

Géza Szilvay

Colourstrings®
Violin ABC

Handbook for teachers and parents

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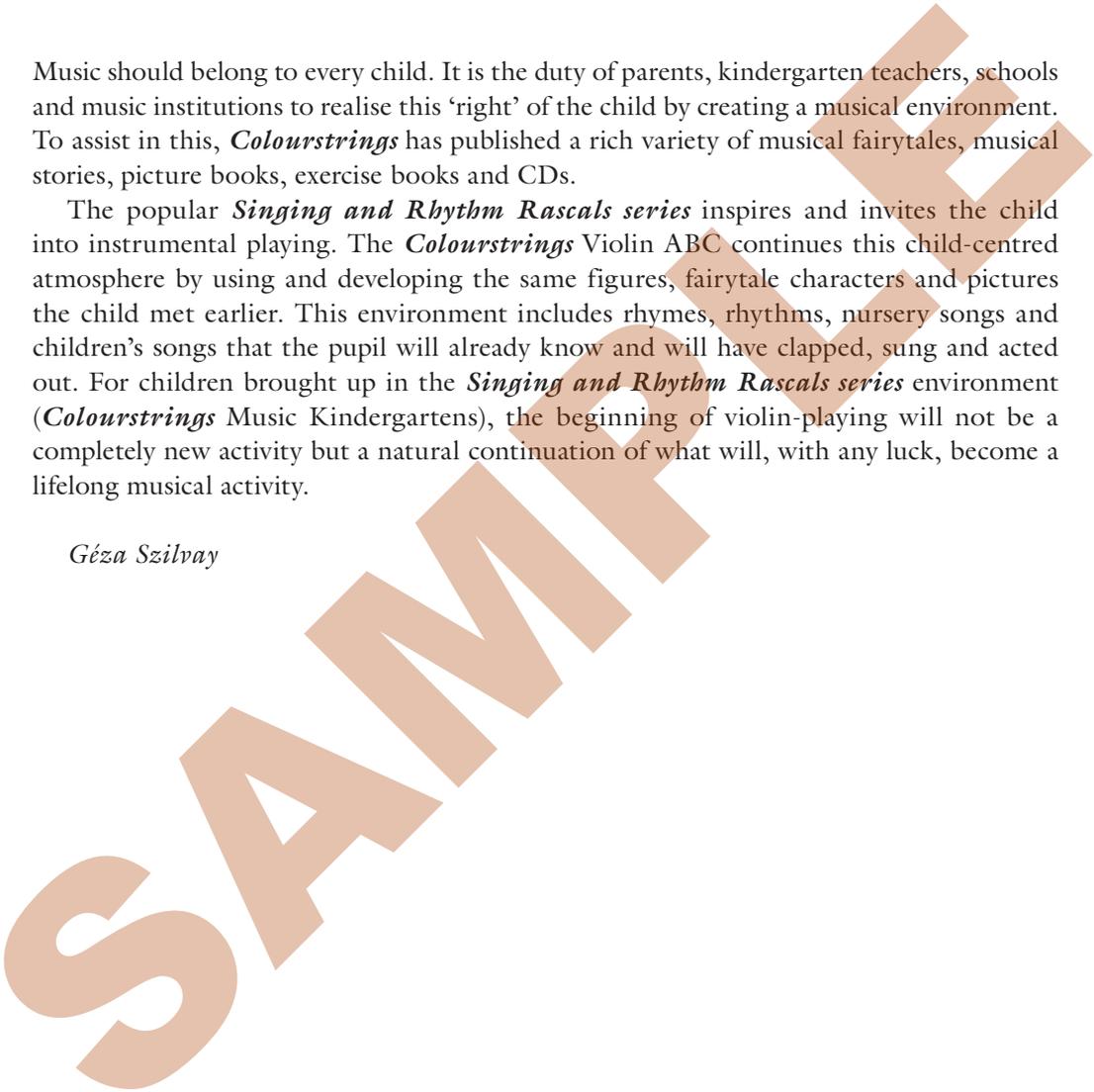
SAMPLE

FOREWORD

Music should belong to every child. It is the duty of parents, kindergarten teachers, schools and music institutions to realise this ‘right’ of the child by creating a musical environment. To assist in this, *Colourstrings* has published a rich variety of musical fairytales, musical stories, picture books, exercise books and CDs.

The popular *Singing and Rhythm Rascals series* inspires and invites the child into instrumental playing. The *Colourstrings* Violin ABC continues this child-centred atmosphere by using and developing the same figures, fairytale characters and pictures the child met earlier. This environment includes rhymes, rhythms, nursery songs and children’s songs that the pupil will already know and will have clapped, sung and acted out. For children brought up in the *Singing and Rhythm Rascals series* environment (*Colourstrings* Music Kindergartens), the beginning of violin-playing will not be a completely new activity but a natural continuation of what will, with any luck, become a lifelong musical activity.

Géza Szilvay



Special features of the *Colourstrings* Violin Books

Colours

Children prefer colours to plain black. Colours awaken and maintain interest and make the learning process easier, more enjoyable, deeper and longer-lasting.

Visual Presentation

Rhythm, pitch, intervals and other elements of musical grammar are introduced and explained visually. These pictures and illustrations bring complex musical ideas within the child's sphere of understanding.

Rhythms

The early rhythm exercises consist only of basic rhythms ♩ ♪ ♫ ♬. Gradually, the complete, rich repertoire of more complicated rhythms is introduced, step by step.

Melodies

The melodies are graded similarly, from the simplest, two-note songs to more complex pentatonic and diatonic melodies.

Form

The melodies are short, so that the form can easily be absorbed, mastered and learned by heart.

Singing

Before playing, the child may sing the songs with words, solfa or rhythm names. Songs given with words are those published in the *Colourstrings Music Kindergarten* books (*Singing and Rhythm Rascals series*): however, teachers or pupils are at liberty to make up their own words.

Instrumental Technique

In the history of violin teaching, *Colourstrings* is the first method to use natural harmonics in a systematic way to develop the beginner's technique. Similarly, the use of left-hand pizzicato is emphasised and taught from the very first lessons. Left-hand pizzicato is executed by all fingers of the left hand. A new idea is the 'numbered' pizzicato (see A1, Teacher's Handbook p. 17). The numbered pizzicato prepares the left hand fingers for the stopping motion without the burden of intonation.

Integrated Teaching

Besides teaching violin technique, these books enable a teacher to develop children's musical hearing (solfa), musical intellect (theory) and enrich their emotional world *all at the same time*. These integrated elements should be in constant balance with each other: nevertheless, the books introduce only one new component (technical, theoretical or musical) at a time.

Joint functioning of the senses

For the teaching of any new element, the *Colourstrings Violin ABC* applies the principle of reinforcement of perception through joint functioning of the senses because what is perceived simultaneously by two or more senses leaves the deepest and most lasting impression.

Child-friendly stave system

The standard stave system is reached step by step, almost imperceptibly. It initially starts with no stave at all, then introduces the one-line and two-line staves, then the two-line system superimposed within a five-line stave, and finally, the full five-line stave.

The colours, visual representations and simplified stave systems are never in contradiction to conventional notation: rather, they grow sequentially into it in a natural 'organic' way.

Relative solfa

Colourstrings uses the *Guido-Glover-Curwen-Kodály*-developed system of relative solmisation. The movable DO (tonic solfa) enables the young player — with the help of transposition — to become acquainted with the whole fingerboard during the very early stages of learning an instrument.

Letter names — A, B, C, etc — are not used in the *Colourstrings* approach until a later stage: we consider that, for beginners, they place a limit on technical advancement and facility whereas the use of relative solfa actually enables a far greater freedom, both technically and musically. Relative solfa in time then paves the way for absolute pitch together with letter names of the notes: special scale exercises and performance pieces are designed for this purpose.

Colourstrings also advocates the abandoning of the illogical 'H, His, B' used in parts of Europe and promotes the use of 'B, Bis, Bes' to avoid confusing the child.

Mother-Tongue Principle

The instrument is not only an extension of the child's arms but also of his or her *soul*. The first melodies played on the tiny violin should be chosen after the *Singing and Rhythm Rascals* pattern from the child's national and local heritage. They should first be sung and then played. For these indigenous melodies, blank pages are given at the end of each chapter of the books. At the same time, this principle invites the violin teacher to develop the *Colourstrings* approach to meet local and individual needs.

Creativity

Instrumental playing should not be imposed on the child but s/he should be invited and encouraged through involvement. The 'creative pages' at the ends of each chapter offer space and opportunity for active involvement through

- colouring
- copying
- composing
- transposing
- transforming (into different modes)
- improvising

Group teaching

Colourstrings teaching is based on individual tuition; nevertheless, group teaching alongside the individual lessons makes a valuable addition. Therefore, the Violin ABC has been designed in such a way as to make it useful for group instruction as well.

Chamber Music

Group teaching develops naturally into playing chamber music together. Within the *Colourstrings* approach to instrumental teaching, there is a rich repertoire of chamber and orchestral music that supplements the Violin ABC books.

Repetition

Colourstrings books are intended to be used not only page by page but with continuous revision and a concomitant expectation of improvement each time: for example, learning to play a piece by heart, with dynamics, in transposition and with different tone colours.

There have been many children brought up through the *Colourstrings* approach who have become professional musicians, some of whom are internationally renowned. Naturally, not every young beginner will seek to become a professional but the first steps in basic musicianship should be the same for the future professional and the serious amateur. While using the books, the teacher should not take the attitude of pushing the child into professionalism but should bear in mind that the child may one day become a great artist on this instrument. This sort of approach in the teacher and parent will create a relaxed atmosphere, nevertheless with an awareness of responsibility for the child's future. The pupil-teacher-parent triangle will thus bring a sense of happiness and well-being into the learning atmosphere.

DEVELOPING THE BASIC HOLDS, BASIC MOVEMENTS AND BASIC RHYTHMS ON OPEN STRINGS

PAGE A1

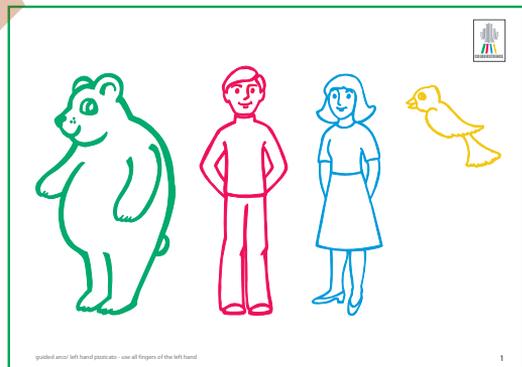
Pitch and becoming acquainted with the violin

The violin strings are illustrated with these pictures and, at the same time, the pupil becomes acquainted with pitch.

Play the open strings (long and short, fast and slow, loud and soft voices) with left hand pizzicato (mainly with the fourth finger), then arco. The student should be assisted with the bow hold and the stroke guided by the teacher.

One can teach the child to pluck the

- G (Bear/Teddy) string with the 1st finger
- D (Daddy) string with the 2nd finger
- A (Mummy) string with the 3rd finger
- E (Birdie) string with the 4th finger



In this way, all fingers are active and the independence of each finger is encouraged right from the very beginning.

In this book, this type of left hand pizzicato is referred to as 'numbered pizzicato'. Numbered pizzicato will make the left hand figures independent, thus prepares the fingers for the future stopping movement.

Numbered pizzicato can be carried out easily when the left hand is in the middle position (III or IV position). In first position, the strings may be too close together and/or too close to the fingerboard.

The basic hold of the violin

The correct basic position requires standing with feet slightly apart and a good posture from the hips upward. The shoulders and the hip joints are placed in one line, avoiding a twisted rotation.

The violin is a plane upon which various actions are performed (stopping, shifting, vibrato). These actions can be executed well only if the child holds the instrument freely but securely. This has to be taught from the very beginning.

The basic hold involves:

Lower support

the contact surface of the collarbone and the back of the violin (shoulder rest)

There is no ideal shoulder rest which fits every child. A pupil with long neck needs usually a bridge type of shoulder rest but a child with short neck may need only a piece of leather or even can hold the violin without any shoulder rest.

As the child grows, and the shoulder rest, which was perfect one month may not be adequate the next. The left shoulder's natural position should be regularly controlled and the raising of this shoulder indicates that the shoulder rest and/or chinrest needs either further adjustment or changing to a different type better suited to the child.

Side support

the point of contact of the neck and the violin's side (lower bout)

This contact should be very light and gentle but nevertheless constant. The metal adjuster of the chinrest on the lower bout may irritate some pupil's skin. Many children display mild skin allergies towards metal (especially copper). The regular use of a clean handkerchief may help. Also the metal adjuster can be covered by a piece of soft flannel or chamois-leather.

Upper support

the placing of the left side of the chin onto the chinrest

There is no perfect chinrest: each child needs individual attention to choose the correct one for him or her. Chinrests with sharp edges should be avoided because they can cause physical pain for the child. Similarly the deep and narrow type of chinrests are not suitable for children. Large, shallow chinrests where not only the chin but also the jawbone can be placed in with maximum comfort should be searched for. If this comfort is not found in spite of many tests, the teacher may well start teaching without chinrest and the position of the head should be established on the cover/top plate of the violin.

the position of child and instrument.

Note: there are certain professions (e.g. medicine, hairdressing, ballet) where the doctor, hairdresser, ballet master or other practitioner must touch the patient, client or student. The work of a violin teacher in teaching the first years of violin playing is unquestionably one of these professions. Mere verbal explanations, illustrations or showing by example are not sufficient when, e.g., establishing the hold of the violin and bow. A child cannot translate verbal instructions into tactile sensory memory.

The feeling of the correct bow stroke can only be achieved by moulding the pupil's hand into an optimum hold. This should happen with the assisting hand of the teacher and it takes time. Pedagogues working with beginners should make it clear to the parents that 'remote control' teaching at this stage does not work properly. The relationship is built on mutual trust where the parent's presence in the lesson is always welcome.

The establishment of good violin-hold (and bow-hold) can be done only through individual teaching. It is our duty to emphasize to parents, teachers and most of all to school and institution policy-makers that proper and quality teaching can be achieved only if group lessons are complemented with regular weekly individual tuition.

PAGE A2

The realm of the violin strings

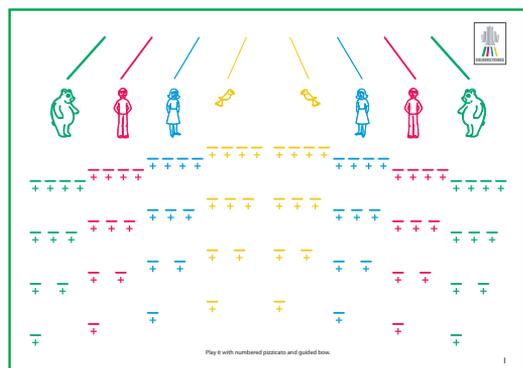
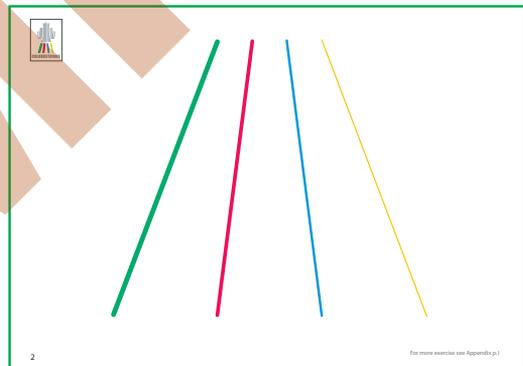
This picture of the strings is used to guide the child into the more abstract world of violin playing. Showing the strings in this way is a step away from the fairytale pictures of Page 1 and towards the reading of musical notes.

Exercises

See notes for Page A1 and Appendix p. I

- numbered pizzicato (all fingers of the left hand):
 - G-string: 1st finger
 - D-string: 2nd finger
 - A-string: 3rd finger
 - E-string: 4th finger
- guided arco

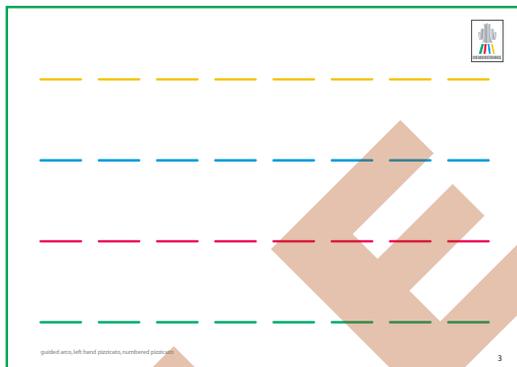
Exercises should always be played in a variety of musical ways – e.g., fast, slow / forte, piano / high, low - to encourage a sense of musicality at the earliest opportunity and to ensure that the children do not always approach pieces at a 'moderato' speed and at a *mezzo forte* dynamic.



Appendix p. I

Long (crotchet/quarter note/TA)

These lines represent the time-value and length of the prospective crotchet/quarter note. In this way, the children are given a visual image of the note's length and value (which is particularly important while practising pizzicato).



Exercises

- left hand pizzicato (mainly with the 4th finger)
- numbered pizzicato (all fingers of the left hand)
- guided arco

Left-hand pizzicato variations:

- use only one finger
- alternate between two neighboring fingers (1-2, 2-3, 3-4)
- alternate between two non-adjacent finger (1-3, 2-4, 1-4)
- descending pizzicato 4-3, 3-2, 2-1, 4-3-2-1

The lines (notes) can also be played

- arco (the bow being guided by the teacher)
- and then alternated between left hand pizzicato and the bow.

When playing with left hand pizzicato, the guided bow stroke movement might sometimes be imitated in the air (mimed).

These lines (notes) are not used merely for open strings. Later on one can use natural harmonics and even stopped notes!

The rhythm lines on a page of this book will usually represent the rhythm of a nursery rhyme or children's song. **One line is one exercise.** When practising repeatedly, use different tempi and a variety of dynamics.

Chapter 3

NATURAL HARMONICS IN FIRST POSITION

PAGE A51

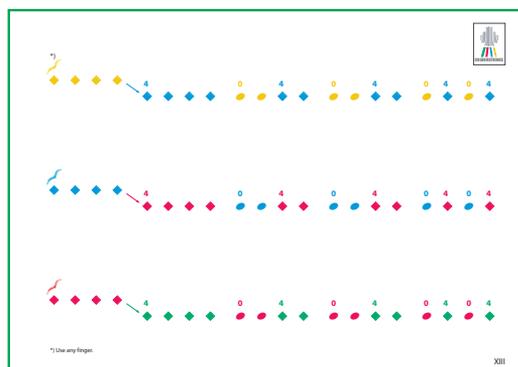
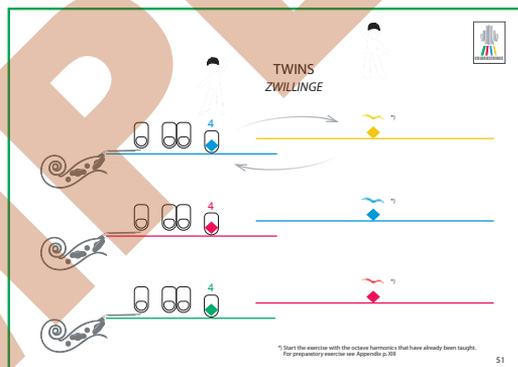
Natural harmonics (fifth) played with the 4th finger in first position.

When practised systematically, numbered pizzicato develops independence and dexterity of the left hand fingers and thus prepares their future stopping movement.

The plucking fingers of the left hand – as a next step towards the stopping movement – should now touch the string gently. (The playing of natural harmonics (octave) has already been introduced in the middle and higher positions [Ch. 2].)

In order to find the fifth harmonics accurately, firstly play the octave harmonics that have already been taught with the hand in the middle position (the finger touching the exact half-way point along the vibrating string), then bring the hand down to the adjacent lower string in first position and touch the fifth harmonics gently with the 4th finger (exactly one-third along the vibrating string length) to create the idea of twins.

Assist the pupil's hand and finger helping to find the right places on the fingerboard. In this way the teacher can mould a good, relaxed hand and curved fingers in the first position.



Appendix p. XIII

Exercises

Practise these natural harmonics (octaves and fifths) shifting between middle and first position. At first, practise each natural harmonic 4 x, then 3 x, then 2 x and finally, 1 x each.

Chapter 5

LEFT HAND STOPPING MOTION

Teaching how to use the stopping fingers takes place in the following order:

1st finger	0 – 1
2nd finger	0 – 1 – 2
independent 2nd finger	0 – 2
3rd finger	0 – 1 – 2 – 3
independent 3rd finger	1 – 3
	0 – 3
4th finger	0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4
independent 2nd and 4th fingers	0 – 2 – 4
independent 4th finger	0 – 4
	1 – 4

While teaching the melodies of Book B, the traditional right hand pizzicato playing of the songs should be avoided, because right hand pizzicato playing requires considerably stronger stopping movement of the left hand than at arco playing. The fingers would use too much force to press the strings down and it makes the left hand-technique very heavy and rigid.

Notes for Book B

While learning from **Book B**, teachers should not forget **Book A**, whose songs, scales and technical exercises should be continually revised.

Besides being accurate with rhythm and pitch, the teacher should always remember to phrase the songs beautifully and use expression, dynamics and avoid teaching every song at a *moderato* tempo and *mezzo forte* dynamic.

With songs that are memorised, use extreme tempi, dynamics and expression - *lento*/*presto*, *pianissimo*/*fortissimo*, *crescendo*/*diminuendo*, *ritardando*, *rubato*. Try to introduce character - e.g., *maestoso*, *giocoso* - and invent games to enliven the teaching and make it more child-centred.

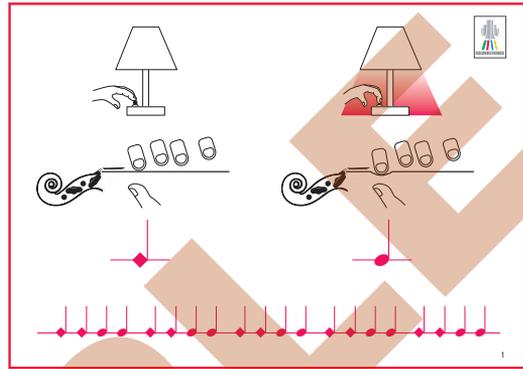
The first finger

PAGE B1

The use of the first finger (0 – 1)

Teachers commonly observe that beginners press the violin string either too hard or too lightly. Every effort should be made to achieve minimal but sufficient application of force. The pictures on p. B1 illustrate this matter. (One should use the same amount of force for stopping as one uses for, e.g., switching on a lamp.)

The child has already been taught how to play a natural harmonic, where the finger touches the string gently. A stopped note is achieved by stopping the string sufficiently firmly. The pupil should thus notice that tones vary with the amount of pressure or strength used.



It is unnecessary to use a visual aid for notes in 1st position (such as dots or tapes) on the fingerboard. Although this may achieve a faster initial result, in the long run such aids can mislead the child into ‘looking for’ intonation, instead of listening for it. The fingers should be trained so that they carry out the command of the ear, not the eye.

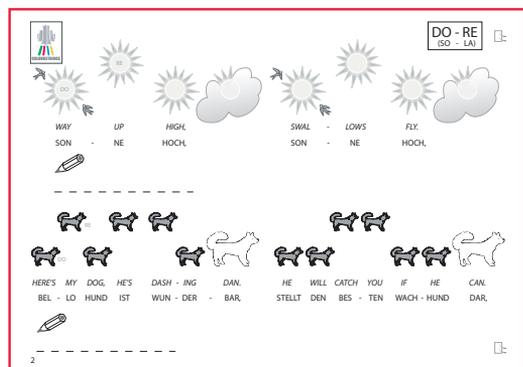
PAGES B2-B3

Pictorial two-note melodies ** (d-r / s-l)

The picture symbol moves up and down on these pages according to the pitch (high or low) of the song’s melody line.

The pupil should sing the song first and then play it on the instrument. (0 – 1 open string and 1st finger.) For more information on singing, see Book A, pp. 54-55, Teachers’ Handbook p. 49.

The teacher (or the pupil with teacher or parental help) should write in song lyrics appropriate to his/her vernacular region (e.g. Mr Sun, Our Dog Sammy in Queensland).



**) Double asterisks indicate that a song belongs to the “Singing/Rhythm Rascals” repertoire.

Chapter 6

THE TWO-LINE STAVE WITHIN THE FIVE-LINE STAVE

NEW RHYTHMS AND BOW DIVISION

Five-note melodies

PAGES C1–C3

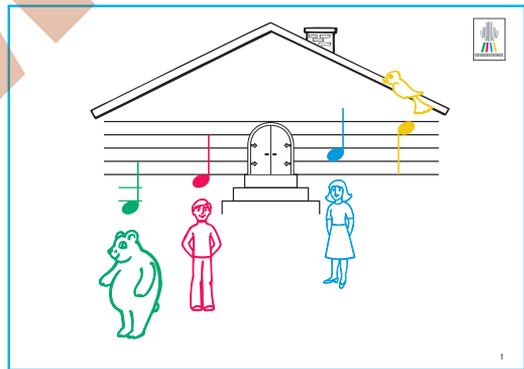
A child-centred introduction of the stave (system) and leger lines
Notation

The familiar characters (Teddy, Daddy, Mummy and Birdie) now move into a five-storey building (p. C1).

In this five-storey building, all the floors are occupied by the notes of the Daddy and Mummy strings. For the Bear, there is space only in the cellar or basement and he will need leger lines. The bird lives in the attic and, similarly to the Bear, uses leger lines (p. C2).

While using this book, occasional reading errors will generally happen with the leger lines: therefore, the teacher should return to these pages whenever such a mistake occurs.

In the former Books A and B, note writing was simplified for the children and the stems of the notes were always written upwards (except for high octave harmonics). In Book C, standard notation is used and the five-line stave is introduced step by step. In the first chapter, the familiar coloured two-line stave is thickened and placed within the five-line stave. Reading mistakes are thus minimised. The ladder now appears as a proper accidental (sharp) and is placed in front of the notes. The time signature includes a number (how many) and a TA (quarter note/crochet) value symbol.



PAGE C4
Tempi

While playing the songs and melodies of **Book B** at various speeds, the children learnt the concept of tempo unconsciously. This unconscious recognition matures into half-consciousness on this page by using the proper musical terms to indicate tempo – Moderato, Allegro and Adagio.

After this page, tempo marks will be left to the teacher to add at the beginning of the pieces at his or her discretion.

Song text:

*Come, come elf! You must be brave!
Beat your drum! Don't be afraid!*
(D.H.)

or

*Come and join the march with me!
It is easy, you can see!
One foot up and one foot down,
Marching, marching through the town!*
(D.H.W.)

PAGE C5
Down bow; up bow.

While rehearsing the repeated up and down bow movements, the teacher should call the attention of the child how to release the contact of the bow on the string. This bow pressure releasing movement should be introduced gradually:

Place the upper part of the bow on the (D) string. Raise it with a gentle downwards turning movement of the little finger. Hold the bow in the air for a while and then let it drop down bouncing freely on the string.

After repeating this “lifting-dropping” exercise several times, the bow pressure releasing function of the little finger should become obvious to the child. The movement of the tip of bow is like a railway level crossing boom gate which opens.

Use and develop this bow releasing movement even when playing with long bow strokes.

Tell the child to imagine that each violin string is like a thick rope. The bow moves on the surface of this imaginary rope but it can move and play also on the left and right side

NEW FINGER PATTERN

MAJOR AND MINOR PENTACHORD

PAGE D1

Flattened 2nd finger

New position of the 2nd finger relative to the 1st finger
Flat and natural signs (♭ and ♮)

The wavy line, together with the accidentals, will make visual for a small child the function of the sharp, flat and natural. In these exercises, the 2nd finger moves back and forth, changing its position relative to the 1st finger. The exercise should be practised both with a gliding movement and with a lifted stopping motion of the 2nd finger. Because of the relationship of the two fingers, the 1st finger should, in this case, be kept on the string all the time.

PAGE D2

2nd finger position in relation to the 1st and 3rd fingers

The 1st finger, and the 3rd finger on the higher adjacent string, are anchored in position on the strings while the 2nd finger moves back and forth between the two. This is a good exercise for practising mixed natural/basic and flattened finger patterns.

It should be practised both with a gliding movement and a lifted stopping motion of the 2nd finger. If it is too difficult you may use it as a silent exercise

without a bow. Pay attention to the relaxed left hand. Ensure that the child is not gripping the neck of the violin between the thumb, base joint of the 1st finger, and the stopped 1st and 3rd fingers.

PAGE D3

Three-note melodies played with flattened 2nd finger

Appendix p. I

The staves are now more conspicuous and the notes mainly appear in black. Nevertheless, to reduce reading difficulties, coloured fingerings are given and more can be added by the teacher if necessary. The middle line, which divides the staff, is still printed in blue.

The three-note (tritone) melodies with the new note **TI** lead the children towards the minor scale. The relevant D-book Appendix exercises introduce and explain the new position of the **DO**-key and the syllable **TI**.

Appendix p. II

PAGE E1
Reading exercise

This reading exercise is a continuation of the similar exercises presented on the last pages of the Violin School Volume D. The pupil should read and play these notes. When reading, it is recommended that the child says the note names aloud, using the absolute (letter) names of the notes.

In the third section of the exercise, where the notes appear out of order, the E, A and D notes are printed twice. They should be played both as an open string and with the fourth finger.

Repeat this exercise and use it as a remedial device when reading mistakes occur.

The image shows a musical score for a violin reading exercise. It consists of six systems of music, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are color-coded: red for E, blue for A, green for D, and yellow for G. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4. The first system has a box with a wavy line above it. The second system has a box with a hand icon above it. The third system has a box with a hand icon above it. The fourth system has a box with a hand icon above it. The fifth system has a box with a hand icon above it. The sixth system has a box with a hand icon above it. A large, diagonal watermark reading 'SAMPLE' is overlaid on the score.

PART I

THE SECOND FINGER

The natural or basic finger pattern

PAGES E2-E7

Exercises and melodies played with natural/basic finger patterns

The majority of violin schools introduce the stopping movement of the fingers with the most natural finger position, where the second and third fingers are close to each other. We propose that this natural position of the fingers be named the “natural” or ”basic” finger pattern instead of the often-used term; ”first” finger pattern. The child has already been playing with this finger pattern since Book B. This chapter is actually a repetition where we now raise the playing with this natural finger pattern into a full consciousness in connection with reading in the absolute system.

The easy finger exercise on page E2 trains the second finger and connects its natural/basic stopping movement with the stopping movement of the other fingers (including string crossings).

When the exercise is played with slurred bowings, the tempo may be gradually increased to Allegro.

The double stops are marked with the ad libitum sign nevertheless their regular playing is advised.

The image shows a page of musical notation titled "PART I THE SECOND FINGER". It includes several staves of music with fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4) and a diagram of a hand with fingers numbered 1, 2, 3, 4. The diagram is labeled "THE NATURAL OR BASIC FINGER PATTERN". There are also diagrams of a violin and a bow, and a cartoon character. The page is numbered 2 at the bottom.

PAGES E8–E10
 Natural harmonics in first position

To play consecutive natural harmonics in first position (4th, 3rd, 2nd finger) on the same string may disturb the logic of the child because the harmonic played with a lower finger produces a higher pitch than a harmonic played with a higher finger. We intended to visualise this strange novelty with the figure climbing on his hands.

Our violin school has so far avoided teaching this peculiarity (exception B p. 56). However, at this stage, the phenomenon is considered an interesting challenge and pupils will most likely practise it willingly.

NATURAL HARMONICS IN FIRST POSITION

The diagram shows a stick figure with its hands raised, climbing on them. Below the figure are two sets of musical notation. The left set shows a sequence of notes on a single staff with fingerings 4, 3, 2. The right set shows a sequence of notes on a single staff with fingerings 1, 2, 3. The notes are placed on the same string, illustrating the concept of natural harmonics.

This section contains three sets of musical notation, each with a small illustration to its left. The first set is accompanied by a girl sitting on the ground. The second set is accompanied by a rabbit. The third set is accompanied by a bear. Each set of notation shows a sequence of notes on a single staff with fingerings 1, 2, 3, 4. The notes are placed on the same string, illustrating the concept of natural harmonics.

* The teacher may write fingering under the notes so that the pupil can play the notes in second position. It is possible to use different fingerings in order to play the notes in various positions 1st, 2nd and 3rd. Change positions as well.

SAMPLE

PART V

SPECIAL POSITIONS OF THE STOPPING FINGERS

PAGES F1–F11
Half position

Half position facilitates the easier playing of certain musical passages on the violin.

The finger exercises on pages F2 and F3 present two fingering options for the same note material; one is clearly clumsy and the other is convenient. The purpose is to demonstrate the indispensability of half position.

The falling column of mercury below 0° C on page F4 illustrates the corresponding downward (toward the scroll) movement of the hand. With the drawing of a thermometer, we hope to intrigue and motivate the young pupil to take more interest in practising this useful finger placement.

PAGES F12–F26
The sharpened or double sharpened first finger
The double sharp

While planning the lesson, the teacher should reserve time to explain the effect of the double sharp on the altered notes.

When playing the various scales on page F14, particular attention should be paid to the first finger, which alternates between basic and sharpened stopping position.

At this stage, the pupil is already confident in recognising the notes by their absolute pitch name. However, the child's musical mother tongue, the relative solmisation (movable DO), is still to be continuously used. The new solfege syllable is RI, the name for sharpened RE (p. F19).

To ensure perfect intonation, difficult passages, such as those that contain chromatic steps, should be sung with solmisation before playing.

THE SHARPENED OR DOUBLE SHARPENED FIRST FINGER
THE DOUBLE SHARP

12

PAGES F27–F32
The sharpened or double sharpened second finger

In the beginner's literature, the pupil seldom experiences this rare double sharp position of the second finger. But, in order to achieve optimal mastery of the fingerboard, it should be introduced and practised even during the basic years of instruction.

The short preparatory exercise on page F28 trains the second finger to play this new extreme position.

THE SHARPENED OR DOUBLE SHARPENED SECOND FINGER

27

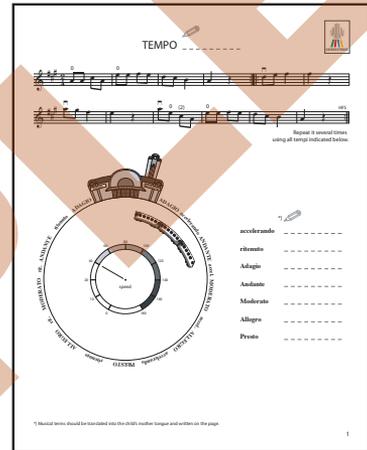
BASIC RHYTHMS

PAGES 1-7 Tempo and dynamics

The concepts of tempo and dynamics are introduced in Volume C of the Colourstrings Violin School. In all of the Colourstrings Volumes, the teacher is required to use different tempi, dynamics and expression even when teaching the simplest pieces. It has been left to the teachers' discretion however, to write these signs on the child's music.

The purpose of this chapter of the Yellow Pages is to teach the so far semi-consciously played tempo and dynamic concepts fully consciously. The most important tempo and dynamic markings are indicated in the book, but the teacher is invited to add his/her own more detailed information to enrich the interpretation of the piece. With the help of the changing tempi and dynamics, the child's playing will be more colourful and interesting and (s)he will be more involved emotionally thus enhancing artistic creativity.

It may be useful to introduce the metronome during this chapter.



PAGES 8–16
Time signatures and $\frac{3}{8}$ time

When teaching children, the instrumental teacher needs time and patience to explain the concept of time signatures.

The time signature contains two numbers. The lower number shows the note value, and the upper indicates how many of these notes are contained in one bar of the piece.

In Volumes A-D of the Colourstrings violin school, the time signature, therefore the beat, is restricted to the quarter note (crotchet) (but see A-book Appendix pp. III-V). To feel and understand this quarter note beat, the children are taught to march and clap the beat: firstly by marching and clapping the rhythm of the piece, then by marching and singing the piece and finally by marching and playing the piece. The quarter note beat (TA) is visualized by the drawing of a shoe print.

When the lower number of the time signature is an eighth note (quaver /TI), the beat of the piece is an eighth note. If necessary, the marching-clapping-singing-playing exercises should be done with these pieces as well. To visualize this new, lighter eighth note beat, the picture of a flower is used, in contrast to the heavier shoe print. The pieces in this chapter should be taught in 3, i.e. count 3 in each bar. The more condensed “in one” counting and playing of $\frac{3}{8}$ time is introduced later on, in Yellow Pages (YP) I: 33-45. (From hereon page numbers only given in numerals.)

The diagram illustrates the concept of 3/8 time. It features two boxes at the top: the first contains '3 in 3' with a musical staff showing three quarter notes, and the second contains '3/8 = 3/8' with a musical staff showing three eighth notes. Below these are four rows of musical notation. The first three rows show a quarter note followed by two eighth notes, with shoe prints (representing a quarter note beat) underneath. The fourth row shows three eighth notes, with flower prints (representing an eighth note beat) underneath. A large watermark 'A' is overlaid on the diagram.

PAGES 17–21
Triplets

The beat is shown in the left hand pizzicato part (indicated with + sign), which should be played initially by the teacher whilst the student plays the arco part. Later on the student can pluck the beat with the left hand on the E string and bow the G string simultaneously. (YP I: 17).

It is important that the various notations of the triplet are introduced and understood, even in these early stages of learning. (YP I: 17).

The musical score shows a triplet of eighth notes in the left hand, indicated by a '+' sign and the word 'TRIPLET'. Below this are several variations of the triplet, each with a circled '3' above it. A large watermark 'A' is overlaid on the score.

BASIC RHYTHMS AND ORNAMENTS

PAGES 1-8
Change of the time signature

Contemporary music contains many different time signatures. Composers use changes of time signature deliberately to make their compositions more interesting and challenging for conductors, players and listeners.

The pieces of the chapter should be taught with care. It is important that the pupil learns to feel and understand pulses, such as the quarter note (crotchet) beat and eighth note (quaver) beat. This will enable the student to change between time signatures with no disturbance to their music reading or playing skills.

The image shows a page of musical notation titled "CHANGE OF THE TIME SIGNATURE". It features several staves of music with various time signatures and musical notations. The first staff is in 4/4 time. The second staff is in 3/4 time. The third staff is in 2/4 time. The fourth staff is in 3/8 time. The fifth staff is in 2/8 time. The sixth staff is in 3/8 time. The seventh staff is in 2/8 time. The eighth staff is in 3/8 time. The ninth staff is in 2/8 time. The tenth staff is in 3/8 time. The eleventh staff is in 2/8 time. The twelfth staff is in 3/8 time. The thirteenth staff is in 2/8 time. The fourteenth staff is in 3/8 time. The fifteenth staff is in 2/8 time. The sixteenth staff is in 3/8 time. The seventeenth staff is in 2/8 time. The eighteenth staff is in 3/8 time. The nineteenth staff is in 2/8 time. The twentieth staff is in 3/8 time. The page includes a small illustration of a girl and a boy, and a small icon of a person in a wheelchair. The page number "1" is visible in the bottom right corner.

PAGES 9–14
Thirty-second note and rest (demisemi-quaver)

The left hand pizzicato part (indicated with the sign \dagger) should first be played by the teacher while the pupil plays the arco parts. At a later stage, the pupil can simultaneously pluck the beat with their left hand on the E string and play the arco part on the G string. (YP II: 9, 14)

Before introducing the last note value; the thirty second note (demisemi-quaver), the pupil should already have a thorough knowledge of all other note values. For children the drawing of the rocket symbolizes this new note value and bow speed, which is the shortest and fastest of all rhythms.

At the same time while the child learns the thirty second note, it is advisable to introduce the sautillé bowings because when the “Theme with variations” on page YP II: 9 is practiced the variations might already be played with sautillé. It is important that the pupil has a good quality bow.

The image shows a page of musical notation titled "THIRTY-SECOND NOTE AND REST". It includes a diagram of a rocket with a note value symbol, a diagram of a hand plucking a string, and a diagram of a hand holding a bow. The score consists of two staves with various rhythmic patterns and a section titled "Theme with variations". A small icon of a person is in the top right corner.

PAGES 15–16
Augmentation

For young pupils augmentation can be explained with the use of an illustration. When viewed using a magnifying glass, the kitten becomes a tiger. This is an analogy for augmentation in music, where the note values are doubled. Remind the child to read the music through an imaginary magnifying glass whenever augmentation is required.

The teacher should check that the pupil understands where the beat falls in the music. The child can be encouraged to write beat signs under or above rhythmically difficult sections before playing.

The image shows a page of musical notation titled "AUGMENTATION". It features an illustration of a kitten and a magnifying glass. The score consists of two staves with various rhythmic patterns and a section titled "AUGMENTATION". A small icon of a person is in the top right corner.

BOWINGS

A teacher who works with children needs to develop a special vocabulary. He or she should use words, which inspire and involve the pupil, appealing to the child's imagination, even developing it and creating an atmosphere optimal for learning the violin.

Violin playing could be introduced as magical and the bow for instance could be compared to a magic paintbrush, which paints beautiful pictures, performs and tells interesting stories or whispers secret feelings. To define and name the various bowings one can borrow words learnt from the children. These words will better inform the young pupil about the character of a particular bowing rather than using standard technical terminology.

In this volume therefore, alongside the traditional classification of bowings and bowing names we will use definitions, which were invented by the children.

The teaching material in this volume is all written in easy finger patterns to enable the child to concentrate on the movements of the bowing hand but the teacher may add more demanding fingerings for more advanced pupils.

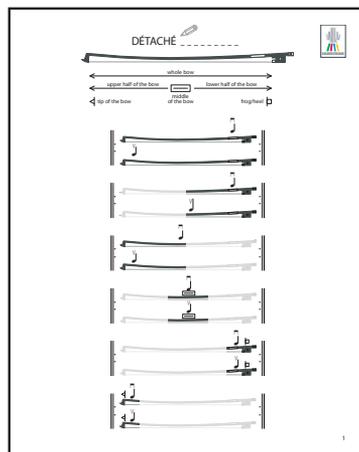
Please observe and ensure that the player's bowing arm; shoulder-elbow-wrist are in one line. Edges must be avoided. We highly recommend to introduce all bowings at an early stage by assisting (guided bow) the bow-stroke of the child. Come back to this volume repeatedly to refresh the technique of the different bowings to bring them to a higher level.

PAGES 1–11

Detache
"Talkative"

To play consecutive notes with up and down bow-stroke directions shouldn't mean the separation of these notes. In other words: notes played with detached bowing should be nevertheless attached.

If the children liked and accepted the explanation about the "magic bow" which can paint pictures and perform stories, they will understand that in telling the story the words would not be spoken broken up into separate syllables. In music, notes are like syllables and when notes are played with separate up and down bow strokes they still have to be connected just as words are spoken connecting the separate syllables together. The connecting movement happens at the change of bow and is managed by the fingers. It is important to know that before the bow-changing movement the connection between bow and string should be lightened in order to let the string vibrate freely. After the



bow-change the connection (adherence) between bow and string should be re-established.

The art of good bow changing, feeling the connection between bow and string just before and after the change of bow direction, may take several years to achieve but it is important to work on it in the early stages of learning and the pupil will be rewarded later with a beautiful tone.

PAGES 12–22

Legato
“Binding”

In arts-pedagogy the child’s rich imagination should be utilized for learning new techniques/theories. For example, legato bowing might be introduced to the child as follows;

“Notes are magic and they can change their appearance easily at will. Sometimes they are like words or syllables, another time they appear as shining pearls. Let us make from the single pearls a beautiful necklace and use the bow like a thread to slur/bind them together. We can make jewelry from two, three or four pearls but the most beautiful necklaces are made from eight or even sixteen pearls.”

Verbal introduction or preparation like this will inspire the majority of children making them practice the legato exercises with more enthusiasm.

In legato playing the speed of the movements made by the two hands are considerably different. The left hand fingers stop several notes with fast movement, while at the same time the right hand connects/binds these notes with slow bowing movements.

The image shows a page of musical exercises for violin. At the top, there is a diagram of a violin with the word "LEGATO" written above it. Below the diagram are several lines of musical notation. The first line shows a simple melody with notes slurred together. The second line shows a similar melody with a different slurring pattern. The third line shows a more complex melody with slurs. The fourth line shows a scale exercise with slurs. The fifth line shows a scale exercise with slurs. The sixth line shows a "Theme with variations" with slurs. The seventh line shows a scale exercise with slurs. The eighth line shows a scale exercise with slurs. The page number "12" is visible at the bottom left of the page.