

The Right Finger on the Right Spot

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Overview to “The Right Finger on the Right Spot”

- Tuning Instruments
- The Right Finger
- The Right Spot
- Finger Refinement
- Ensemble Refinement

Tuning Instruments in Baby Steps

- Kids can do it, so **Work on it**
- Baby steps that make sense
 - Matching a reference pitch to each string
 - It’s like a stretched rubber band
 - Ex. Second Grade, “Lets Play D”
 - Tuning fifths
 - With drones
 - Tune yourself
 - Tuning with harmonics
 - Understanding the physics

The Right Finger

- First, students need to know what finger is the right finger
 - They must understand the fingerboard through hand frames
 - They must learn the “feeling” of whole steps and half steps
- Hand frames for violin and viola players
 - Four main hand frames

 - Three unusual ones
- Hand frames for cello players
 - Minor 3rd hand
 - Diatonically uses 1, 4, and either 2 or 3
 - Major 3rd hand
 - Diatonically uses 1, 2, and 4

- Hand frames for bass players
 - There are only three choices
- Teach students to “Think like a string player”
 - Meaning, what hand frame is use
 - when I am in this key
 - on this string
 - in this position
 - Worksheets
- Teach students to find hand frames in the literature



- Use note names, not numbers
 - This is not a 2
 - This marking is a problem
 - Think like a string player
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The Right Spot

- Wiggle strings
 - Sympathetic Vibrations
 - When tuned perfectly, one vibrating string will move another string sympathetically
 - To a string player this is most important when considering the fundamental
 - Ex. the A on the G string will move the open A string
- Wiggle strings can place the first finger
- Wiggle strings can shape the size hand
- Wiggle strings can place the hand in the right position

Finger Refinement

- What does it mean to be in tune?
 - Talk about this and let students babble
 - Technology
 - Tonal Energy app and iReal Pro
 - Yamaha HD-200
- Repetition
 - Dr. Suzuki, Nurtured by Love

It is a matter of “Ease comes with training.” We simply have to train and educate our ability, that is to say to do the thing over and over again until it feels natural, simply and easy. That is the secret.” p. 51
- The trick is to make it fun!
 - One idea is to practice “scales” (or playing in a key signature) through chord changes

Ensemble Refinement

- Tune chords often
 - Root, 5th, 3rd, 7th then others

Resources

Alexander, M. (2012). 20 ways to get your string orchestra to play in tune. *Southwestern Musician*. 81(2), 28-31.
<https://www.tmea.org/southwestern-musician/issues/September-2012/>



Spieker, M. (2020). Field Guide to String Education: Intonation
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<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/1033890>

