



# olivier LESSEUR

France

## learning violin - FREE test - Lesseur method - volume 1

### A propos de l'artiste

Professeur de violon passionné par l'enseignement du violon et la pédagogie sur 4 cordes, j'ai créé la méthode Lesseur en 5 volumes avec CDs pour apprendre le violon irlandais, classique et jazz avec plusieurs concepts pédagogiques qui simplifient l'apprentissage de l'instrument. La pédagogie est classique mais conviviale (photos, dessins, etc...), et étudie les grands styles musicaux du violon. Il est possible de débiter le violon avec la méthode Lesseur pour apprendre le violon sans connaître le solfège. Cette méthode de violon enseigne le violon "tous styles" avec une pédagogie à la fois classique et moderne.

**Page artiste :** [https://www.free-scores.com/partitions\\_gratuites\\_violoniste18.htm](https://www.free-scores.com/partitions_gratuites_violoniste18.htm)

### A propos de la pièce



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# Foreword

As a violin teacher passionate about teaching and pedagogy on 4 strings, I wished to create a method which puts the violin within everyone's reach, by developing several original concepts which simplify the learning of the instrument:

➔ The use of a guitar tuner (easy to shop for) to tune the violin and to learn precision in an interactive way.

➔ a very gradual and regular progression of the difficulty of the exercises and pieces, the development of this method having taken place "in the field" during the teaching of violin in music schools.

➔ the visualization of the melody with the "illustration of fingering of the piece" and the concept of the "mini-scales tuning and scale tuning" to learn and acquire a very good precision throughout volumes 1 and 2.

➔ "used as exercises" melodies, selected within the framework of the technical progression of each volume, with preparatory exercises for the melodies that follow, and a very educational and as efficient as possible approach, "to make the best" of each exercise.

➔ an intuitive fingering tablature (in parallel with the traditional score), designed as an aid to the learning of music theory. This method makes it possible to quickly play all styles of music pieces (traditional, music of the world, etc...) with a minimum of work without knowing music theory, but it is also conceived to interest and motivate the pupil so that he improves his level of music theory.

➔ a teaching method which reconciles traditional work (music theory, score, holding the instrument) with working with the ear (exercises without score, easy and interactive learning of precision, initiation to a technique of improvisation with the work on visual mini-scales and harmonies with 2 violins).

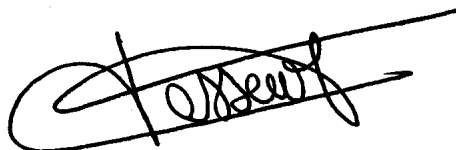
This method will enable you to improve quickly if you devote a little time each day to the practice of your instrument. The educational concept is built on the efficiency of the "mini-scales tuning and scale tuning" exercises. It is necessary to rehearse during each working session, throughout volumes 1 and 2.

You will naturally stop using the tuner for precision towards the end of volume 2.

*The violin is a magic instrument, which offers a broad palette of possible styles: traditional, gypsy, Irish, jazz, etc... Regular work with this method will then enable you to acquire the technical bases to be able to play one of these styles: classical music and its beautiful melodies, gypsy music and its virtuosity, traditional Irish music with its captivating charm, or jazz and the pleasure of improvisation.*

I hope you will improve with this method, while keeping in mind that a good proportion between work and pleasure will be the key to your forthcoming success.

Musically yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. O'Sullivan', written over a horizontal line.

## Presentation of the 1<sup>st</sup> volume

Each melody of your method includes an illustration of the fingering to use and a second score (a smaller one) which is an accompaniment to be played at the same time as the principal melody. Your teacher or a violinist with an advanced level will be able to accompany you with this second score when you have acquired a correct precision.

*The accompaniments are voluntarily written in a high or low range to allow the pupil a "tolerance of precision". However, if the precision is very good, these accompaniments will then be played in a lower or higher octave.*

You will find many photographs and pieces of advice in this book. Draw inspiration from them to improve your holding of the violin and the bow month after month, until you get a very supple and relaxed grip of both. This will enable you to overcome the technical difficulties more easily, so as to take more and more pleasure when playing the violin.

*Your book "volume 1" follows the progression of "music schools" with 30 lessons per school year, but of course, your progression will be linked to the amount of time you devote to the work on your instrument each week.*

*The best way to improve is to play each day (even if the working session is short), insisting regularly on the work on tuning exercises with the tuner (mini-scales tuning and scale tuning)*

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free



## Presentation of the CD

The CD that comes with your method will enable you to practise the exercises (  or  ) and the melodies (  ) more easily in the course of this 1<sup>st</sup> volume. Do not neglect the work on the exercises because it enables you to play the pieces more easily. Indeed the exercises in your method are conceived according to the melodies which follow, for a better mastery of the technical difficulties.

*To make listening easier (memorizing of the precision and learning of the rhythm), the exercises and the melodies on the CD included in this 1<sup>st</sup> volume are recorded without accompaniment (you will find recordings with several violins and playbacks in the following volumes).*

The exercises and the melodies are related to each other and follow a regular progression around a technical topic. You should not hesitate to repeat the exercises, and to play them over and over again (several times without stopping).

*The CD included in this 1<sup>st</sup> volume is mainly designed for listening, the accompaniments appear from the 2<sup>nd</sup> volume on. You will have to listen to each exercise (  or  ) and melody (  ) from the CD several times. So use the “repeat” function of your CD player.*

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<u>Tombalaïka (2<sup>nd</sup> violin) .....</u>	<u>CD track 12</u>
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<u>Une souris verte .....</u>	<u>CD track 29</u>
<u>D major scale .....</u>	<u>CD track 30</u>
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<u>Amazing grace.....</u>	<u>CD track 36</u>
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A few purchases  
before starting...


free test

## At the Violin maker's



If you do not have a violin, you must go to a violin maker's to rent a violin and a bow. This professional is very often a passionate artist himself who will advise you as well as possible.

*For children (violin sizes 1/8, 1/4, 1/2 or 3/4), hiring is often preferable to purchase. For adults (full size violin), purchase is more interesting financially.*

 *To make the tuning of your violin easier, first choose a tailpiece with 4 fine tuners.*

I also recommend that you buy the following 2 accessories at your violin maker's (to have more choice and a specialist's advice):

The shoulder rest



*The "bar" type model is the most comfortable because it takes on the shape of the left shoulder*

The rosin



*An essential accessory for the bow. Without rosin, the hair of the bow would slip on the strings without producing the least sound!*

## The guitar tuner

A guitar tuner is essential to tune the 4 strings of your violin (see pages 25 to 28). Thus, you will be able to play your violin immediately, as early as the 1<sup>st</sup> lesson.



This guitar/bass tuner (NOT the chromatic tuner) will allow you to tune your 4 strings more easily (G, D, A, E)

The guitar tuner functions very well for the violin because the 4 strings of the violin "G D A E" correspond to the 6 strings of the guitar (tuned "E A D G B E")

*Advice for the purchase of the guitar tuner : I advise you to choose a guitar/bass tuner ( NOT a chromatic tuner). It is the simplest model, and it will be perfect for tuning your violin. With it, you will also be able to work on precision and on the basic fingering with the violin (1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> finger on the D and A strings).*

## The CD player

A CD player will allow you to work on the exercises and melodies more agreeably, by regularly listening to the CD of your method. You should choose a model with the "repeat" function, to be able to listen to the tracks over and over again.

*You can also copy the CD of your method on a computer, then convert it into MP3 to listen to the pieces on a portable player.*

## The music stand

Where to put your violin book?

A music stand is an essential investment to be able to position the scores at eye level.

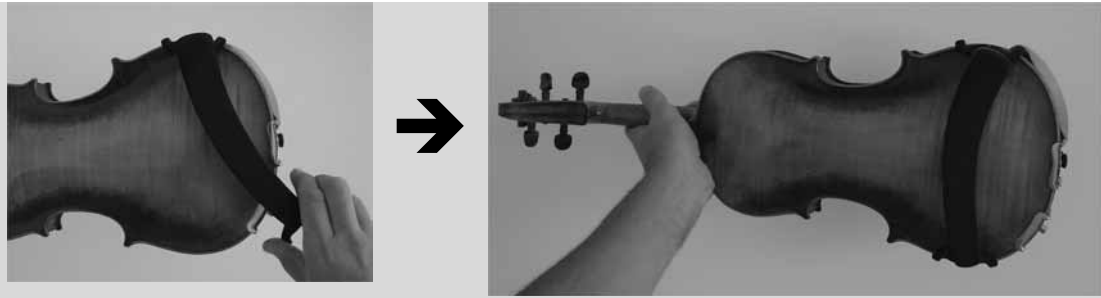


# First steps





## Positioning the shoulder rest



Put the broad side of your shoulder rest at the top, then let the narrow side slide to the bottom.

## Holding the violin



The head must remain erect, slightly turned towards the left, never reclining on the chin rest

*If you are uncomfortable with your chin rest,  
cover it with a handkerchief or a cloth*

Practise holding your violin  
without your left hand above your bed →



## Holding the left arm



The left hand is in an upright position, with the roundest possible position of the wrist and hand set.

Your violin must be horizontal.

*Your left wrist should not be “bent”.*

## Holding the left hand



The left thumb is erect, with the 4 fingers above the key, in a “ready to fall” position, like the fingers of the pianist above the keys of the piano.

*The 4 fingers are close to the strings, in a “ready to play” position.*

## Holding the right arm



The right arm is not stuck to the body. The right elbow is at the same level as the fingers which hold the bow.

*Your left wrist must be rounded as much as possible.*

## Holding the right hand

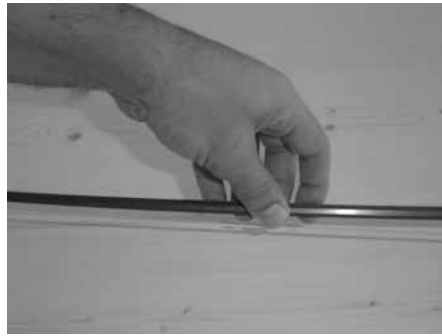


The right wrist is above the fingers which hold the bow, as if directing a puppet.

*the arm must be rather high, to have a rounded wrist (“not bent”) and the hair of the bow leaning (to the side of the left hand)*

## Holding the bow

1



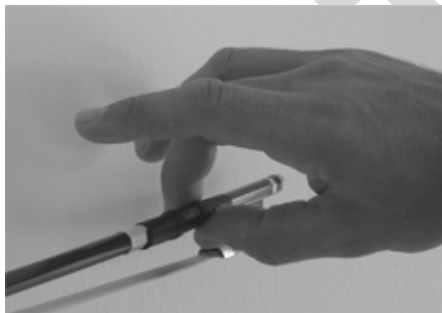
Take your bow  
with your left hand

2



Place the end  
of your right thumb  
on it

3



Pinch the rod between  
your middle finger and  
your thumb.

4



Place your 1<sup>st</sup> finger  
and your 3<sup>rd</sup> finger.

5



Place your little finger.

## Some advice on holding the bow



To improve your holding of the bow, take a tennis ball in your right hand. (or an apple or an orange).

*Try to find this sensation of roundness in the holding of your bow, in order to eliminate the maximum tenseness, which would spoil the necessary suppleness of the wrist, the hand and the fingers.*

The 4<sup>th</sup> finger is simply placed on the rod



The index "rolls around" the rod

*To be able to caress the strings with the hair of your bow, and thus to have a more pleasant sound, hold the rod of your bow as lightly as possible.*

## Looking after the bow

Rosin must be used when the bow starts slipping on the strings. It is necessary to caress the strings to have a pretty sound, but on the other hand don't hesitate to rub rosin on the hair!

When you have the hair of your bow changed by your violin maker, you will notice that, as long as you have not used rosin, the hair slips on the strings without producing a single sound. You will then use a lot of rosin this 1<sup>st</sup> time, while taking care to rub it on the entire length of the bow, from the frog to the tip.

You will learn thereafter how to reduce the amount of rosin to find the best compromise because if there is too much of it on the hair of the bow, the sound becomes harsh.

*Rub rosin on the hair of your bow regularly.*

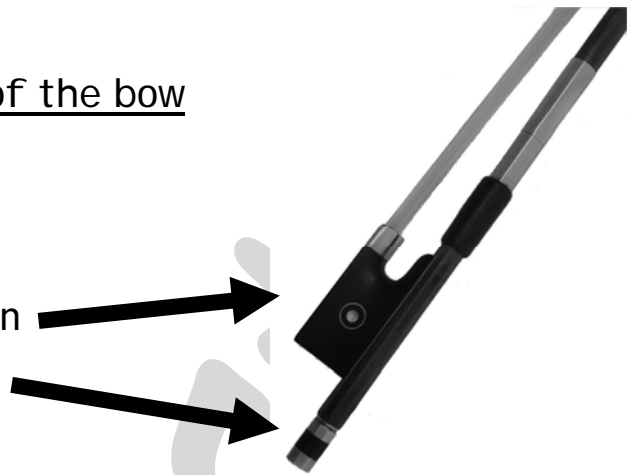
## Looking after the violin

Clean the rosin which settles on the front with a dry cloth and use a cloth with alcohol to do the same thing with the rosin which has settled on the strings. (between the bridge and the key).

## The tenseness of the hair of the bow

It is necessary to tighten the hair of the bow  
before playing

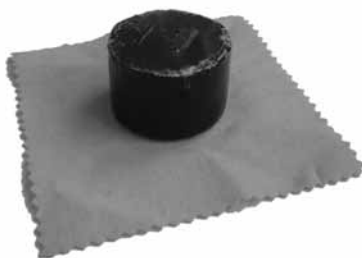
It is necessary  
to move the frog up or down  
by turning the screw



Start by tightening the hair of your bow to have a space of at least 5 mm in the middle. The hair should not be too tight because the rod must keep a certain suppleness to be pleasant to play with.

Test the tenseness by pressing the 1<sup>st</sup> finger on the rod, which must then be able to touch the hair without too much strength. But if you don't manage to have the rod and the hair touch each other easily, it is because you have tightened the hair of your bow too much.

*Remember to slacken your bow after playing  
(as the tennis player slackens the net in order not to damage it)*



*Rub rosin  
on the hair of your bow  
every time you play*

## Do not hide your violin away!

Here is a photograph  
of my violins:



The box in which you can put away your violin is designed for transport. At home, I strongly recommend to show your violin, first because it is a beautiful instrument (many people have a violin without knowing how to play it...), then and especially because it is easier to want to play the violin than the box...

Here is another home made stand, simpler to install, with 2 coat hangers fixed not in line with each other.

You will put the lower ankles of your violin on the 2 hooks at the top, and your bow on one of the 2 hooks at the bottom

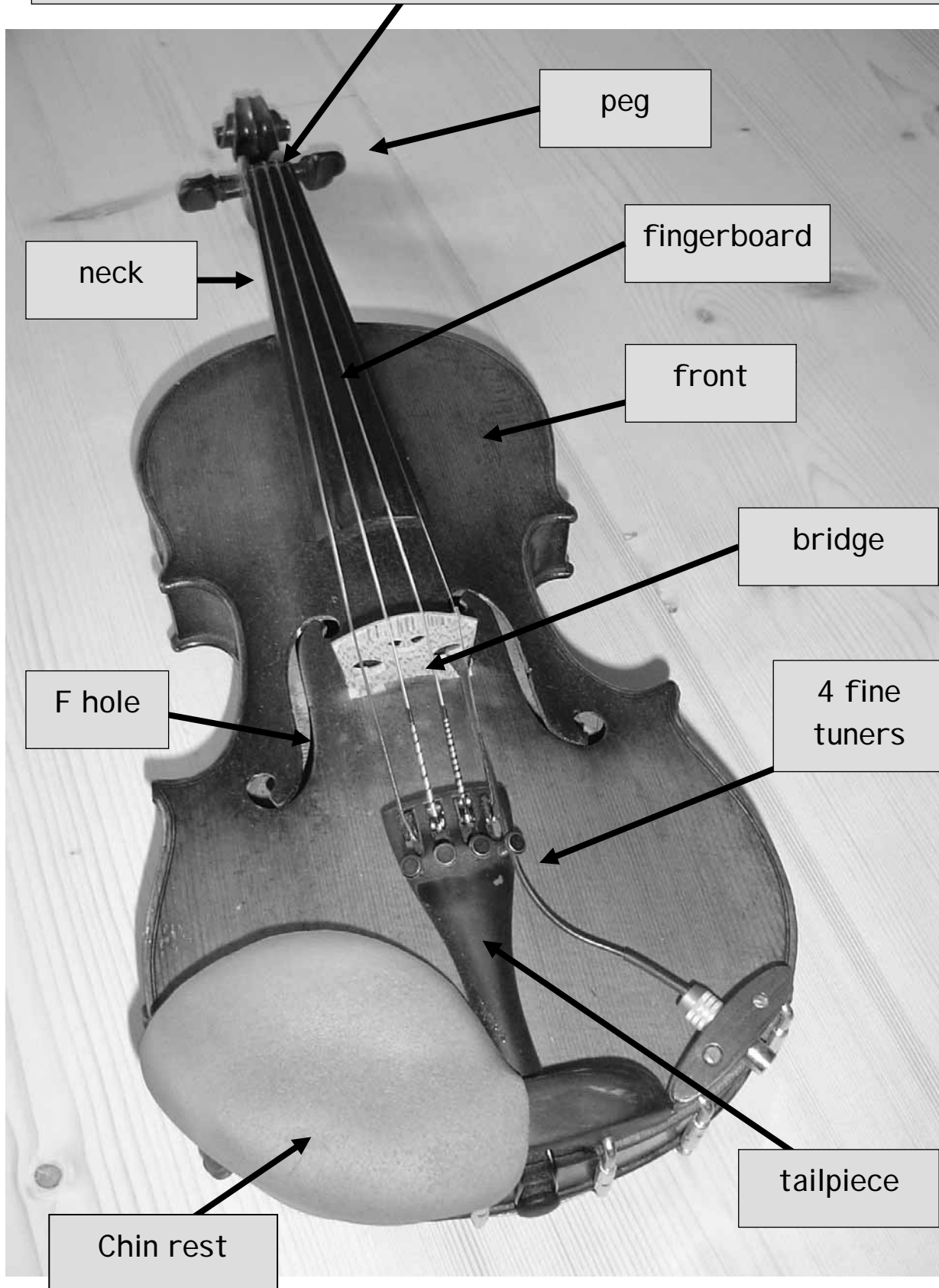


More simply you can also hammer in 2 nails: 1<sup>st</sup> nail to hang your violin with a string (on the head of your instrument), and 2<sup>nd</sup> nail for your bow.

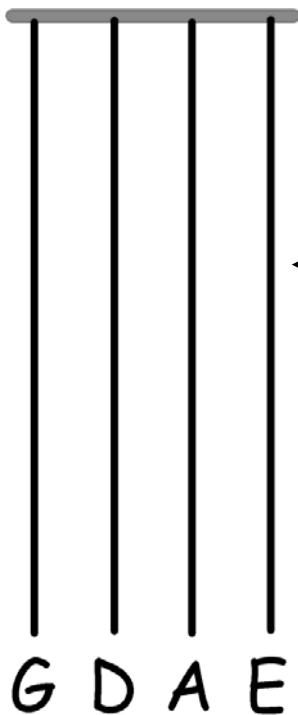


## Mini-glossary

The nut is a small ebony part which guides the 4 strings and raises them above the fingerboard. The nut plays the part of virtual fingers which would play the open strings.



## The 4 strings of the violin



Each score of your method comes with an illustration representing the strings and the notes which are used to play this score.

← This illustration represents the key of the violin, from the low pitched string on the left, to the high pitched string on the right:

- the open G string (letter G on the tuner)
- the open D string (letter D on the tuner)
- the open A string (letter A on the tuner)
- the open E string (letter E on the tuner).

*The illustration above and to the right of the scores represents the fingering to be played on the 4 strings of your violin (from left to right : G, D, A, E)*



G D A E


## Tuning the violin

1) Practise tightening and loosening the screw of the D string with the left hand:



2) The same exercise here, by rubbing the D string with the bow:



 tuning the violin in pizzicato: For children, I advise starting by tuning the violin in pizzicato (by plucking the strings one by one). Hold the violin like a cello, sitting on a chair, in front of the tuner.

*This method proposes a fast tuning system in order to be able to play the violin immediately. It is of course an intermediate phase, before tuning in the classical way, that is with playing 2 near strings at a time. (This technique is studied at the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> volume.)*

*To tune that way, it is necessary to know how to rub two strings at the same time. It is a technique which requires an average of two years of practice of the violin. That is why you will continue to tune your violin one string at a time with a guitar tuner, as long as you haven't mastered playing with 2 at the same time.*

## On the D string

*You must display the letter D on your tuner*



If the red light of your tuner comes on on the left, the string is too low and you must **TIGHTEN** the screw of the D string (clockwise).




If the red light of your tuner comes on on the right, you must **LOOSEN** the screw of the D string (anti clockwise).




Get as close as possible to the green light. (your D string is in tune when the arrow is upright).

## On the 4 strings of the violin

For each string, you must display the corresponding letter on the tuner, by tightening or loosening the screw of the fine tuners of the string, to try to light the green light only.



Tuning of the 4 strings of the violin



A musical staff in treble clef showing four notes: G (one line below), D (second space), A (third space), and E (fourth space). Below each note is its corresponding letter. To the right of the staff is a diagram of four vertical lines representing violin strings, labeled G, D, A, and E from left to right.

*BEFORE playing: Tune your violin and tighten the hair of your bow.*

*AFTER playing: Remember to slacken the hair of your bow.*

*OFTEN check the tuning of your violin.*

Notes and observations:

Blank area for notes and observations.

# First melodies



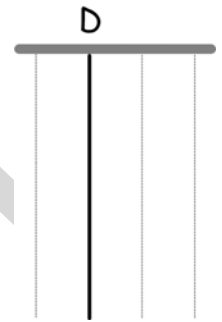
## On the D string

Here is a 1<sup>st</sup> melody, with 4 beats per bar. Here you learn how to play crotchets on the D string, by changing the direction of the bow on each note (1 bow stroke per note and per rhythmic beat).



Playing crotchets (2<sup>nd</sup> violin)

*CD track 01*



Position your bow on the open D string

and play crotchets "in a loop" :



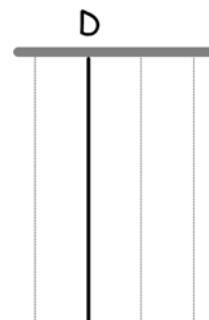
O  
D

Beginning of the piece

End of the 1<sup>st</sup> bar



*At the time signature at the beginning of the piece, the top figure gives the number of beats per bar. The bottom figure gives the value of the beat (4=crochet). There are thus here 4 crochets per bar.*



## Playing minims (2<sup>nd</sup> violin)

*CD track 02*

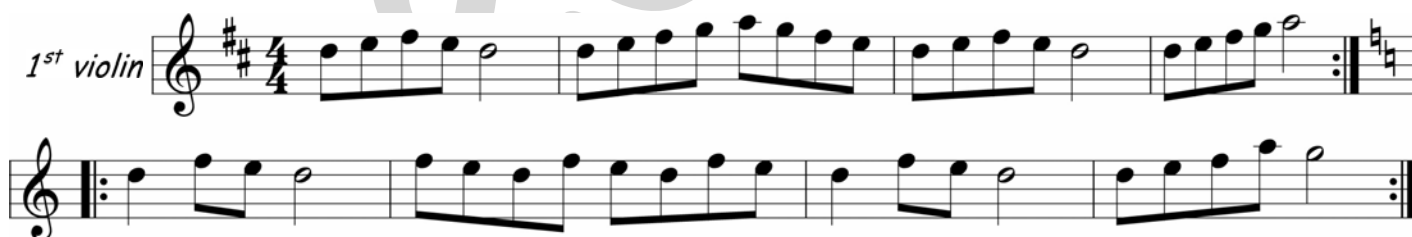
You will now learn how to play minims, by slowing down the speed of your bow, and by pulling or pushing your bow over a bigger length (length of bow **doubled** compared to a crotchet's)

1 minim =  = 2 crotchets =  = 2 beats

Position your bow on the D string

and play in a loop:  with the CD

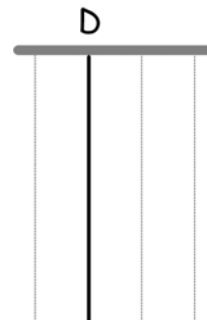
 To play minims: slow down the speed of your bow.



***The tablature system** of this method is designed as a help to the learning of musical theory. For example, only the new fingering positions are indicated under the notes. You must thus also read the scores!*

*The tablature corresponds to the illustration of the fingering which is at the top on the right of each score. The string changes are indicated with the international notation (G, D, A, E)*





## Jingle bells in D (2<sup>nd</sup> violin)

*CD track 03*

Listen to the melody played by the CD once,  
then accompany this melody by playing  
with the open D string:

Do not play during the value of 2 crochets →

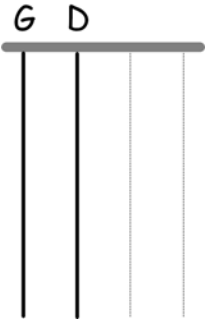
minim rest

*you must listen to the exercises and melodies and play them several times.*

# On 2 strings: G and D



## Happy road (2<sup>nd</sup> violin) CD track 04



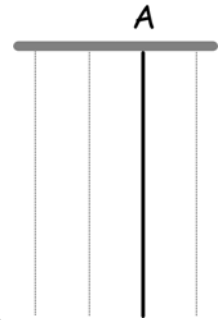
Go back to the beginning of the piece ←

Repeat barline

1<sup>st</sup> violin

*Take advantage of the half rests (“3-4” on the CD) to raise your bow and play again starting from the frog.*

# On the A string



## Jingle bells in A (2<sup>nd</sup> violin) CD track 05

0  
A

0  
A

0  
A

0  
A

1<sup>st</sup> violin

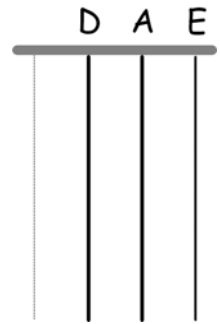
*Bourdon style accompaniment: The pupil plays the melody of the 2<sup>nd</sup> violin with only one open string, while the CD (or the professor) plays the melody of the 1<sup>st</sup> violin.*



On 3 strings : D, A, E



Lady mum (2<sup>nd</sup> violin)  
CD track 07



An accompaniment to "Ah vous dirai-je maman"  
on the D, A and E strings

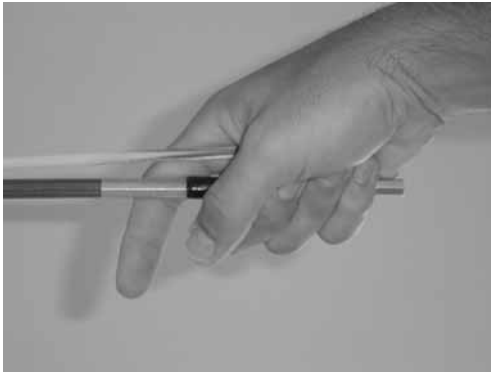
O A O D O A O E O A  
O A O E O A O E  
O A O E O A

1<sup>st</sup> violin

Notes and observations:

## Learning of pizzicato

1



Take the bow in your right hand (with the hair on the side of the palm of the hand).

2



Place your right thumb on the side of the fingerboard.

3



Pluck the D string (over the fingerboard, where the strings are less tight).



Soirs de Moscou (2<sup>nd</sup> violin)  
*CD track 08*

play "in a loop" in pizzicato :

1<sup>st</sup> violin



Practise your exercises and pieces while walking



Walking tends to relax muscles and you will thus obtain more relaxation with your playing.

Notes and observations: