

A PARADIGM SHIFT

*Starting Position Work in
Fourth Position*

KU



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SOME THOUGHTS BEFORE WE BEGIN...

- Proficiency in the various positions is *a fundamental skill* for all stringed instruments.
- *Technical training must come from us, the school teacher.* Many of our students don't have the resources to take private lessons.
- *String educational repertoire calls for IV position; we've just been working around it.*
 - A substantial number of JW Pepper's top 100 original and classical works (Medium/Medium-Advanced) require IV position for violins and violas.

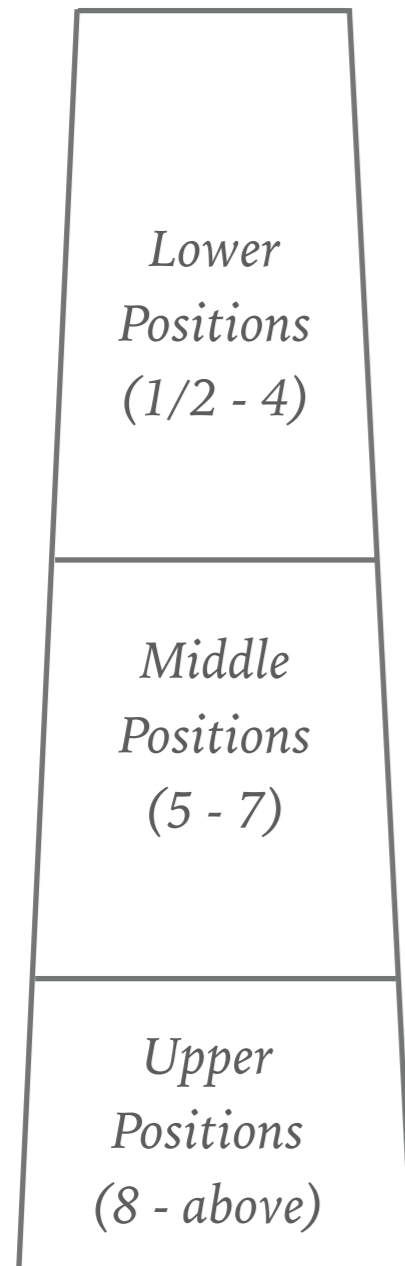


PURPOSE

- ▶ Let's introduce shifting by starting in IV position.
 - ▶ What is our sequence?
 - ▶ What are some strategies we can use to teach shifting?
 - ▶ How do we teach the bass pivot?
 - ▶ How do we connect IV position with III position?

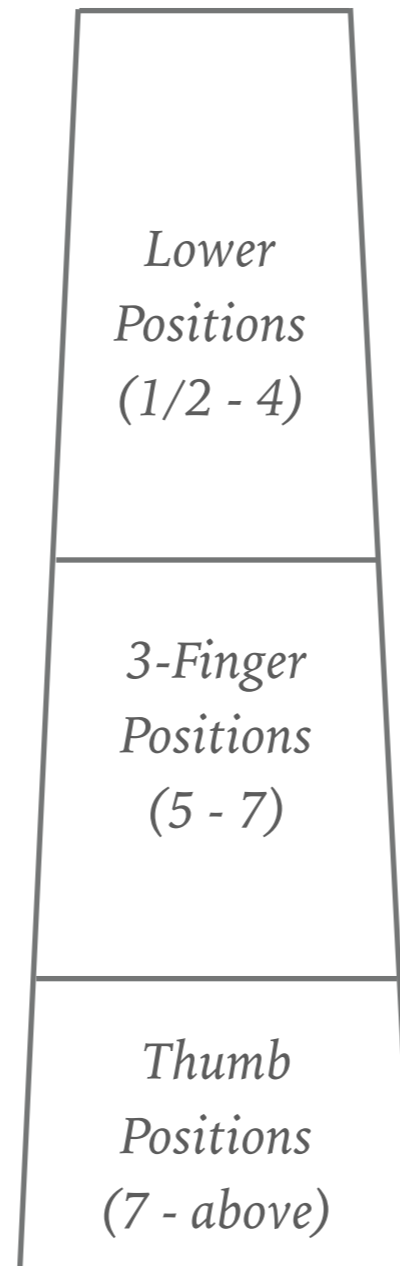
WORKING DEFINITION OF THE POSITIONS

Violin/Viola



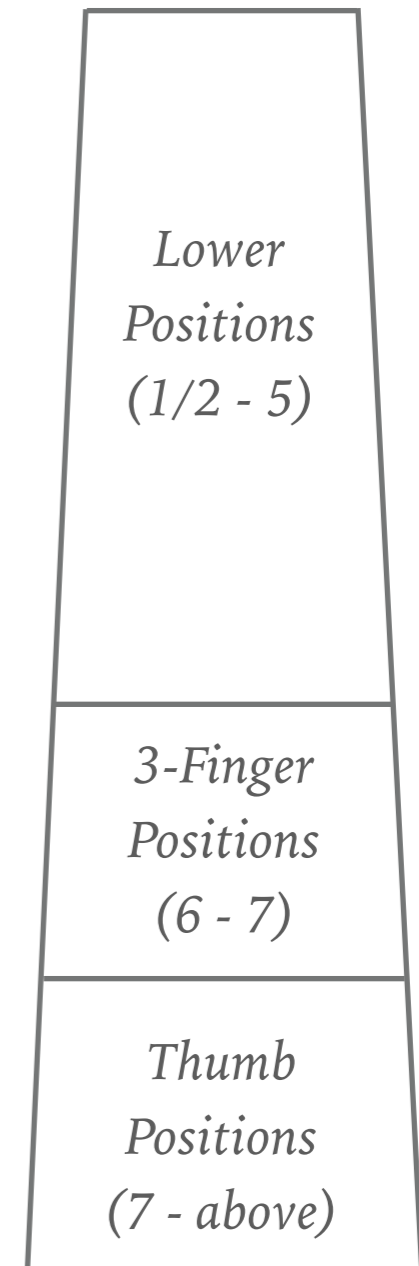
(Simon Fischer)

Cello



(Janos Starker)

Double Bass



(Franz Simandl)

WHY FOURTH POSITION?

- Cellists and bassists often use the heel as an anchor point; violinists and violists use the bout (shoulder).
- I and IV positions outline the other lower positions (II and III).
- Violins and violas must be able to play in IV position just as well as III position.
- Cellists and bassists need IV position when violinists and violists play in III position.
- Bassists have the opportunity to learn pivots into V position.
- Similar to I position, IV position fits tonal pattern nos. 1 and 2 for violins/violas (e.g., 12-3-4; 1-23-4)
- IV position provides access to the 3rd and 2nd (middle/octave) harmonic.

What does this look like in practice?

PREREQUISITES TO FOURTH POSITION

- Heterogeneous shifting instruction typically begins when:
 - Violins/Violas know I position and all five-finger patterns
 - Cellos know extensions as well as I, II, and upper-II position (e.g., F-nat. and F-sharp)
 - Basses know I, II, III, and 1/2 positions (e.g., G, F-nat., E-flat)

SETTING LEFT-HAND SHAPE

Violin/Viola

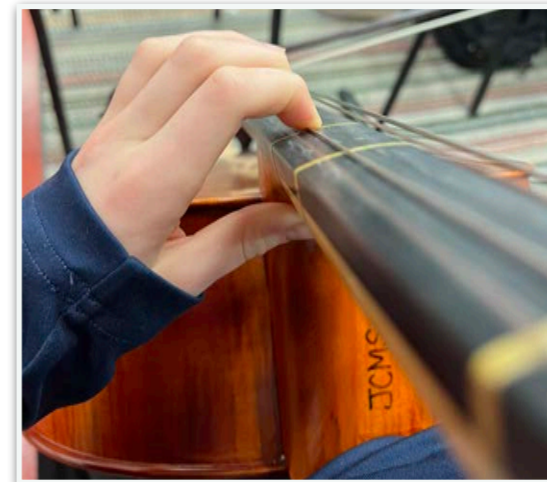
- The shape of the fingers when contacting the fingerboard remains the same as in I position.
- The hand contacts the bout of the violin, “replacing the index finger in forming the second point of contact.” (Galamian, 1962)
- The side of the index finger and its metacarpophalangeal (base knuckle) joint **may separate slightly** from the instrument but not to the extent of the hand in V position.
- The spacing between the fingers decreases proportionally.



SETTING LEFT-HAND SHAPE

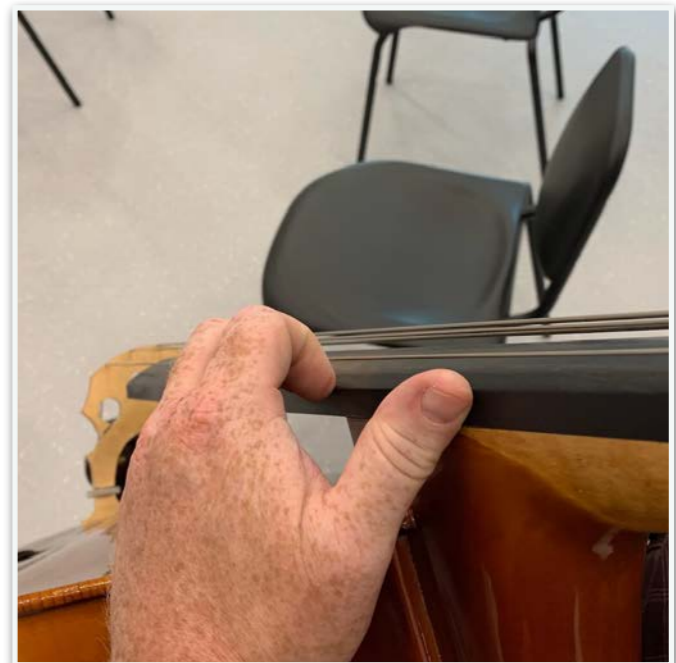
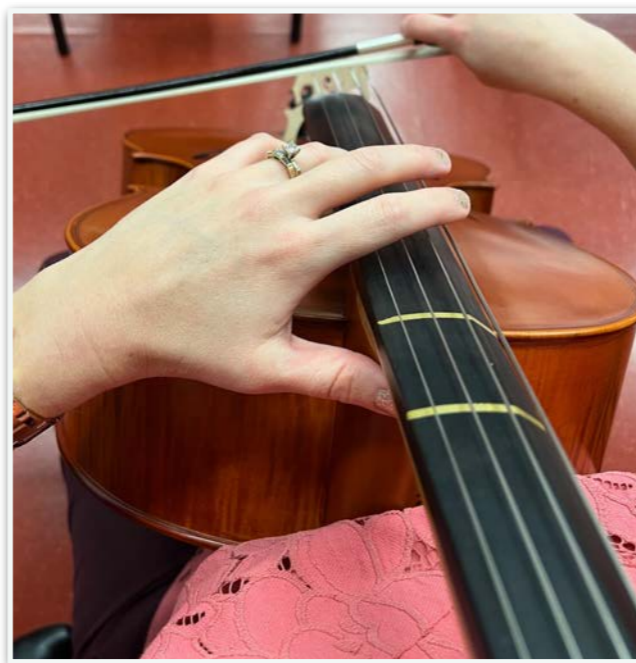
Cello/Double Bass

- The thumb contacts the heel of the cello and bass.
- The hand shape remains the same as I position.
- The spacing between the fingers decreases proportionally.
- The thumb is positioned closer to first finger, given the thumb's contact with the heel.
- There are two types of bass necks:
1) D neck (IV) and 2) E-flat neck (V).



SHIFTING TO THE 2ND (MIDDLE) HARMONIC

- Best practice throughout the 20th and 21st century (Bornoff/Rolland).
- Teaches students to relax the hand & thumb in preparation for shifting.
- Violinists and violists should learn 3rd and 4th finger; cellists and bassists use 3rd finger.
- See George Bornoff's *Patterns in Position* for a comprehensive collection of exercises. (see handout p. 3)



FINDING IV POSITION

Try these shifting exercises to find IV position:

Step 1: Setting the Aural Expectation

<i>E</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>E Har.</i>	<i>A</i>
1	0	1 (Slide)	1

Step 2: Initiating Thumb Movement

<i>E</i>	<i>E Har.</i>	<i>A</i>
1	1 (Slide)	1

Step 3: Initiating the Silent Shift

<i>E</i>	<i>Rest</i>	<i>A</i>
1	-	1

Step 4: Self-Evaluate w/ Open A

<i>E</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>A</i>
1	-	1 0

TEACHING THE BASS PIVOT

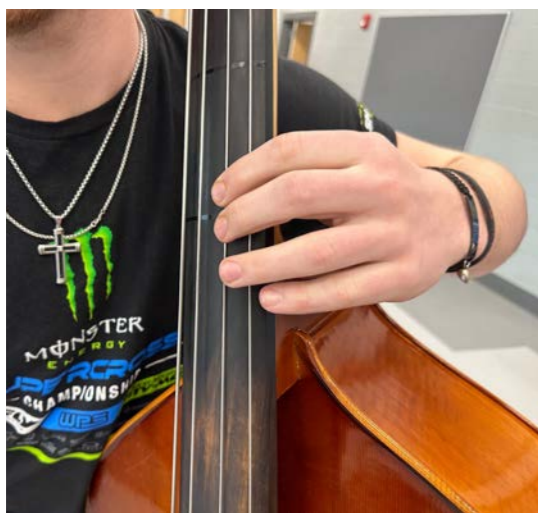
- ▶ The bass pivot refers to when the fingers move up or down the fingerboard but the thumb remains static.
- ▶ Most easily learned in IV to V position (only move a 1/2 step).

Step 1: Finger Exchange

Step 2: Play the 1/2 Steps

Step 3: Pivot

Musical notation for the bass pivot exercise, showing three steps: Step 1: Finger Exchange, Step 2: Play the 1/2 Steps, and Step 3: Pivot. The notation is on a bass clef staff with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). Step 1 shows positions IV and V. Step 2 shows positions IV and V. Step 3 shows positions IV and V. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1, 2, 4, and (P) for the thumb. The notation shows the thumb (1) and fingers (2, 1, 4) moving up and down the fingerboard while the thumb remains static.



A. Hand before pivot



B. Thumb before pivot



C. Hand after pivot



D. Thumb after pivot

TEACHING THE BASS PIVOT

*So easy, a
middle schooler
can do it!*



GETTING FAMILIAR WITH IV POSITION

Practice only tonal patterns no. 1 (hWW) and 2 (WhW) in IV position on each string by rote and follow up with note reading (see handout pp. 4-5)

- ▶ Pattern no. 3 (WWh) requires extensions in IV position and should be taught after students feel comfortable with the first two patterns.
- ▶ Pattern no. 4 (WWW) requires cellists to play V extended position and bassists to play VI position.

Practice:

- ▶ Play tetrachords with rhythmic variations
- ▶ Play modal “Marys” in IV position on each string
- ▶ Play Kradoudja (aka “Snake Charmer”) and “Sakura”

The image shows a musical score for string quartet, divided into three columns for the D String, A String, and E String. The rows represent the Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), and Cello (Cb.).

- Violin (Vln.):**
 - D String:** Shows a tetrachord pattern (1, 2, 3, 4) with a slur over the first three notes.
 - A String:** Shows a tetrachord pattern (1, 2, 3, 4) with a slur over the first three notes.
 - E String:** Shows a tetrachord pattern (1, 2, 3, 4) with a slur over the first three notes.
- Viola (Vla.):**
 - D String:** Shows a tetrachord pattern (1, 2, 3, 4) with a slur over the first three notes.
 - A String:** Shows a tetrachord pattern (1, 2, 3, 4) with a slur over the first three notes.
 - E String:** Shows a tetrachord pattern (1, 2, 3, 4) with a slur over the first three notes.
- Cello (Cb.):**
 - D String:** Shows a tetrachord pattern (1, 3, 4, -3, -4) with a slur over the first three notes. Below the staff, it indicates IV and V positions with fingerings: IV (1, (4), -3, -4) and V (-2, 4).
 - A String:** Shows a tetrachord pattern (1, 3, 4, -3, -4) with a slur over the first three notes. Below the staff, it indicates IV and V positions with fingerings: IV (1, (4), -3, -4) and V (-2, 4).
 - E String:** Shows a tetrachord pattern (1, 3, 4, -3, -4) with a slur over the first three notes. Below the staff, it indicates IV and V positions with fingerings: IV (1, (4), -3, -4) and V (-2, 4).

SHIFTING DRILLS BETWEEN I AND IV POSITION

(See handout page 6 for exercises)

- A. Shift from open string to 1st finger in IV position and check 1st finger with the open string.
- B. Practice the shift of a perfect 4th from 1 to 1 on each string.
- C. Practice the shift of a perfect 4th from 2 to 2 on each string (3 to 3 for cello; 4 to 4 for bass).
- D. Combine the 1st and 2nd finger shift in IV position.
- E. Combine the 1st and 2nd finger shift in IV position with faster pitch changes.
- F. An inversion of exercise 'E'.
- G. Practice the new-finger shift. Set the guide finger (grace note) during the rest.
- H. Practice the new-finger shift. Use the guide finger from exercise 'G' to find the new fingered pitch.
- I. Another exercise to practice the new-finger shift. Use the guide finger from exercise 'G' to find the new fingered pitch.

CONNECTING IV AND III POSITION

(See handout pages 7 and 8 for exercises)

- A. Sets IV position using open A, and set the aural expectation for B-flat.
- B. Practice finger replacement between IV and III positions.
- C. Shift from IV to III position and check the 1st finger with the appropriate adjacent string.
- D. Practice playing pitches from the first tonal pattern in III position. Basses shift between III and Upper III positions.
- E. Same concept as 'D' with faster pitch changes.
- F. Practice playing the pitches from the second tonal pattern in III position. Cellists shift in Extended Upper III position. Bassists shift between III and IV positions.
- G. Same concept as 'F' with faster pitch changes.
- H. Violins and violas stay in III position; cellists shift between III to IV position; bassists shift between III and V positions.
- I. Same concept as 'H' with a different tonal pattern.
- J. Practice shifting between III to IV position and playing the harmonic in the first tonal pattern. Vln/Vla shift on $\frac{1}{2}$ step. Bassists shift between III and V positions and the harmonic.
- K. Same concept as 'J' with a different tonal pattern.

PRACTICE MORE ADVANCED SHIFTING

- Shifting from a higher to a lower finger in IV and III position
- Move to different strings (cycle form)
- Shift to different fingers (must adjust for cello/bass)
- Shifting to new finger on an adjacent string
- Move into II position

THANK YOU FOR COMING!



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