Right-hand Exercises

These exercises are designed to familiarize the right hand with pizzicato playing by practicing on open strings. The fingerings for the right hand are designed to strengthen the fingers, and develop flexibility by practicing different combinations of the 1st and 2nd fingers.

Keep the right hand facing down, as if holding a tennis ball between the 1st and 2nd finger and thumb. The thumb is placed on the side of the fingerboard.

Try to produce the longest, smoothest tone without getting a ‘pop’ at the beginning of each note. This is attained by rolling the finger around the string instead of snapping it against the fingerboard.

Pull the right hand fingers through the string instead of pulling away from the fingerboard or snapping the string.
The A flat Position

When placing the fingers on the string, do not let the joints of the fingers collapse. Keep the fingers arched, with the string on the pads of each finger, more toward the tip than the joint.

Place the 1st finger of the left hand approximately one inch from the nut on the G string. It should now be over a G♭ (or A♭), the note a half-step away from the open G. (Listen closely to this interval and check it with a piano).

The distance from the 1st and 2nd finger is equal to the distance between the 2nd and 4th fingers. This is very important for good intonation. The 2nd finger should be over an A, and the 3rd finger over B♭ or A♭.

The 3rd finger is not used alone in the lower positions.

The Notes in the A flat Position

G String

D String

A String

E String

Fig. 1A The Fingerboard in the A flat Position

The half-steps from A♭ (1st finger) to A♭ (2nd finger) to B♭ (4th finger) are equal distances. The spaces between the 1st finger to the 2nd finger, and between 2nd finger to 4th finger should also be equal.
Exercises in the A flat Position

On the G String:

On the D String:

The palm of the left hand should now be touching the neck.

On the E String:

The neck is now inside the palm. Pull back on the neck with the bicep.

* Double sharp (the same note as a G♯)
Chapter 3

The A Position

To reach the A position, move the 1st finger of the left hand one half-step up from the A♭ position. It should now be over an A, the note a whole-step away from the open G. (Again, listen closely to this interval, and check it with a piano).

The 2nd finger should be over a B♭, (or A♮) the 3rd finger over B natural.

Fig. 2A The Fingerboard in the A Position.

The Notes in the A Position

G String

D String

A String

E String
Major Scales in the A Position

G Major:

12-Bar Blues in G
Chapter 4

The B flat Position

To reach the B♭ position, move the 1st finger of the left hand one half-step up from the A position. It should now be over a B♭, the note a minor 3rd away from the open G. (As before, make sure to listen closely and learn the sound of this interval, and check it with a piano).

The 2nd finger should be over a B natural, the 3rd finger over C natural.

Fig. 3.1 The Fingerboard in the B flat Position

The Notes in the B flat Position

G String

D String

A String

E String

* Try playing this note on the string as well as the open string above it to check the intonation.
Major Scales in the B flat Position

The C Major Scale

The C major scale requires the use of more than one position. Begin in the A position, and to reach the octave C natural, shift to the B♭ position.

C Major:

Diatonic Exercises in C

Thirds:

Thirds:
Chapter 5

The B Position

To reach the B position, move the 1st finger of the left hand one half-step up from the Bb position. It should now be over a B natural, the note a major 3rd away from the open G.

The 2nd finger should be over a C natural, the 3rd finger over C♯, or D♭.

Fig. 4A The Notes in the B Position

The Notes in the B Position

G String

D String

A String

E String
Etude in the B Position

To smoothly play the triplet figures across three strings, use a rolling motion in the right hand while rotating the bow.
Chapter 6

The C Position – “The Tuning Position”

To reach the C position, move the 1st finger of the left hand one half-step up from the B position. It should now be over a C, the note a perfect 4th away from the open G.

The 2nd finger should be over a D♭ (or C♯), the 4th finger over a D natural.

Fig. 2A The Fingerboard in the C Position

The Notes in the C Position

G String

D String

A String

E String

or
Major Scales in the C Position

D Major:

fingering 0 1 4 0 1 0 2 4

scale degree I II III IV V VI VII VIII

A Major:

fingering 0 1 4 0 1 4 2 4

scale degree I II III IV V VI VII VIII

Blues in D

Rock Feel

D7

G7

A7

D7
Chapter 7

The D flat Position or C sharp Position

To reach the D♭ position, move the 1st finger of the left hand one half-step up from the C position. It should now be over a D♭, the note a tritone away from the open G.

The 2nd finger should be over D natural, the 4th finger over E♭.

Fig. 6A The Fingerboard in the D flat Position

The Notes in the D flat Position or C sharp Position

G String

or

D String

or

A String

or

E String

or
Etude in the D flat Position

D.S. al Coda (no repeat)
4-note groups:

D string

Triad and scale:

D string

D string
Etude #2 in the E flat Position

D string

\( \text{arco} \)

\( \text{p} \)

\( \text{pizz.} \)

G string

\( \text{arco} \)

\( \text{mf} \)

\( \text{p} \)

\( \text{ritar.} \)
Bowing Exercises on Each String

Placing the bow on the strings between the bridge and fingerboard, tone is produced by the weight of the arm pressing the bow against the strings. The bow is kept at a right angle to the strings, with the wrist and shoulder forming a straight line. *Almost all the bow hair should be in contact with the string for the fullest possible sound*, keeping the stick of the bow turned slightly toward the player.

The bow should be taken off the string during rests. With the German bow, place the little finger into the curve of the bow, acting like a hook, letting go with the other fingers.
Remember:
· Tilt the bow when crossing strings.
· Bow at a right angle to the strings.
· Use the shoulder and the upper arm to press the bow to the strings. Stay Relaxed.
Flat Scales

1. F Major Scale (1 flat, B♭)

2. B♭ Major Scale (2 flats, B♭ E♭)

3. E♭ Major Scale (3 flats, B♭ E♭ A♭)

4. A♭ Major Scale (4 flats, B♭ E♭ A♭ D♭)

5. D♭ Major Scale (5 flats, B♭ E♭ A♭ D♭ G♭)

6. G♭ Major Scale (6 flats, B♭ E♭ A♭ D♭ G♭ C♭)
Four-note Chords

Four-note chords can be studied by labeling their pitches with arabic numerals.

Major 6th Chords (maj6, or 6)

This chord symbol can be divided into two parts: the major triad plus the addition of a major 6th interval above the root.

C major scale:

F major scale:

Minor 6th Chords

6th chords can also be minor. A minor 6th chord consists of a minor triad plus the interval of a major 6th above the root.

C major scale:

Exercises:

1. Write and play the following major 6th chords: D6, A6, E6, B6, G6, A6, F6.
2. Write and play the following minor 6th chords: D–6, A–6, E–6, B–6, G–6, A–6, F–6.

→ If you have difficulty naming the notes in any chord, write out the respective scale and label the steps with the arabic numerals. Remember to include all sharps and flats.
Ex. 2 Roots and 5ths

Try this same approach using roots and 3rds, as in the next example.

Ex. 3 Roots and 3rds

Now combine the roots, 3rds and 5ths and use the complete triad. Try to place notes on the 4th beat that allow the line to flow smoothly to the next downbeat.

Ex. 4 Triads
Interpreting the Written Part

Given the various types of written bass parts, and the intent of some arrangers, there can be a great deal of confusion as to how certain parts should be played. We will look at several parts and try to resolve some of these problems.

Jazz ensemble bass parts are written in various degrees of completeness:
1. Fully written out, played as written
2. Fully written out with chord symbols
3. Only chord symbols
4. Chord symbols and a suggested walking bass line.

1. Fully Written Out and Played as Written

In this case, the arranger wants this part to be played as written. This can be inferred because there are no chord symbols and the pitches and rhythms have been chosen by arranger to enforce what the ensemble is doing.
Here is another example of a bass line that could be improved. Look carefully and see if you can find why parts of this line sound weak.

Measure 1 on its own seems fine, but the giant leap from the G to the F on the downbeat of the 2nd measure makes the line awkward. The line could be fixed by changing the octave of either the G or the F:

Could be played:

Having the 3rd of the chord on the downbeat of measure 3 doesn’t outline the harmony as clearly as if the root had been used on the first beat. Measure 4 on it’s own would be fine, however, it is not a good idea to use the A natural on the 4th beat, when it is going to be used on the following down beat:

Could be played: