
BASICS

Scales and arpeggios 2

Holding fingers down

Holding down the first and fourth fingers in a scale, not just as a practice method, builds great security into the left hand.

Musical notation for a scale exercise in 3/4 time, D minor. The first line shows an ascending scale with fingerings 1-4-1-4-1-4-1-4-1-2-3-4. The second line shows a descending scale with fingerings 4-3-2-1-1-2-4-4-1-1-1-1. An annotation "x-note = first finger ready on string" points to the second-to-last note of the descending scale.

- Ascending and descending, keep the first finger on the string for as long as possible.
- Ascending, keep the fourth finger on the string until after the bow has begun to play the first finger.

Taking time from the note before the shift

The short moment that it takes to shift needs to be 'stolen' from the note before the shift. If the note before is played completely full-value, there is no time to shift without arriving late. The time taken needs to be so little that the listener would never know that the note was a fraction shorter than it should have been.

- Practise by exaggeration: shorten the note before the shift and shift too early.

Musical notation for a scale exercise in 3/4 time, D major. Two examples are shown: (1) shows a note before the shift played for half its value, and (2) shows a note before the shift played for its full value but shifted slightly early.

- (1) Think of playing the note before the shift only half-length.
- (2) Shift a little later, but still getting to the arrival note slightly early.

In separate-bow shifts the finger might arrive late (i.e. the bow has already begun to move), because it is much simpler for the bow to change direction than it is for the finger to find the right place on the string.

- Practise arriving too early so that the note you shift to is played momentarily by the previous bow stroke.

Musical notation for a scale exercise in 3/4 time, D minor, illustrating separate-bow shifts. Fingerings 2, 1, 1, 4, 3, 2, 1 are shown above the notes.

BASICS

Missing out the note before the shift

- Miss out the note before the shift to feel the exact moment, within the tempo and rhythmic pulse, when the shifting finger must arrive on its note.

The exercises are written in treble clef, 4/4 time, with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The first exercise is labeled "Sul G" and consists of two measures of sixteenth-note runs. The first measure has fingerings 1, 4, 4, 3 and the second has 1, 4, 4, 3. The second exercise is also labeled "Sul G" and is titled "Arpeggio sequence used by Sevcik and Flesch". It consists of two lines of music. The first line has four measures with fingerings 3, 1, 3, 1, 3, 2, 3, 2, 4 and "etc.". The second line has four measures with fingerings 3, 1, 3, 2, 3, 2, 4 and "etc.". The third exercise is in 3/4 time and consists of two lines of music. The first line has two measures with fingerings 2, 4, 1, 4 and 1, 3. The second line has two measures with fingerings 2, 4, 1, 4 and 1, 3.

- Begin slowly and gradually speed up to a fast tempo.

Trilling shifts

- Make each shift into a sort of trill, playing it as fast as possible.
- Encourage the fingers to be very light on the string by bowing lightly over the fingerboard.

The exercises are written in treble clef, 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The first exercise consists of two lines of music. The first line has four measures with fingerings 1, 1, 1, 1, 4, 4, 4, 4, 3, 3. The second line has a first measure with fingerings 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1 and the instruction "ppp". This is followed by a double bar line and the instruction "Repeat many times". The second line of the exercise has three measures with fingerings 2, 1, 2, 1, 1, 3, 1, 3 and the instruction "simile".