

Viola Gauntlet: Day 5 (Friday): Vibrato & tone

Key of the day: E-flat major

Tone first: sounding point, bow speed and a dynamic ladder over an E-flat drone, then vibrato practised as measured rhythm (2, 3, 4 and 6 per beat) on every finger. It ends with an original slow cantabile in E-flat where the vibrato never stops and the phrases have room to breathe. About 24 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; contact point steady, watch the bow stay parallel to the bridge

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 2

finger 3 finger 4

finger 1 finger 2

finger 3 finger 1 finger 2 finger 3 finger 3

mp mp mp mp mp

4. Sounding point & bow speed ~2.0 min

Move toward the bridge to get louder: slower bow, more weight, same clean tone

$\text{♩} = 60$
C string: *tasto* -> *bridge* *bridge*: *slow, heavy* G string *tasto* *mid* *bridge*

pp < f > p mf f mf pp < f > p mf f mf

D string *tasto* *mid* *bridge* A string *tasto* *mid* *bridge*

pp < f > p mf f mf pp < f > p mf f mf

5. Dynamic ladder, pp to ff ~1.9 min

Every bow one dynamic step louder (then softer), with the tone staying centred

Stretch: the C-string pass, ppp to fff and back, with a ppp that still sings

$\text{♩} = 60$
one step per bow - every step must be audible

C string: *ppp to fff and back*

pp p mp mf f ff f mf mp p pp

ppp pp p mp mf f ff fff ff f mf mp p pp ppp

6. Measured vibrato: 2 and 3 per beat ~2.5 min

Rock from the note to just below and back, exactly in time with the clicks

$\text{♩} = 60$
2 per beat 3 per beat 2 3 2 3 2 3 G: 2 3 2

mf mf

3 2 3 2 3 D: 2 3 2 3 2 3

mf

25

mf

7. Measured vibrato: 4 and 6 per beat ~2.3 min

Faster rocking, still even: 4 per beat, then 6 per beat (stretch)

Stretch: 6 per beat (sextuplet speed), even and relaxed, on the 4th finger too

♩ = 60

4 per beat

6 per beat

13

24

mf

mf

mf

free: your natural speed

8. Continuous vibrato ~2.3 min

The vibrato keeps going through every finger change and bow change

♩ = 60

2 per bow: vibrato never stops between notes

10

18

26

mf

4 per bow: fingers 1-2, 2-3, 3-4

A string
hold, vibrato alive

G string
hold, vibrato alive

C string
hold, vibrato alive

hold, 4th finger (not open G)

9. Vibrato width & dynamics ~1.8 min

pp = narrow and quick, ff = wide and rich; the vibrato follows the dynamic

Stretch: the ff on the 4th-finger E-flat: wide vibrato with no pressing or bleat

$\text{♩} = 60$
medium wide, rich
G string: narrow, quick narrow as you fade
D string, 1st finger
D string, 3rd finger

13

10. Cantabile in E-flat (original) ~3.1 min

Sing it: unbroken vibrato, long bows, and let every rest breathe

Adagio cantabile ($\text{♩} = 56$)
dolce - breathe at every rest

11

again: more vibrato, more line

22

32