

# BASICS

## Scales: finger preparation

The string vibrates between the bridge at one end, and the nut or finger at the other end. An open string always sounds pure (apart from squeaking open E strings) because it is stopped so well at both ends; but if a finger stops the string instead of the nut, the finger must have the stop ready before the bow starts to move to sound that note. Otherwise there is a momentary sound of 'fuzz' before the note becomes pure.

Obvious examples of fingers that need preparation are slurred descending notes on the same string, where the lower finger needs to be placed before lifting the upper finger; and any finger played on a new string, which must be in place before the bow gets there.

### Exercise 1

Place the prepared fingers exaggeratedly early, but exactly in time. Gradually place them later and later:

Place the x-notes (shown below as stemless notes) exactly in time without playing them

First position

(maj.)

(mel.)

(harm.)

Fifth position

(maj.) G

(mel.)

(harm.)

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## Exercise 2

The notes that most often come out slightly 'fuzzy' in scales are the first finger on the new string ascending, and the fourth finger on the new string descending. Use the following patterns as a warm-up. It can be surprising how good the normal scales feel afterwards, as well as passages in pieces.

(maj.) G

(mel.)

(harm.)

(maj.)

(mel.)

(harm.)

(maj.)

(mel.)

(harm.)

(maj.)

(mel.)

(harm.)

Next month's BASICS returns to the bow hand.