

Viola Gauntlet: Day 3 (Wednesday): Double stops

Key of the day: G major (cadences also in D)

Double stops in G: open-string pairs first, then the scale in thirds, sixths and octaves, slow and sustained before they move. A low G and D drone sits under the scales so every interval can be tuned until it rings, and the week's chord work closes with I-IV-V-I cadences in G and D. About 21 minutes with the video.

Every exercise starts with 2 bars of count-in clicks. Stretch items are marked: aim at them, don't force them.

1. Open-string long tones ~3.3 min

One unbroken tone per bow, in tune with the drone; halfway point, let the string ring after each bow

Stretch: 12-beat bows with no audible bow change

$\text{♩} = 60$
8-beat bows

13

23

36

12-beat bows: messa di voce *pp* < *f* > *pp*

2. Drone intonation ~1.7 min

Each note rings with the drone - no beats; thirds low, leading note high

$\text{♩} = 66$
listen for the beats to stop

11

17

interval ladder: hold the tonic, place each note against it

colour note

3. Fifths across strings ~1.7 min

One finger flat across two strings: a pure fifth means the hand frame is right

$\text{♩} = 60$
one finger flat across both strings - finger 1

finger 2 *finger 4*

finger 1 *finger 2*

finger 3 *finger 4* *finger 1* *finger 3* *finger 4*

mp *mp* *mp* *mp* *mp* *mp* *mp* *mp* *mp*

4. Double stops with an open string ~1.6 min

The open string is your drone: tune each stopped note until the pair rings

$\text{♩} = 60$

C and G strings: open string + stopped note - 5th, 6th, octave, 4th, 3rd

G and D strings *D and A strings*

in rhythm: 2 per bow, keep both strings sounding

mp *mp* *mp* *mf* *mf* *mf*

5. Finger pairs (Sevcik op. 9) ~1.8 min

Two fingers move as one unit: both notes land together, in tune, no gap

$\text{♩} = 60$

thirds, C-G strings: 3-1 and 4-2 *thirds, G-D strings*

thirds, D-A strings *sixths, G-D strings: 1-2 and 2-3*

sixths, D-A strings

mp *mp* *mp* *mp* *mp*

6. G major in thirds, 2 octaves ~2.1 min

Major thirds low, minor thirds high: every third rings against the G drone

Stretch: the top octave (5th-7th position) as clean as the bottom

sustained: one third per bow, 4-2 / 3-1, shift on 4-2 to 3-1

$\text{♩} = 60$

mp

slurred 2: release, shift, then weight

mf

in rhythm, one octave: long-short

7. G major in sixths ~1.5 min

Neighbouring fingers on neighbouring strings: major sixths low, minor high

sustained: fingers side by side, sixths in the hand frame

$\text{♩} = 60$

mp

slurred 2

mf

in rhythm: long-short

8. G major in octaves ~1.2 min

The hand frame again: 1 and 4 a fixed octave apart, moved as one block

Stretch: the eighth-note pass with every octave still pure

1 and 4 locked in the octave frame; the whole hand shifts

$\text{♩} = 60$

mp

slurred 2: shift the frame, never the fingers

eighths, 4 per bow

mf

9. Three-note chords: I-IV-V-I ~1.3 min

Ring three strings at once: bow near the frog, weight into the middle string

$\text{♩} = 60$
in G: I - IV - V - I, broken

together: all down-bow, ring the open strings
in D: I - IV - V - I, broken

mp

f

mp

10

in rhythm: quarter-note chords, then the final cadence

together: all down-bow, ring the open strings

f

10. Fingered octaves (stretch) ~1.1 min

Octaves without sliding: 1-3, 2-4, and the hand opens instead of shifting

Stretch: the whole exercise: fingered octaves are a long-term target

$\text{♩} = 60$

fingered octaves: 1-3 then 2-4, shift only from 4 to 1

half notes

slurred 2

mp

11. Chorale in thirds and sixths ~2.1 min

Make double stops music: one voice sings on top, the other supports it

$\text{♩} = 66$

chorale: legato, long bows, *p*

p

again, warmer: *mf*, a little vibrato on both notes

mf