

Violin Masterclass
With Dr. James Stern
IIMIF 2020 - July 15

Whitney

Mozart Concerto No. 3, I. Allegro

- Good technique rests on the foundation of good posture, and good posture rests on the foundation of the way you are oriented in a room
- Practice zipping from tip to frog above the strings, then slowly place the bow back on the string
- Erosion - repeating something multiple times, getting slightly worse each time you repeat it. It happens when placing unlike things together and they morph into one another
- To combat erosion, it requires a special kind of thinking to categorize whatever motions you are practicing. (never mixing slow and fast)
- Do the opposite mistake on purpose! *Ex:* if your head goes downstage when zipping to the frog, force your head to go upstage instead
- When shying away from uncomfortable bowings, it's possible that some of the poetry of the music could become lost
- Have a different kind of energy in the preparation (light, electric) than the kind of energy we use to play (heavy, lazy) to do this, there is some scary wait time between the preparation and the first sound
- Hit attack vs. breaking the glue attack (bow is glued to the string, pull against it until the glue can't hold you anymore) actually called a *colle*
- If you want to be twice as good a violinist as you are now, learn all of the written bowings :)
- Beware of the differences in the recapitulation
- An *appoggiatura* means that the first note needs to be louder than the second note (can be in the form of a grace note)
- Count count count!
- In the wait time between prep and playing, that is where you become the poet and the magic happens

Amica

Saint-Saens Concerto No. 3, I. Allegro non troppo

- How could you demonstrate/count a time signature without using numbers? Ex: 4/4 time can be thought of as “strong and weak and”
 - Think of it as a type of poetry
 - You can also have some measures stronger than others
 - Sing your music using strong, weak, and other nonsense syllables
- When we really understand meter, we don’t need the metronome to tell us if we’re correct
 - “And” and “weak” are anticipatory words leading the ear to whatever is next
- To get more expression, focus on bow distribution and vary the amount of bows depending on strong and weak.
- More spring into the left hand
 - Adds to the excitement and brilliance
 - Recite fingerings like poetry. Then try playing it all on the same note, while reciting the fingerings in your head. Then try playing the fingerings, shifting so it’s all on the same note. (play 1 2 3 4 all on a C#)
 - Think “springy” when replacing fingers (ex: 3rd finger with 1st finger, 1st finger with 4th finger, etc.).
 - Prepare with tons of energy then focus the energy.
- Avoid heavy-fingered glissandos
- A lot of French music should have a “silky sound”
- When a violinist plays out of tune, they ask “what don’t I know about the fingerboard?” Instead, you should ask yourself “what don’t I know about my left hand?”
- Play the octave section at the tip of the bow. Then you have a whole bow to use for the last note
- When practicing fingered octaves, alternate between 1 & 3 and 2 & 4 on the same note (ex: 1 & 3 on octave Cs then switch to 2 & 4 on octave Cs)
- The tip of the bow is where you get to feel the spring of the stick, especially if you have a springy left hand!

- Feel a “rubber band snapping” in your left and the bow. Especially at the end of big runs. Also go for a “scrubby click”
 - Think of it as an elevator crashing through the ceiling!