

Advice to a (Prospective) College Student

<http://beststudentviolins.com/advice.html>

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A college-bound student on one of the Facebook string forums asked what "things" would an adult who had been through a university program in string performance, recommend. I feel qualified to answer this question; starting at local, state schools, I attended 12 of these programs. Not exaggerating: every time I got a better orchestra job, the concertmaster, who taught at the university, invariably offered me an orchestra scholarship (i.e., I played in the school orchestra for free). So I took the required coursework (principally music theory, music history—and at the graduate level, the research tools course), sometimes more than once. I finally slowed my peripatetic behavior for a while, and finished at Rice University in Houston (in 2 1/2 years). I was 37. Full scholarship. Here is a list of my recommendations, regrets and advice, in no particular order of importance:

A. Auditioning advice:

1. I would never audition for any university, cold. Instead, contact the teacher the year before and say that you want to study with them. Your teacher is going to be the deciding factor, both with respect to where you want to go to school, whether you get into that program, and whether you get a scholarship. Prepare consistently for the first lesson with that teacher, which you should schedule long before the school audition. You don't have to be the world's great player; what you have to show is that you're working hard, are thoughtful and consistent, and will be a feather in this teacher's cap, so to speak.
2. Find out all about your prospective teacher; their background, where they play currently, if they have any recordings extant. If you think they won't notice you care about them personally, think again. It's only common courtesy.
3. Prepare consistently for your SAT test. Don't just wing it, no matter how well you play. Do the best test you can. Hopefully, you also have good grades. And turn in a winning application with no spelling or grammar errors and a solid essay, expressing your love of music.
4. When you do audition (if you need to), be as classy as you can, as conservatively but beautifully dressed, good instrument, positive and friendly attitude. If you have problems, they can be fixed, but you won't get that chance if they don't like you.

B. Physical things:

1. Get the best instrument and bow you can. Get an expensive case, if you can. If you join the musicians' union (AFM, American Federation of Musicians), you can get a loan. Or you can borrow one. Rice loaned me a good instrument, but you have to give it back when you finish.
2. Good rosin, shoulder rest, chromatic tuner/metronome. Don't leave these in the practice rooms; they will very likely not be returned.

3. Decent backpack.
4. Good self care: visit dentist, get yearly check, and monitor your diet/exercise. The stronger and healthier you are, the more you will be likely to succeed, both personally and professionally. Don't make excuses.
5. In terms of printed music, your teacher will suggest pieces, and sometimes you can make copies from the music library, but you will invariably need etude books and Carl Flesch Scale Book. But teacher will let you know. Don't fail to get these immediately.

C. Mental attitudes:

1. Bertrand Russell (English philosopher and mathematician) wrote that the two most important things in the world are "kindness and intelligence."
2. Remain professional under all circumstances, even if someone acts like a jerk (they will) or is outright rude, racist, sexist, whatever. Know in advance you will encounter this. Ignore it. Maybe they will grow up spiritually some day, but it's not your responsibility to enlighten them. Your responsibility right now is to yourself, so you can get a good degree and contribute your gifts to society.
3. If you can always be kind, always have a sense of humor about everything, never gossip, never be hateful to anyone, and always see the other person's side (especially when they're screwed up in some way)—develop empathy, in other words—you will be a much happier person, be much more loved and supported by others, and save a lot of wear and tear, not to mention time, with things that really don't matter.

D. Habits:

1. Make sure you're healthy, not over- or underweight, and have good eating habits. Whether it's fair or not, the better you look, the more that will contribute to your success. I recommend veganism, with D and B12 supplements, lots of water, and small meals. Change your habits and you will change your life for the better. Get exercise, throw away the television, and learn how to monitor your breathing (yoga).
2. More on diet: this is my personal opinion, of course, but it is supported by research. Avoid SAD (Standard American Diet). McDonald's is killing the American (and now world) population, is horrible for the planet, and has dire consequences for everyone's health. Salt, sugar and fat are the enemies. But don't take my word for it. Investigate. Personally, I don't do eggs, dairy, meat, fish, sugar or alcohol. I don't look like I'm 66, or act it, or feel it. Don't believe the propaganda from the meat and dairy industries. It's all an attempt to manipulate you and get you to spend your money. It's a lie.
3. One of the things I regret the most is not attending enough concerts and recitals at school. I took every freelance job that was offered, and I think in retrospect this was a mistake. Go to everything. The people you meet or see at the concerts, and the music you hear, will be more instructive than the freelancing. Take miniature scores, if you can determine what the works are that will be performed. Watch the scores with a pencil in hand to mark things you want to look up later.
4. Needless to say, always be clean, neat, appropriately dressed, with a happy and friendly mental

attitude. Don't do weird things. Don't wear the same clothes over and over, get some decent concert clothes, always wear clean shoes, and pay close attention to grooming. Don't wear loud perfume (especially on stage), and wear very light makeup. No nose rings, tattoos, or multiple earrings (unless your field is rock or jazz—but not classical). This may sound over-restrictive, but remember: the people who are evaluating you are mostly older folks.

5. Always keep your commitments. If you say you're going to do something, do it, or at the very least, contact the person(s) involved and apologize. This is incredibly important if you want to earn income as a player. Contractors will not tolerate primadonna behavior; there are plenty of good players, and if you act like you're doing them a favor by showing up, they'll take you off the list and call someone else. People need to be able to trust you, and if you act like a self-centered child, they won't. They'll write you off.
6. Never, ever be late. Some people make a habit of this and what it indicates is that they think they are so important people have to wait for them. This is a mistake. Nobody is that important.
7. Create a practice/study schedule and keep to it. Practice every single day, slowly, 20 minutes at a time with full focus, and as many 20 minute sessions as you can manage, at least four. Length of practice is far less important as focus. Don't be afraid to play very slowly, but be careful not to practice mistakes. See Galamian on this issue. Time management is key.

E. Final Words:

1. There is an old saying in the music business, "the music world is a small world," so be nice to everybody because it is pretty certain that you will see that person again. Don't, in other words, get into interpersonal conflicts with anybody, no matter what, no matter how much they deserve it. Some people are not very developed spiritually, and say and do things which are stupid, insensitive, unkind and unnecessary. Count on this happening. Don't interact with it.
2. Show the utmost respect towards your teachers, following their instructions carefully, even if you disagree, even if it puts a huge burden on you time-wise or any other way. Do everything asked of you to the best of your ability. Understand what it took for them to get where they are and try and learn everything you can while you're around them. You will graduate sooner or later and you won't have that access again.
3. Learn how to manage your time. Pay attention to the excuses and rationalizations in your head. This comes under self-knowledge, which is sadly lacking in most people. Stop, and breath, and think about what you are doing and how you are managing your time.
4. Above all, have respect for what you're doing. The violin is a 400 year old art form, and is the doorway to a very happy life. It opened the world to me and allowed me to experience things I never would have, otherwise. Don't take your gifts for granted. Respect yourself and the people you encounter who have done the things you'd like to do.

Best wishes!!

Works by J.S. Bach for Violin

- **Bach Cello Suites:** orig. for cello, transcribed for violin and viola:

Bach: Six Cello Suites - for violin

http://www.sheetmusicplus.com/a/item.html?aff_id=186635&item=3129790

Bach: Six Cello Suites - for viola

http://www.sheetmusicplus.com/a/item.html?aff_id=186635&item=4297769

- **Bach Unaccompanied Sonatas and Partitas:** orig. for violin, transcribed for viola:

Bach: Six Sonatas and Partitas - for violin

http://www.sheetmusicplus.com/a/item.html?aff_id=186635&item=4295285

Bach: Six Sonatas and Partitas - for viola

http://www.sheetmusicplus.com/a/item.html?aff_id=186635&item=4297782

- **Bach Six Sonatas w/ piano:** orig. for violin, transcribed for viola:

Bach: Six Sonatas w/ piano - for violin

http://www.sheetmusicplus.com/a/item.html?aff_id=186635&item=5643296

Bach: Six Sonatas w/ piano - for viola

Vol. I: http://www.sheetmusicplus.com/a/item.html?aff_id=186635&item=4298252

Vol. II: http://www.sheetmusicplus.com/a/item.html?aff_id=186635&item=4298266

- **Bach Concertos:**

[Violin Concerto in A Minor](#)

[Violin Concerto in E Major](#)

[Violin Concerto in G Minor](#)

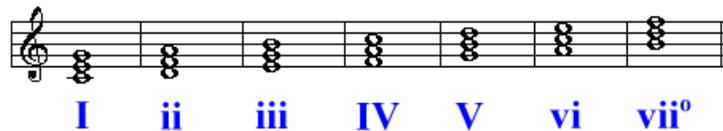
["Double" Violin Concerto in D Minor](#)

[Viola Concerto In C Minor](#), ed. Casadesus

Chord Structures

<http://beststudentviolins.com/cadences.html>

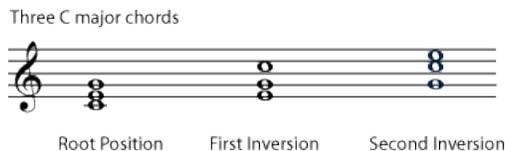
Something like the following graphic is presented at the beginning of nearly every theory book. This represents the character of triads built on each step of the major scale. Note that I, IV and V (the Tonic, Subdominant and Dominant) are major (and upper case), and ii, iii, and vi are minor (lower case). A triad built on the leading tone of the scale is a diminished triad, or the top three notes of the Dominant seventh chord (V^7).



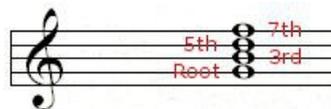
These are designated as follows:

- I - Tonic
- ii - Supertonic
- iii - Mediant
- IV - Subdominant
- V - Dominant
- vi - Submediant
- vii° - Leading Tone

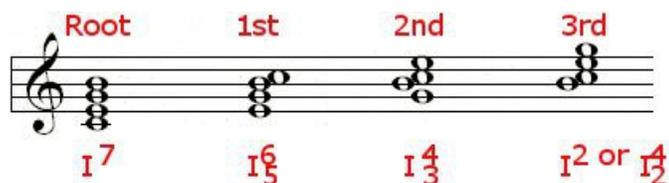
The following represents the Root Position and First and Second Inversions of the I chord in C Major. These are labeled as: I, I^6_4 , and I^6_2 .



Seventh chords have an additional third at the top of the triad:



The root position and the three inversions of the seventh chord are designated as follows:



Cadential Formulas

I. **Authentic cadence:** V to I.

A. Perfect authentic cadence (PAC): The chords are in root position; that is, the roots of both chords are in the bass, and the root of the final chord is in the highest voice. A PAC is a progression from V to I in major keys, and V to i in minor keys.

B. Imperfect authentic cadence (IAC):

1. Root position IAC: the highest voice is not the tonic
2. Inverted IAC: one or both chords must be inverted
3. Leading tone IAC: V is replaced with vii°

II. **Half cadence:** any cadence ending on V, whether preceded by ii, IV, or I, or any other chord.

III. **Plagal cadence:** IV to I, also known as the "Amen Cadence"

IV. **Deceptive (or interrupted) cadence:** V to any chord except I (typically vi or VI).

Authentic:

V-I, V-i

Plagal:

IV-I, iv-i

Half:

x-V

Deceptive:

V-(VI), V-(vi)

Resources

- [Cadence](#), Wikipedia
- [Seventh Chords and Inversions](#), Terry Ewell, Connexions
- [Triads](#), Catherine Schmidt-Jones, Connexions
- [Types of seventh chords](#), Wikipedia

Early History of the Violin (1520-1650)

Author: [C.M. Sunday](#)

<http://beststudentviolins.com/early.html>

Relatively little is known about the violin before 1600, though the true violin was popular at village fêtes, taverns, in homes, and at aristocratic court functions such as the French ballet, English masque, and Italian intermedio. Its power of rhythmic articulation and penetrating tone was used extensively for dance music. Instrumental music was modeled on forms derived from vocal models not idiomatic to the violin, which was also used to double or accompany vocal parts. The real potential of the violin was not exploited until the 17th century when the Italians wrote sonatas. With the possible exception of Orlando di Lasso, no great composers wrote for violins until Gabrielli and Monteverdi. The two uses of violins contrast sharply; on the one hand, the undignified and festive use of violins for dancing, (jamming), with no music in sight; and on the other, the serious use of violins for religious or semi-religious purposes, in church, say, with instruments held at the neck and longer bows. The unwritten tradition of improvisation is comparable to the early history of jazz, the violinist being much like the sax player. In the area of dancing, the violins gradually drove the rebecs from court. (See [The Rebec Project](#).)

Violin playing was not considered a lady-like or gentlemanly pursuit; violinists were considered to be a species of servant, and the violin had little social or musical prestige. It was considered a lowly instrument played mostly by professionals. In time, however, it spread through every class. The formation of the "24 Violins of the King," in France, symbolized increased social prestige.

"Virtuous" people (aristocratic amateurs), according to Jambe de Fer (see below) passed their time playing the viol, a family of instruments unrelated to the violins which persisted for 150 years after the violins came into being, and fell into neglect when polyphonic music went out of style. All viols (lira da gamba) were played held downward, larger ones between the legs and smaller ones on the knees, and the bow was held underhand. The violins developed independently.

Though hybrid instruments continued to exist some time after the emergence of the violin, its origins are said to have been the rebec, the Renaissance fiddle, and the lira da braccio. The rebec dates back to the 13th century and consisted of a family of treble (discant), alto-tenor, and bass instruments. It was pear-shaped, and without a soundpost; the neck and pegbox were integral parts of the instrument. There were no overhanging edges, no frets, and the three strings were tuned in fifths. The sound of this instrument is said to have been smaller than the violins, with a nasal, oboe-like quality. The bow was held overhand. The Renaissance fiddle, c. 1500, had five strings, (one a drone), and frets. Shaped like the violin, it had a top and back with connecting ribs, a separate neck and fingerboard, and it was in the soprano register. Close to the violin body outline, the lira da braccio was designed in several sizes; its bouts made it easier to bow than the rebec. Like the violin, it had an arched back and top, overlapping edges, ribs, a sound post, and f or c-shaped sound holes. It had seven strings, two of which were drones.

By a kind of organic, triangulative process between craftsmen, players, and composers, early

violins came into existence around 1520 in northern Italy. The 4-stringed "true" violin family was complete in its basic structural features - though not standardized - around 1550. (Jambe de Fer described them explicitly in his *Epitome Musical*. Lyons, 1556.) The controversy over who invented the first violin is probably not answerable; Gasparo da Saló was a candidate, as were several Brescian craftsmen. It is now generally accepted that da Saló was not the inventor since he wasn't born until 1540. Better candidates are Giovan Giacobbe dalla Corna and Zanetto de Michelis da Montichiario, both born in the 1480s. It is, however, clear that Andrea Amati perfected the form. Similar instruments in France and Poland suggest the far-reaching influence of the Italian Renaissance. Native schools of violin-making existed in Cremona and Brescia, and also in Paris and Lyon; but this had to do with the trade routes (and the silk trade) from Venice to Paris. Changes in the violin after 1600 were largely decorative.

Early violins could be either 1/4" shorter or 1/2" longer than the modern 14" (35.5 cm) instrument. Pegboxes sometimes ended in carved heads instead of scroll. The neck is shorter, projects at right angles from the body, and the fingerboard is shorter (by 2 1/2"), with a wedge between neck and fingerboard. The bridge is both lower and rounder. Open strings were used when possible, and the more yielding hair of the old bow made it easier to sustain triple stops at forte. The modern chinrest was unknown, and the violin was held at the neck; perspiration marks on either side of the tailpiece indicate the chin held the instrument there. In dance music, the instrument was often or usually held lower.

While the Tourte bow rendered the older bows obsolete and of no commercial value (therefore none exist today), the older violins were carefully preserved, though apart from rare exceptions, usually opened and altered with modern fittings, including neck, fingerboard, bridge, bass-bar, sound-post, strings, chinrest and E tuner. Because of the lower tension, the old bass bar was shorter and lighter and the soundpost thinner. Early (convex) bows varied greatly in shape, and the modern frog was predated by various attempted solutions to holding the narrower ribbon of hair in place. The modern Tourte bow, with its logarithmic inward curvature, cannot be pressed too deeply in the middle, or the wood will be scraped by the strings. Baroque bows did not have this problem, though the degree of curvature began to decrease at the end of the 17th century.

Early in the 16th century the advantages of combining from its predecessors the greater sonority, the easier and more efficient playing and tuning, and the more sensible fingering were discovered. The new instruments were easier to carry at dances, weddings and mummeries (theatrical productions including masked figures), and their sound "carried well," which was important for dancing. Many musicians played both old and newer instruments, and technical practices were borrowed from the old.

Though the Baroque violin was considered "*beaucoup plus rude en son*" (Jambe de Fer, 1556), it was, by our standards, less intense, purer, reedier and more transparent. Gimping, or the practice of using gut strings overspun with fine copper or silver wire, was not practiced until the early 18th century. Strings were gut, (for this reason the G was unresponsive, and seldom used), and gauges were not known, though violin strings were stronger and thicker than viol strings.

Early Baroque violin music, (of which there is very little before the turn of the century, and that in the last 20 years, and not idiomatic), seldom ventures beyond the third position. (The first

written music designated with a violin part is that of a Royal French wedding in 1581.) Therefore the usual range was d'-b" or c", (since the low G was seldom used)--the typical range of the soprano voice. Though lute players were encouraged to play "beyond the frets," the short, fat neck of the violin did not encourage playing in upper positions, and made it more difficult to use the fourth finger; the momentary robustness of open strings was not uncommon.

There were no accepted standards of pitch; string players were regularly told to tune their instruments up as high as they would go, (Agricola, 1528) and pitch varied from town to town and even from one organ to another within a church. Nor was there any equally tempered tuning system. There was probably a distinction between harmonic pairs of notes, but it worked opposite to what it is today. (For example, violinists today think of F#, say, as a sort of leading tone to G, and the F# is played higher than the upper enharmonic. The reverse was true in the Baroque.)

Nor was there any standardization in the way the bow of the violin was held. As mentioned above, the violin was held in a more relaxed position while dance music was played on the breast or arm, (hence, the distinction "lira da braccio,") and held at the neck for more serious music. The bow was held in two styles; that of the French -- very different than the modern way -- with the thumb under the hair and not between the bow and stick, as in the second, or Italian way, which is said to be entirely similar to modern teaching, such as that of Carl Flesch.

The animated styles of dancing and the short bows were made for an articulated style, unlike the "endless bow" idea of modern practice. Vibrato was not continuous, but used as expressive ornamentation. (Our wide and continuous vibrato would have been disruptive.) No fingerings have been found before 1600 even for such simple music that exists. Playing in the higher positions seems unlikely, considering the way the instrument was held in dance music. (From the modern viewpoint, second position is excellent to use, particularly in sequential passages.) However, there was more to violin music than the extant pieces indicate. So much money was spent on fine instruments, and this is not compatible with the idea of primitive instruments and technique. Orchestral and chamber parts were not required to go above the third position, but virtuoso pieces were another matter. Some advance technique may have been lost because it was considered a professional secret.

After 1600, violin players built on the technical achievements of the viol players, and the practice advanced rapidly. Monteverdi's operatic writing included idiomatic sections with comparatively sophisticated technique. After 1610, the advent of the violin sonata, the formative period of violin practice ended and a new technical virtuosity came about in response to an age which produced Galileo, Kepler, Bacon, Descartes, Newton and Harvey. (And anticipated by da Vinci and manifested in the Reformation.) The rise of opera and instrumental forms not subordinate to the voice is analogous to the gradual subordination of religious to secular authority. Musicians were usually lower-middle class, and traditionally from long lines of musical families; socially, the lot of the musician varied from little better than beggar to that of the Royal musicians, who enjoyed fine clothes, salaries, and some measure of security. Even the ordinary musician was protected by unions in both France and England. During the early 17th century, the preeminence of violin making continued in Brescia and Cremona, and Biago Marini of Brescia (1597-1665) was the most important composer of violin music of the time; he and

contemporaries such as Dario Castello, Salomone Rossi, Maurizio Cazzati, and Marco Uccellini experimented with purely instrumental forms. The sonata -- most advanced of instrumental forms -- came from the old practice of doubling vocal parts of a chanson, one of the principle Renaissance forms.

Marini's work is calculated in terms of the violin; the rapid passages fit the hand, particularly in descending or ascending sequences and arpeggios and broken chords involving playing back and forth across strings. Marini used the "stile concitato," predating Monteverdi, and experimented extensively in double - and triple-stops. (*Capriccio per Sonare il Violino con tre corde a mondo di lira*, Op. 8.) His scordatura was written at pitch, leaving the player to work out the fingerings. (Most later scordatura works were written in "hand-grip" notation.)

Other special affects of the Baroque were the use of pizzicati like that used in Monteverdi's operas (not called such), the mute, col legno, sul ponticello and sulla tastiera. Harmonics may or may not have been known, and the matter is not settled. Two types of ornaments were used; (a) those with specific names, such as the trill, mordent, vibrato and (b) those which constituted some improvised melodic formulae. The practice of adding passages to the written score was so common that sometimes composers felt it was necessary to add "come sta senza passaggi." Since the demands of dance music were chiefly rhythmic, it is not known if violin practice included ornamental elaboration like the diminutions and passaggi of Francesco Rogniono. (*Selva de varii passaggi secondo l'uso moderno*. Milan, 1620.)

All of these physical characteristics contributed to a sound which was altogether less assertive, less massive, and more edgy, pungent, and colorful. "Just as the painter imitates nature," (wrote Ganassi, in "Regola Rubertina," the only detailed treatise on string playing in the 16th century; Ganassi was a professional viol player,) "so wind and string players should imitate the human voice." Vibrato on long notes must have been combined with dynamic nuance, and the messa di voce probably carried over into string practice.

Though if one sees a lot of dynamic markings in a Baroque piece, and it may be inferred that they were put there by the editor, they nevertheless existed from the start of the period and increased in frequency throughout. Performers considered them hints, however, and dynamics are properly used for structural shaping, to delineate the form by terraced fortes and pianos, and to mold the texture within the form. This may cause a built-in echo effect, as in some of Marini's sonatas, particularly the Sonata in Echo for three violins, Op. 8. (Composed in Germany and published in Vienna. Marini was concertmaster to Schutz.) Agogic accents were probably used for expression, but no mention is made of the audible shifting or portamento so usual in modern playing; the practice was that several shifts were preferred over one big one. Marini's greatest contribution lies in his purposeful adaptation of vocal style to idiomatic violin writing. *Affetti Musicali*, the title of Op. 1 (1617) may be said to indicate that the affections could be moved (that all-embracing Baroque ideal) by means of instruments alone. The Sonate in d-moll (a sonata for violin and cello with organ or harpsichord) well illustrates the Baroque form

The sonata is in three movements: Grave/Allego/Moderate. All three movements are imitative; that is, the slow (and serious) opening (white note) phrases in the cello are answered

rhythmically and melodically by the violin in measures 8-11. This imitative faculty is repeated one beat apart in 16th notes (idiomatic to the violin, as they lay so well within the hand and would, I think, be unlikely as vocal exercise), at measures 17, 24 and 26.

This practice is continued in the Seconda part, the cello's opening phrases repeated by the violin in measure 35, 39, 48. Though diminution and affetti may certainly have been included at moments not suggested by the score, they are specifically suggested in this movement by the fanfare-like configuration of measures 59-72. (Dynamic markings are probably the editor's.) How this solo actually was played can only be deduced according to the skill and imagination of the performer.

Movement three (terza parte) is, again, imitative, but unlike the other movements, is in triple meter. Hemiola is used characteristically in measures 75, 90-94 and 100-102. Starting around measure 90, a brilliant, fiery, "concitato" tension is built, culminating in the high c-b-d-b 16th note figure in the violin, measure 95, which calms down slowly in the alternating eighth note-quarter note figures, measures 96-98.

The Baroque ideal is an arch of sound, appropriately well-sustained and well-proportioned. For Baroque music to get airborne, the line must soar. The bow is like the breath of a singer. To quote Donington (p. 88): "Phrases generally go to a peak note, which is often though not always the highest note, and then relax to a note given away at the end. There is the unit; that much, and no less nor more, is the phrase; and it is for our own musicianship to recognize the fact. Nothing in the notation and nothing in the historical evidence, is going to show us the pattern if our own musicianship does not." To achieve this, the modern violinist (with modern instrument) would have to slow down the bow, use less of it, and play into the string with the hair a little flatter and near the bridge. Donington remarks: it can be done.

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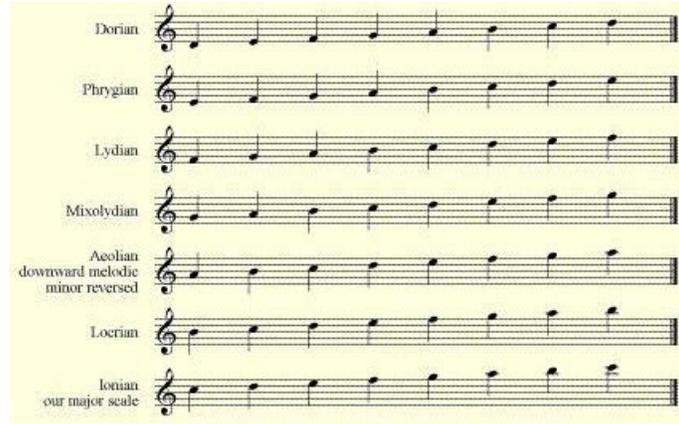
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Sonate D-Moll für Violine, Streichbass (Gambe oder Violincello) Und Basso Continuo, Biagio Marini. Hortus Musicus 129. Bärenreiter-Verlag Kassel und Basel. Germany. 1955.

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Modes

<http://beststudentviolins.com/modes.html>



Early music made heavy use of the Church modes, which are pitch collections which pre-date the modern Major/minor system. Most of these chords and modes are commonly used in jazz; and were in common use in the bebop era.

It is more common for musicians to understand the term "mode" to refer to Ionian, Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Aeolian, or Locrian scales. In everyday speech, this is the most common understanding.

Starting

pitches:

"Do" Ionian

"Re" Dorian

"Mi" Phrygian

"Fa" Lydian

"So"

Mixolydian

"La" Aeolian

"Ti" Locrian

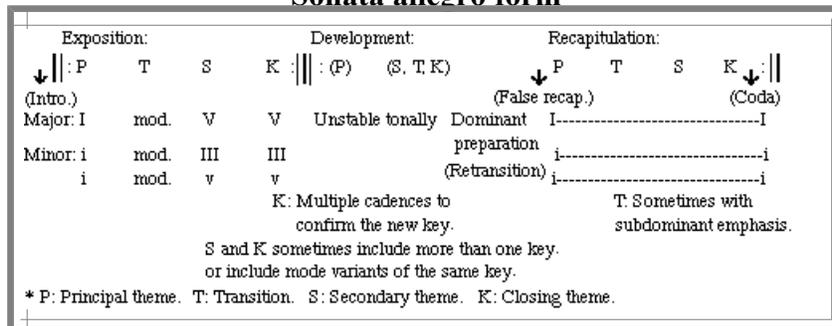
From: [Wikipedia article](#)

Forms

<http://beststudentviolins.com/forms.html>

- Binary SIMPLE: A->B :||: A->B and ROUNDED: A :||: B A or A'
- Ternary A B A
- Strophic (verse-repeating or chorus form) A A A...
- Theme and Variations
- Rondo ABACABA
- Bar Form: AAB

Sonata allegro form

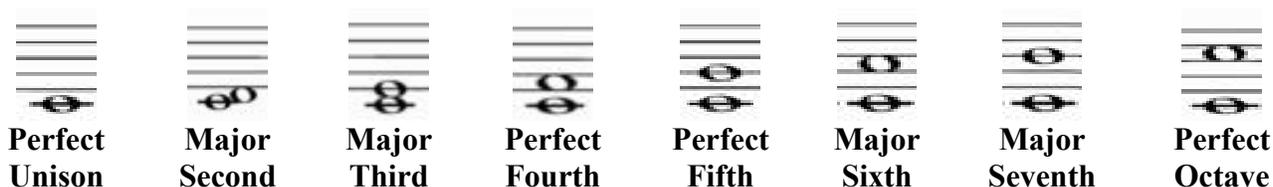


- Sonata Allegro Form: not a form but a procedure of key conflict and configuration. Key and chord are different concepts. Actually only applies to a small number of works. See Charles Rosen, *Sonata Forms*.
 - **Exposition**: Theme I in Tonic, Theme II in Dominant. Relatable keys;
 - **Development**: Development of themes. Tonal fluctuation;
 - **Recapitulation**: Themes I and II, both in Tonic

Evaluating Intervals

<http://beststudentviolins.com/intervals.html>

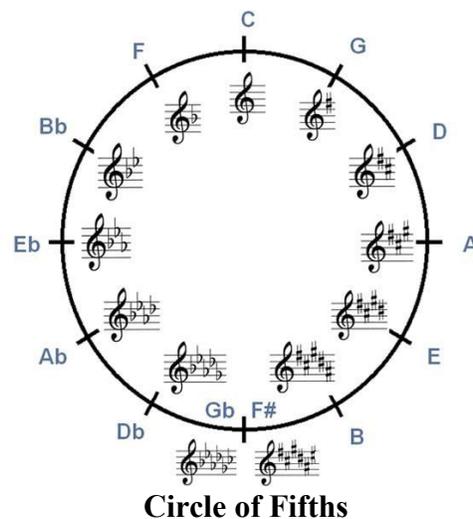
The definition of an interval is the distance between two notes. The rule for evaluating intervals is that you include the note you start on and the note you end on; in other words, both ends of the intervals are counted.



Sometimes students ask, why do you need an interval of a unison. Answer: the pitch may be sung and/or played by different instruments/voices.

Intervals of 1, 4, 5 and 8 are called Perfect (or diminished); intervals of 2, 3, 6 and 7 are called Major (or minor). Intervals may be made smaller (than Major or Perfect) by either raising the bottom or lowering the top. A minor third might be a C-E flat, or alternatively, a C#-E. An interval 1/2 step smaller than a Major is a minor: an interval 1/2 step smaller than a Perfect is a diminished (written with a °). Intervals larger than a Major or Perfect, are called Augmented.

Intervals may be Major (M), minor (m), diminished (dd) or Augmented (Aug.) To determine this, you must understand the keys as demonstrated in the Circle of Fifths. You look at the note on the bottom of the interval (whatever it may be) and ask is the top note **in that key (of the bottom interval)**.



Example: The interval C-E (see, above). It is a third because you count: C, D, E. Remember the rule, count both ends of the interval. Then you look at the bottom note, C. Is the E in C Major? If it is, then the interval is a Major 3rd.

Example: The interval C-E flat is minor because there is no E Flat in C Major; the interval is 1/2 step smaller than the minor, due to the lowered top pitch.

Example: The interval C-F# is an Augmented 4th (or diminished fifth). This is a special interval known as a Tritone or "Devil's interval," forbidden by the Church in the Middle Ages, and often used by modern composers to indicate fear, evil, and program music having to do with witches, etc.

See: [Intervals](#), Wikipedia

Musicology

<http://beststudentviolins.com/musichistory.html>

Note that human life does not lend itself well to restricted categories and both the dates and the styles are subject to change and debate among scholars.

Historical Era	Approximate dates	Representative Composers (Small sample)
Medieval	ca. 500-1450	Hildegard von Bingen, Machaut, Landini, Léonin, Pérotin. See: Wikipedia List
Renaissance	1450-1600	Josquin, Dufay, Palestrina. See: Wikipedia List
Baroque Also see: 1725-1770 Roccoco (and/or Galant)	1600-1750	Bach, Vivaldi, Tartini , Geminiani , Handel. See: Wikipedia List
Classical	1750-1820	Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven .** See: Wikipedia List
Romantic Also see: Nationalism - Grieg, Sibelius	1820-1910	Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, Paganini, Brahms. See: Wikipedia List
Contemporary, also referred to as 20th Century or Modern. Includes subcategories such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impressionism: Debussy, Ravel Expressionism: Schoenberg, Berg, Webern Americana: Copland Neo Classicism: Stravinsky, Copland Neo Romanticism: Piston, Barber, Hanson Experimentalism: Brown, Cage Minimalism: Glass, Reich Also see: Further Discussion: Contemporary Musicology	1910-present Bartók, Bernstein, Cage, Babbit, Gershwin, Varese, Messiean, Stockhausen, Takemitsu. See: Wikipedia List	

** From [A History of Western Music](#): "Through external circumstances and the force of his own genius he transformed this heritage and became the source of much that was characteristic of the Romantic period. But he himself is neither Classic nor Romantic; he is Beethoven, and his figure towers like a colossus astride the two centuries." [Donald Jay Grout. (3rd Edition with Claude V.

Palisca.) W. W. Norton & Co., Inc. New York. 1973. p. 521. [Newest ed. of the Grout, 9th ed., Burkholder](#) (includes ebook and digital recordings).

Also see: [Outlines of Grout *History of Western Music*](#), David Papandrew

Ornaments

Also see: [J.S. Bach's Ornament Table](http://beststudentviolins.com/ornaments.html)
<http://beststudentviolins.com/ornaments.html>



Trill

Both main note, and upper note start of trill



Turn



Ex: Turn



Mordents



Ex: Mordents

Upper and lower note



Appoggiatura ("to lean")



Ex: Appoggiatura



Acciaccatura ("to crush")



Ex: Acciaccatura

From: Wikipedia, [Ornaments](#)

Time Signatures & Conducting Patterns

with MP3 files from the Suzuki literature, performed by [Connie Sunday](#)

[Introduction](#) • [2/4 and 6/8](#) • [3/4 and 9/8](#) • [4/4 and 12/8](#) • [6/4](#)

[3/2](#) • [5/4](#) • [7/4](#) • [Postscript](#)

<http://beststudentviolins.com/TimeSignatures.html>

There are two basic types of time signatures, Simple Time and Compound time.

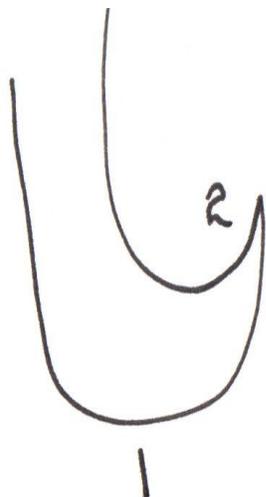
Simple Time is 2/4, 3/4 and 4/4. The top number indicates how many beats to a measure and the bottom number, 4, indicates that a quarter note gets one beat. A quarter note is the "unit of measurement."

Compound Time is 6/8, 9/8 and 12/8. The bottom number, 8, indicates that an eighth note gets one beat. 6/8 (for example) may be thought of as getting six counts, but two beats. The pulse is in two, with two subdivisions: 1-2-3, 4-5-6 (each beat is an eighth note) and thus is conducted in two. Likewise, 9/8 is three pulses per measure and 12/8 is four pulses per measure. In compound time the eighth note is the "unit of measurement."

The first beat of every measure is the "downbeat." Note that with professional players it is usually safe for the conductor to give the beat prior to the starting beat of the piece (as long as that beat is also in the desired tempo). With students and semi-professional groups it is probably a good idea to give a "free measure," again, as long as that measure is in exactly the tempo the conductor wishes the work to begin. If there is a pick up note at the beginning, it is usually a good idea to give a whole measure. For example, if the work begins on beat four in a 4/4 pattern, conduct 1-2 and 3, and then bring the group in on 4.

What students must develop internally is the tactus, or "the moment of the beat." That is the exact instant when the beats occur. I would maintain that learning the conducting patterns—even for students who have no intention to conduct or play in orchestra—is useful in terms of developing rhythmic accuracy.

4 2



6
8

2/4 is two beats per measure; the unit of measurement is a quarter note, which gets one beat. 6/8 is conducted in "2" but the unit of measurement is an eighth note, which gets one beat. 6/8 is "compound" because there are two groups of three eighth notes. In 6/8 a quarter note gets two beats; a dotted quarter note gets three beats. 2/4 is characteristic of marching band (for example). See:

Click to listen [→ Simple Duple Meter](#)

Click to listen [→ Compound Duple Meter](#)

3 3

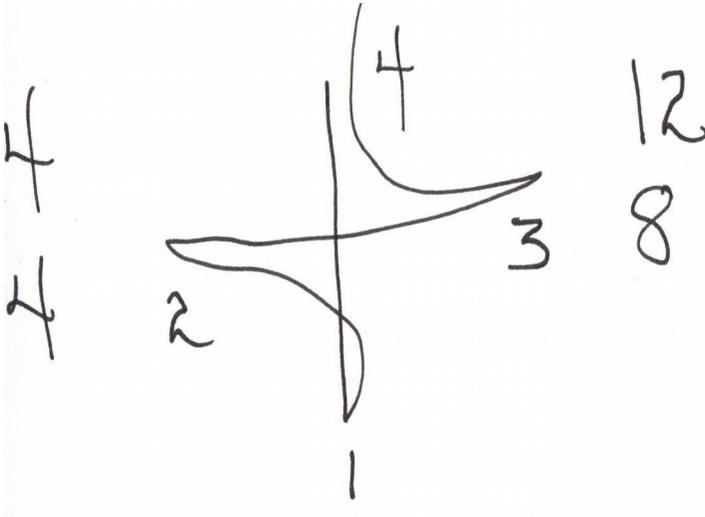


9
8

3/4 is three beats per measure; the unit of measurement is a quarter note, which gets one beat. 9/8 is conducted in "3" but the unit of measurement is an eighth note, which gets one beat. 9/8 is "compound" because there are three groups of three eighth notes. In 9/8 a quarter note gets two beats; a dotted quarter note gets three beats. See:

Click to listen [→ Simple Triple Meter](#)

Click to listen [→ Compound Triple Meter](#)



4/4 is four beats per measure; the unit of measurement is a quarter note, which gets one beat. 12/8 is conducted in "4" but the unit of measurement is an eighth note, which gets one beat. 12/8 is "compound" because there are four groups of three eighth notes. In 12/8 a quarter note gets two beats; a dotted quarter note gets three beats. See:

Click to listen 

[Simple Quadruple Meter](#)

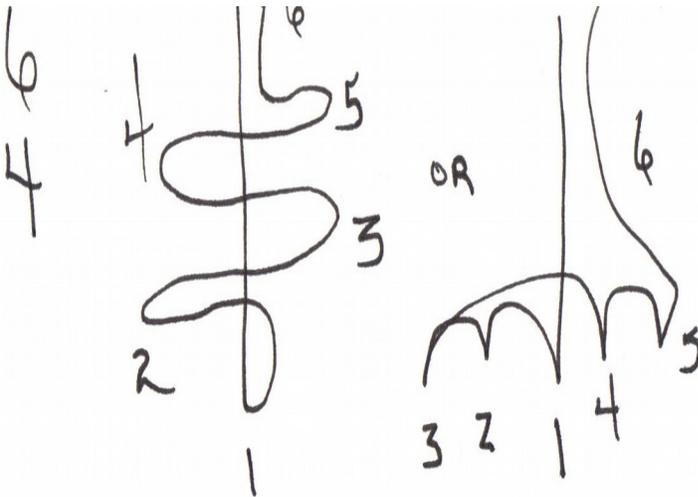
Click to listen 

[Compound Quadruple](#)

[Compound Quadruple](#)

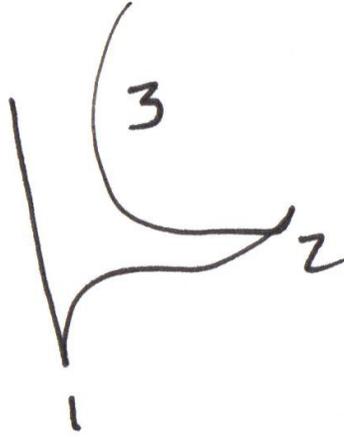
An abbreviation for 4/4 is the large C found in some works; this stands for "Common Time" and so called because +/- 80% of our music is in this time signature.

A derivative of Common Time is "Cut Time" which is the C with a line drawn through it vertically ("alla breve"). Cut time is a faster 4/4 and while one still counts 1-2-3-4 the actual subdivision is in "2" and cut time is conducted in "2". May also be written as 2/2.



There are two basic patterns for the 6/4; the candelabra (see, left) and the sideways pattern (see, right) which is more suitable to a slower tempo. A faster 6/4 could be conducted in two. Remember the rule that there are only two numbers in music, 2 and 3, and everything is a derivative of this.

3
2



You do see patterns where the half note is the unit of measurement. The top number indicates how many beats per measure and the bottom number indicates that the half note is the unit of measurement.

5
4

3+2
2+3

5/4 is fairly common, but musicians are very down-to-earth people, as a rule, and they just say, okay, well that's 2+3 or 3+2, as appropriate.

7
4

4 + 3
3 + 4
2 + 3 + 2, etc.

7/4 is less common but again, it's usually conceived as some reasonable configuration of 2 plus 3, depending on the phrasing of the music in question. It is not, as a rule, 1-2-3-4-5-6-7, but rather broken up into units of 2, 3 or 4, in combination.

It is not uncommon in 20th century works to have within one movement of a work, a string of multiple time signatures of all types. My best recommendation when you encounter this sort of thing is to listen to the recordings carefully and to practice both your instrument and the conducting patterns, carefully, in order to produce the rhythmic configurations the composer indicates.

Another common practice by conductors is to conduct a work "in One." This is not written in the music so much as the musicians write "in One" in pencil at the top of the part. When conductors do this and you're not familiar with the score, and you're just watching, it can be difficult to determine if the work is being conducted by the beats of the measure, or by the measures in phrases. It can be fun to try to determine this, in listening to works with which one is not familiar.

See: [Two Essays on the Development of Student Orchestras](#)

Makup of Major and Minor Scales

http://beststudentviolins.com/3octave_fingerings.html

Every major scale has a relative minor, which has the exact same key signature, but starts three, 1/2 steps *below* the tonic in the major. Minor scales have three forms:

1. Natural: Exact same notes as the relative major, without any chromatic alteration;
2. Melodic: Raised 6th and 7th step in the ascending form; the descending form is like the natural;
3. Harmonic: Raised leading tone (both ascending and descending), which causes a step-and-a-half interval between the 6th and 7th steps.

Note also that works are not in "melodic minor" or "harmonic minor" keys; rather, composers sprinkle these configurations throughout the work.

Key Areas (Major)		Key Areas (Minor)	
	G	F	e
	D	B flat	b
	A	E flat	F#
C	E	A flat	c#
	B	D flat	g#
	F#	G flat	d#
	C#	C flat	a#

Parallel keys are a different thing altogether; what makes them parallel is that the scale starts on the same note - but the key signatures are different. For example:

C Major (no sharps or flat) / c minor (three flats)
G Major (one sharp) / g minor (two flats)
D Major (two sharps) / d minor (one flat)..etc.

So the question really is, if an audition is asking for a "Parallel melodic minor scale" -- parallel to what Major key? You will need to find that out, and then play a scale on that same tonic note but with the melodic minor construction -- which of course is a raised 6th and 7th step in the ascending form, and the "natural" form in the descending.

Supposing that the auditioner wants a melodic minor scale parallel to the A Major; then you would play a melodic minor scale starting on the pitch "A," thus:

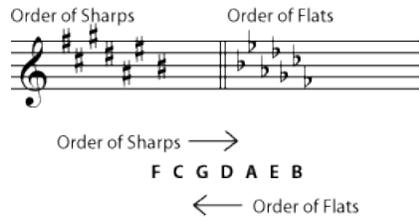
a b c d e f# g# a g natural f natural e d c b a

Identifying Key Signatures

The order of the sharps (from left to right) is Fat Cows Gulp Daises And Eat Beans. The Flats are the opposite: BEADGCF.

Rule for Sharp Keys: The key is 1/2 step above the last sharp (sharp furthest to the right).

Rule for Flat Keys: The key is the next to the last flat. With F Major, you have to memorize that it's one flat, since there is no "next to last."



Graphic from [Key signatures](#) by Catherine Schmidt-Jones

Method for Memorizing Fingerings - Violin

With respect to three octave scales on the violin, all the scales which start with the second finger, can have the same fingering. One rule for memorization is "up on the A, down on the E" (Viola, of course would be "up on the D, down on the A"). In other words, you shift up on the A string in the ascending form of the scale, but come down on the top string, in the descending form.

Second finger scales include those scales with the tonic on:

B flat, B, C, C#/D flat, D, E flat, E, F, and F#/G flat

FINGERING:

- Play two of the scale notes on the A string, then shift up;
- On the E, it's 1-2 (shift), 1-2, then an extension at the end: 1-2-3-4-4;
- The descending form is 4-4-3-2-1, 2-1, 2-1;
- then cross over to the A string

The three non-second finger scales are:

- G:
 - Ascending: on the A, 3rd position; E string, 1-2, 1-2-3-4-4
 - Descending: down to first on E; 4-4-3-2-1, 2-1, 2-1
- A flat
 - Ascending: on the A, 3rd position; E string, 1-2, 1-2-3-4 (no extension)
 - Descending: down to first on E; 4-4-3-2-1, 3-2-1, 2-1
- A (same as A flat)

- Ascending: on the A, 3rd position; E string, 1-2, 1-2-3-4 (no extension)
 - Descending: down to first on E; 4-4-3-2-1, 3-2-1, 2-1
-

Steps and Half-Steps

Rules:

- Half steps in major scales: 3-4, 7-8 (numbers refer to scale steps)
- Half steps in minor:
- Always 2-3 (primary "minor" characteristic)
- harmonic: 1 1/2 steps between 6-7