

The First Two Years

Developing a Beginning String Program

Midwest Clinic - December 18, 2002

Brian Cole - Moorhead, Minnesota Public School

- I. Welcome
 - Dad's words of Wisdom

- II. School Configuration
 - 350 Students per grade
 - 140 Beginners
 - 90-100 Second Year Players
 - 5th Grade in 4 Schools
 - One 25 Minute Lesson a Week
 - Large Group Three times a year
 - 6th Grade in
 - One 25 Minute Lesson a Week
 - Two 25 Minute Rehearsals a week
 - One 70 Minute Evening Rehearsal a week
 - One 25 Minute Chamber Music Coaching every other week

- III. Recruitment
 - Pre-5th Grade
 - Christmas
 - Young Peoples Concert
 - May Pops Concert
 - 5th Grade
 - First two days of school
 - Sound Production (pizz/arco) Cello on the Head
 - Name this Tune - Peer Gynt - tell the story -
 - Thursday Night - Orchestra Sign up -
 - Monday - lessons start

- IV. The First Lesson
 - Room in Order -
 - Part of a Team - Sense of History - Photos -
 - Items to pass out
 - Folder w/Label
 - Practice Calendar
 - Flash Cards
 - Information sheet
 - Learn Body Parts - no bow - show broken bow
 - Posture - Pluck open strings with CD

- V. Assignment Cards & Newsletters
 - See Attached

- VI. The First Twelve Lessons
 - Next Page

- VII. Sixth Grade Concepts
 - Circle of Fifths
 - Order of Sharps (5th Grade)
 - Transposition
 - Playing by Ear

- VII. Extra Orchestra Offerings
 - Cultural Outing
 - Parent's Night
 - Sledding Party
 - Regional Tour
 - Summer Camp
 - The week before workshop in August
 - 6th and 7th Graders
 - Lesson (2) - Sectional - Rehearsal (2) - Theory - Recital - Gym - Practice - Lunch
 - Overnight - Concert - Guest Artist - National Anthem at Baseball Game

The First 12 Lessons

Week 1	Posture - Sing - Pluck Open Strings
Week 2	Add Fingers on D and A String - Scale - Sing
Week 3	KFD - Bow Hold on Straw - then pencil
Week 4	Instrument on Shoulder - bow hold with tubes - rosin raps
Week 5	Short Week - Review - MEA
Week 6	Sing & Pluck Twinkle - ABA - Bow Open Strings
Week 7	Tune with up bows - Bow with Fingers - 10 second long bow Practice Method Sign it Pluck it Air Bow it Play it
Week 8	15 second long bows - bow the scale - pepporoni pizza - dir.
Week 9	Finger Trills (use 4th) - 8th notes - d scale
Week 10	Play open string in dark - marshmello/snicker - half notes -
Week 11	G Sring - ABC 123 on the G - Play by ear -
Week 12	Memorize Jingle Bells -

It is something to be able to paint a particular picture, or to carve a statue, and so to make a few objects beautiful; but it is far more glorious to carve and paint the very atmosphere and medium through which we look, which morally we can do. To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts.

-- Henry David Thoreau, "Where I Live"

Repetitious Phrases from the Elementary Classroom

The First Twelve Lessons

Posture

- “Feet flat on the floor forever” (use a hammer as a prop)
- “Back is straight - Head Is Up - Looking like a million ducks”
- “The Better you look the Better you play”
 - “If you look pathetic you’ll sound pathetic - if you look professional you will sound professional”

Cello/Bass Left Hand

- 1 “Biff your neighbor” (Left arm extend straight out)
- 2 “Do the Dew” (Pretend to hold a can of Mt. Dew - not a juice box)
- 3 “Bring it on in”

Violin/Viola Getting Instrument on Shoulder

- “Belly to the Birdy- Make a ‘V’ between your knees and navel- Fiddle above your head - fiddle right on your shoulder-jaw in the jaw rest”
- “Feet flat fiddle flat”

Violin/Viola Left Hand

- “Fingers round curved and boxy” (we do boxy with a British Accent)
- “Rind of on the tape or right on the tape” (we do right on the tape in a low voice)
- “Hamster Dead or Alive!” (we do Alive ala Frankenstein)

Bow Issues

- “We tighten the bow before we play we loosen the bow when we put it away”
- “Lean in with your booger pikin' first finger”
 - “Why? - - - so you can bow the snot out of it”
- “Bow Parallel to the Floor” (cello and bass)
- “Lane #3 - Middle of the Road”
- “We tune from the Tip”

Bow Hold for Violin/Viola

- “The bump touches the hair - the middle two hug the frog- the first linger lays down and the pinky does push ups”

Other

- “We use the rests to look and plan - - - A H E A D ”
- “Air pluck, pluk - Air bow, bow - - practice this and it will snow” (Practice Method)
- “ABC 123 on the G”

Rote Before Note from the Elementary Classroom

The First Twelve Lessons

Lesson 1

String Greeting - Play long and prosper-

Prepares students for half step - whole step - ala Vulcan Greetings from Star Trek

Brush your teeth- Bad breath-

Prepares Students to bend elbow and wrist in their right arm - Bass use Grandfather Clock

Flash Cards -

Prepares students for notes that are introduced in lesson two.

Polish your nails

For Violin/Violas - creates boxy fingers

Lesson 2

Scale - Musical Ladder - They must know definition

We have them start "G" on their "D" string and pluck down - Bass open "G" and descent

Prepares students to be able to pluck and bow the scale

KFD - Keep Fingers Down

Have them pluck open "A" with all of their fingers down on the "D" string

Prepares students for "Look and Plan Ahead"

Yes, I Can Seeeeeee you

Have students make bump in right thumb and connect it to first joint in middle finger

Prepares students for bowhold - Bumpitus = what we call the thumb - Brush Teeth etc.

Lesson 3

Bow Hold on Straw

Prepares students for little tension we go to bows or pencils

Up to the Moon - Down to Earth

We call this rocket ship air bow - visually lines up with "up and down" bow - wrist bends

Finger Taps

Prepares Students for Finger Trills (Lesson 7)

Lesson 4

Bow through Toilet Paper Tubes

Helps wrist bend - feels just like bowing on the instrument -

Lesson 5

Bow Taps - At the Frog - Middle and Tip

without making any sound - prepares students for full use of bow - connect the dots

Lesson 6

10 Second Long Bow - From the tip (we increase each week up to a 40 second long bow)

Prepares students for slow bows i.e. half notes and wholes notes

Wash your arm - extend the left arm out in front of you - place right hand at left elbow and wash to wrist

Prepares students for 8th notes - we say "Pepperoni Pizza" or "Minnesota Vikings"

Lesson 7

Pepperoni Pizza on Open D- and then up a scale

Prepares students for next lessons which is page 22 in Red Book - Essential Elements

Lesson 8

Finger Trills - O-1-O-1-O-1 & 1-2-1-2-1-2-1-2 & 2-3-2-3-2-3-2-3 & 3-4-3-4-3-4-3-4

Each grouping in one bow - prepares students for slurs and use of 4th -

Memorize Mary Had a Little Lamb

Prepares students for same finger pattern on "G" string

Later *F Natural - F Sharp* - Have them play those notes - prepares half step between one and two