.)

Concepts taught this month: Violin / viola fourth finger study, double stops, “unblocked fingerings”.

Week 28: *The student will...*

- Perform and identify fourth finger usage. (Violin and viola only.)

Procedures:

Have students hold up their left hands in a WIDE-CLOSE-WIDE finger pattern. On the board write the following:

Example 1: DEF#G A2A4 AGF#E D2D4
0123 4-4- 4 3 2 1 0-0 Play 5 times.

This simple fourth finger pattern is for the violin and viola sections only. (*Please note:* These patterns must be played very slowly! The kids need time to place their fingers very carefully on the fingerboard. Two and three MUST TOUCH. The cello / bass sections have been using their fourth finger all along, so now they must be patient. There are several things that the cello / bass can do to stay occupied while the violins and violas are learning their fourth fingers.

1. Cello / bass: “drone” either the open A string or the open D string.
2. Cello / bass: play the open string with a half note rhythmic pulse continuously.
3. Cello / bass: pizzicato pulse.
4. Cello / bass: play the actual notes along with the violin / viola.
5. Cello / bass: help the teacher “listen” to the violins and violas to see if the fourth finger is in tune.

Here are several more sequential patterns for learning fourth finger.

Example 2: DEF#G AAAA RRRR
0 1 2 3 4040

Example 3: DEFG AGF#E D2D4 D234'
0123 4 3 2 1 0-0- 0---lift'

Have the students hold up their left hands in the CLOSE-WIDE-WIDE pattern.

* The below patterns use the F-natural, which is far more difficult for their little left hands. Please choose a SLOW tempo, and repeat 3-5 times. One and two MUST touch.

Example 4: *DEFG A2A4, AGFE D2D4
0123 4 – 4 4321 0 – 0 –

Example 5: DEFG AGFE, D2D4 D234
0123 4321 0 – 0 0----

Bonus Pattern! (difficult)

Example 6: DEFG A2G4, AGAG AGFE, DEFG A2G4, AGFE D2 lift rest.
0123 4-3- 4343 4321 0123 4-3- 4321 0--

During these exercises, please walk through the rows, making sure that the students are keeping their elbows under the instrument (crucial) and are touching either 2 and 3, or 1 and 2. Sometimes the teacher must physically squeeze their two fingers together for the correct half step. Next, locate a line or two from the method book which includes fourth finger work. If there aren't enough good exercises in the method book, search other books for this, and give the students a "hand out". Use words like "stretch"! and "elbows under" throughout the lessons. Evaluate the students by giving them a performance test on Friday! Have a high expectation!

Follow-up: Sight read a piece, and discuss places where the fourth finger must be used in the violin and viola part. Have the kids mark all of the 4's in their part with a pencil. (Please note: Try to pass out one new piece each week to keep the kids motivated, and to prepare for the spring concert.)

Continue to rehearse Spring Concert Selections!

Week 29: *The student will...*

- Learn double-stops
- Sight read “March Heroic”

Procedures:

Demonstrate double stops (using AD) on your instrument. Have the students echo you on some 2 bar patterns. Emphasize big sound, fast bow speed, and students watching to see if both strings are playing (vibrating) at the same time. (*Please note:* Basses should just play the open D, their instrument is not suited for double stops.)

Sight read and learn “March Heroic” by Eliot Del Borgo.
Test on Friday.

(Please Note: When sight reading and learning sheet music, students should have a pencil on their stands each and every day.)

Continue to rehearse Spring Concert Selections!

Week 30: *The student will...*

1. Learn the two octave G Major scale (violin only)
2. Perform an exercise with “unblocked” fingerings and “criss-cross” fingerings.

Procedures:

Start the period focusing on the violin G Major two-octave scale. Students will need an explanation of what a two octave scale is. Demonstrate the scale for them using a slow half note. While you play, have a cellist play the tonic G half note along with you. Here is the important part: When coming DOWN the scale, violins should only put one third finger down for the D and for the G. (not all three fingers) Around this time of year, it is a good idea to “break” the violins and violas of blocked fingering. Before the violins play the scale, have them “show you” the one third finger on their fingerboard. Explain to the students that this is an “advanced” fingering that they are to use ONLY when instructed to. Have the violins play the two octave G scale, with the viola / cello / bass playing the G tonic half note only. Repeat at least twice.

Next, have the violins just play the upper octave scale, (start on third finger G) and have the rest of the orchestra play G Major one octave with them. Do this one octave scale several different ways, keeping the lesson creative and interesting.

Locate exercise #145 from the Essential Elements Vol. 1. "Variations on a Familiar Tune" (Skip to my Lou.) Demonstrate for the students the first two measures of the Variations. BBGG BBD4. The "criss-cross" fingering for violin / violas / cello (sorry, the bass part is different) is as follows:

Violin/viola

Keep first finger DOWN (B) (When crossing), cross over with one third finger for the G's, come back to the B's, and add the high D all WITHOUT the middle finger. Repeat these two bars until the criss-cross fingering is comfortable.

Cellos

Keep first finger DOWN, (B) cross over 2,3 and 4 (at the same time) for the G's, come back to the B's and add the high D as usual. (Please note: cellos will still continue to use a lot of blocked fingering until vibrato starts..) This criss-cross is a difficult skill for the cellos, please repeat until mastered.

Basses will work on shifting for #145

Keep this fingering consistent all the way through this exercise. Test on Friday. Please ask Terry Shade for assistance with this beneficial application.

Continue work on "March Heroic or other Spring Concert Selections.

General Suggestions for this month:

Fourth finger work is a continuous process. Spend two solid weeks of intensive study with your violins and violas. At least 15 minutes per day. Have students consistently identify and mark fourth fingers in their books and in their pieces. In order for this skill to become AUTOMATIC the teacher needs to point out the spots throughout their entire SECOND YEAR of study. In their third year, students will not need to be told! If taught properly, fourth finger study will strengthen the entire left hand and you will see the benefit of your hard work!

Now is definitely the time to "break" your violin and viola students of blocked fingering. You will notice when the students put three fingers down at once, the second finger is going to be out of tune. It invariably lands between the first and third finger. Using one third finger in certain musical circumstances, will "free up" the first and second finger, allowing the F-natural and C – natural to be played in tune!

Concepts taught this month: A week long unit on dynamics.

Week 31-34: The student will...

- Perform and identify the five basic dynamics. Piano, mezzo forte, forte, crescendo, decrescendo.

Procedures:

Have the five dynamics written on the board along with their abbreviations. Have a short discussion on why we use dynamics in music.

Begin the study by demonstrating the piano dynamic on your instrument. Ask the students to give you words to describe the sound. Ask the class, “did you notice how I achieved this sound?” Hopefully, you will get answers such as less pressure on the bow and bow placement over the fingerboard. Use words such as “feather bow” and “very few horse hairs” to make your point. (*Please note:* An important aspect of achieving a quality piano sound is playing with lots of bow even though you are playing softly. This is what makes this dynamic so difficult. The natural tendency is to use less bow when playing softly.)

Have students play a simple scale using the piano dynamic. Tell them to concentrate on three main things: less weight, bow placement over the fingerboard, continue with lots of bow. The next step would be to find a simple tune (that they already know) out of the method book, mark the piano dynamic with a pencil, then play the tune softly. Point out the individuals who are doing a great job, and have them “demonstrate” this concept.

Demonstrate mezzo forte on your instrument. Explain and discuss this dynamic.

(*Please note:* The students have already played this dynamic on numerous occasions. Now they know the musical term to go along with it!)

Have students play a scale or two, mezzo forte. They should concentrate on three main things: medium pressure, bow placement between the bridge and the fingerboard, don't force the tone.

Demonstrate forte on the instrument. Ask the students to describe what they hear in one word answers. Engage them in a question and answer session on how to play forte. Have the students play forte on an open string concentrating on three things: Added weight / pressure to the bow, bow placement near the bridge, using full bow strokes. The students must “force” the tone and watch their string vibrate. Add an easy exercise out of the book.

Curriculum Performance Objectives: 1.4, 1.5, 1.9, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 3.9
State Standards: 2, 5, 7

Before going on to crescendo and decrescendo, evaluate the students in this way: Have them shut their eyes while you play the three different dynamic levels. Have them hold up one finger when you are playing piano, two fingers for mezzo forte, and three fingers for forte.

Demonstrate an open string crescendo using 8 counts. Engage the students in an explanation of what they heard. Keyword: gradually. Using a very, very slow quarter note count, have the students play an eight beat crescendo from piano to forte on open D. The class needs to concentrate on three things: starting the crescendo over the fingerboard, gradually moving toward the bridge, and gradually adding more weight to the bow. Ask them, “what dynamic level are we after four counts?” After the open string crescendo is mastered, you can add D Major scale notes to this exercise. Teach the decrescendo in the same manner, only reversed.

To evaluate, have the students search through their method books to find any simple tune or exercise and write in some four measure crescendos and decrescendos with a pencil. Call on individuals to “perform” their choice in front of the class.

Follow-up: Work diligently on sections in their spring concert pieces where dynamics should be present. Isolate those spots and rehearse the dynamics over and over again until the group is performing them effectively. (Please note: dynamics in sheet music should be “put in” AFTER the notes and rhythm of the piece are firmly established. If you work on dynamics last, the kids will have the ability to perform them effectively.) Continue to rehearse Spring Concert Selections with added dynamics for the rest of the month.

If you have extra teaching time at the end of the year, here are some suggestions:

1. A unit on four bow strokes: Legato, staccato, martele’, spiccato
2. A unit on dotted quarter-eighth note rhythm
3. A unit on B-flat

(Please note: Students will learn an application and it will “stick” if taught thoroughly in week-long “units”. If we “throw” a concept at the group, the concept will not be permanent, and it will be necessary to re-teach and re-explain at a later time. It is necessary to evaluate the kids at the end of the unit with a performance test, making the students aware of the criteria that you will be grading them on.)