



FORGETTING RIGHT-HAND FLEXIBILITY?

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January 18, 2020
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WANT TO FOLLOW ALONG?

<http://jacobmdakon.weebly.com/pedagogy.html>



SOME CONTEXT

- Right-hand flexibility is a 2nd- or 3rd-year skill
- Multi-step yearlong process; not in most method books
- This method applies best to a Franco-Belgian Style Bow Hold
- High and low strings hold the bow differently and flex differently.
- Influences include Paul Rolland, Don Hamann, and Robert Gillespie.
 - Paul Rolland's *The Teaching of Action in String Playing*
 - Hamann & Gillespie's (H&G) *Strategies for Teaching Strings*

MOVING OF THE BOW (ROLLAND)

- When starting a down bow at the balance point (home),
 - Wrist and knuckles are flat
 - Fingers and thumb are curved
 - Elbow is slightly lower than the wrist
- When starting the up-bow at the upper-half or tip,
 - The wrist raises slightly
 - The fingers extend
- During the direction change at the frog, return the fingers home.
 - The wrist slowly flexes downward returning to the original down-bow position

AS PART OF THE STRING CURRICULUM

- Prerequisites
 - Bow Hand-Shape (finger placement, relaxed, rounded)
 - Simple-Connected Bow Stroke
 - Flexion/Extension of right elbow
 - Abduction/Adduction of right shoulder
 - Pronation of hand into bow stick
 - Staccato Stroke
 - Refine Pronation motion
- Preparation for 2nd- and 3rd-year right-hand skills:
 - Using the full bow with smooth bow-direction changes at the frog
 - Portato (Louré)
 - Collé (violin/viola only)
 - Refined brush stroke and spiccato

HOW DO WE TEACH RIGHT-HAND FLEXIBILITY?

Sequence:

1. Away from bow or bow-like object
2. Using lightweight object (pencil, dowel, or straw)
3. Transfer to the frog or balance point as necessary (no instrument)
4. Apply bow to instrument

AWAY FROM THE BOW: “JELLYFISH”

“Jellyfish”

- Hold and relax right hand in front of body
- Initiate an upward pulse with the arm and forearm; allow hand and fingers to react as if tentacles of a jellyfish.
- **OUTCOME:** Releases tension in students’ right-hand fingers

W/ LIGHTWEIGHT OBJECT: “TALL FINGERS/SHORT FINGERS” (H&G)

- Create a relaxed and curved bow-hand shape on a pencil or straw. Ensure the knuckles are relatively flat.
- Move index, middle, ring, little finger, and thumb from curved flat position into straight relaxed position
- Slowly alternate between straight and curved bow hand-shape position.
- Keep fingers and hand relaxed throughout; wrist may react slightly.
- Variation: Use bow; do the same motion after pronating the hand.
- **OUTCOME:** Explores the range of motion in the fingers; releases any tension in students’ right-hand fingers

W/ LIGHTWEIGHT OBJECT: THE “FOLLOW THROUGH” (ROLLAND)

- Form a bow hold around the bow-like object
- Move the bow straight up toward the ceiling; fully extend right arm.
- “As the arm reaches its limit, move the hand fingers, and bow a little further. Allow the fingers to flex and follow through.”
- Do not grip the bow tightly with the first finger.
- Variation: Transfer motion to the bow
- **OUTCOME:** Isolates movement in the arm, allowing fingers to move the bow independently.

WITH BOW: “CREATING RESISTANCE”(ROLLAND)

- Hold the bow in front of the bow; support the upper third of the bow with the left hand.
- Start with a flat hand and knuckles (i.e., home)
- Pretend to push an up bow, allowing the wrist to raise and fingers to straighten slightly.
- Pretend to pull a down bow, allow the fingers to return to the flattened position (home)
- Variation: Drag the hand over the bow, use friction to initiate wrist flexibility
- **OUTCOME:** The friction between the hand and bow stick allow the wrist and fingers to imitate the flexing motion.

WITH BOW: “PULL AND PUSH” (H&G)

- Form bow-hand-shape at the frog. Hold the upper half with left hand with bow in front of body.
- Push and pull bow with the **left** hand; allow right hand to react (flex) to the motion. Repeat.
- Push and pull bow (flex) with the **right** hand; allow left hand to react. Repeat.
- Repeat motions over left collarbone for violins and violas.
- **OUTCOME:** Students can move the bow with only the flexion and extension of fingers

WITH BOW: “PENCIL INSIDE OF THE BOW TIP” (ROLLAND)

- Hold bow with right hand at the balance point or frog
- Support the tip by inserting a pencil between hair and bow stick.
- Keep the bow hair parallel to the floor
- Pull bow back and forth with the right-hand fingers. Allow hand and wrist to move.
- Increase motion to include détaché stroke.
- **OUTCOME:** Finger flexibility is developed in an authentic bowing situation. Allow for experimentation of different bow lengths.

WITH INSTRUMENT: “STOP AND FLEX” (H&G)

- Review “Creating Resistance” with the bow on the string
- Pull the bow 3 to 4 inches. Stop and flex fingers; push the bow.
- Repeat. Decrease the stopping time gradually.
- **OUTCOME:** Finger flexing is developed in an authentic bowing situation.

WITH INSTRUMENT: “BALANCE POINT RUB” (H&G)

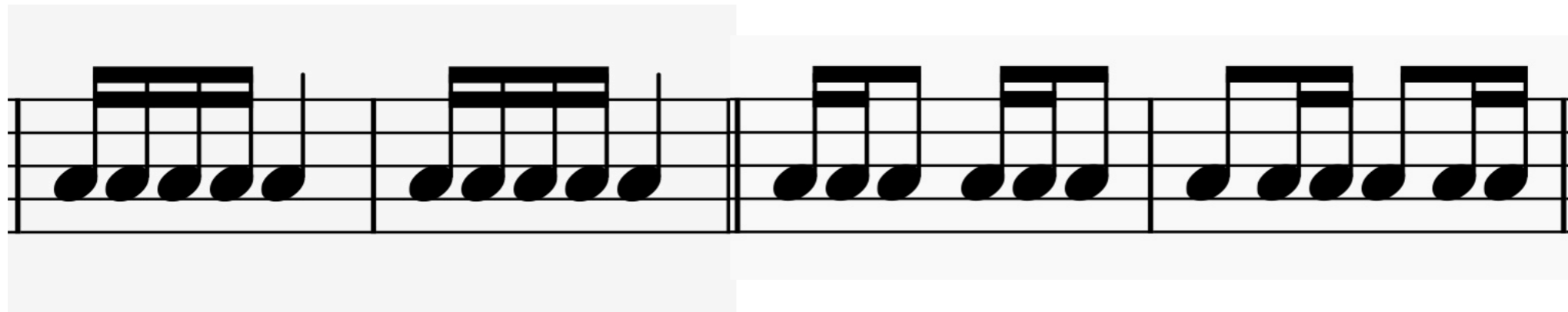
- Create a proper bow-hand shape near the balance point. Place the bow on the string at the balance point.
- Instruct students to make short strokes at the balance point by flexing their right-hand fingers and wrist.
- **OUTCOME:** Preparation for spiccato stroke.

WITH INSTRUMENT: “LIFT/SET/SETTLE/SCRUB” (H&G)

- Raise bow directly above the string (“lift”).
- Set the bow on the string without drawing it (“set”)
- Drop the shoulder, knuckle, and knuckles; flex fingers into traditional bow hand shape (“settle”)
- Using the fingers only, scrub the string (“Scrub”)
- **OUTCOME:** Allows student to practice setting the weight of their arm into string; helps students initiate an articulated bow stroke.

ASSESSING FLEXIBILITY

- Can the student flex with ease at the frog when the bow is stationary?
- Can the student flex the wrist and fingers while pulling 1/4, 1/2, and 3/4 of the bow?
- Do the wrist and fingers adjust slightly when playing simple quarter-double-eighth rhythms?



- Can the student student pull a full bow with smooth wrist and finger motion?

THANK YOU FOR COMING!

QUESTIONS?

(This presentation has been posted to jacobmdakon@weebly.com)

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