

Key bowing patterns (2)

Last month's BASICS looked at how all difficult bowing patterns are nothing but several simple, basic patterns joined together into one sequence. There are relatively few basic patterns, while the number of *combinations* of basic patterns is infinite. Practising basic patterns produces immediate all-round improvement, since all variations and combinations of them improve at the same time. These exercises continue those featured last month.

- ❖ Play at the heel, middle and point. Even if a particular pattern feels awkward in a certain place in the bow, and would not normally be played there, it is still important to practise it there to improve overall control.
- ❖ Keep the bow smoothly and deeply sustained in the string. Use a lot of bow at slower speeds, and less bow at faster speeds; but at each tempo *always use as much bow as possible*.
- ❖ Always work towards pushing your comfortable upper speed limit faster and faster. The speed limit will vary according to the area of the bow. For instance, most patterns will have to be played more slowly at the heel.

String crossings near the heel: the frog makes small movements; the point makes large movements.

String crossings near the point: the point makes small movements; the frog makes large movements.

- ❖ Play with a metronome, starting at a comfortable tempo and gradually speeding up. Work each bowing pattern until:

- 1 It can be played very fast
- 2 The sound is entirely pure whatever the speed
- 3 The rhythm is even
- 4 It feels *easy*

Exercise 1

- ❖ Play each pattern four times, using each chord from the sequence.
- ❖ Play at the heel, middle and point. Keep the bow smoothly sustained, playing deeply into the string.
- ❖ Play each pattern beginning up-bow as well as down-bow.

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The musical notation for Exercise 1 is as follows:

- Staff 1:** Four chords: G major (G-B-D), D major (D-F-A), C major (C-E-G), and F major (F-A-C).
- Staff 2:** Rhythmic pattern 1, starting with a down-bow. It consists of eighth notes and quarter notes with string crossings.
- Staff 3:** Rhythmic pattern 2, starting with an up-bow.
- Staff 4:** Rhythmic pattern 3, starting with a down-bow.
- Staff 5:** Rhythmic pattern 4, starting with an up-bow.

Exercise 2

- ❖ Play each pattern beginning up-bow as well as down-bow.
- ❖ Also play patterns 4, 8 and 12 spiccato (or sautillé at the faster speeds).

EXAMPLE

BOWING PATTERNS

Exercise 3

- ❖ Play each pattern four times, using the chord sequence.
- ❖ Play each pattern beginning up-bow as well as down-bow.