# Above The First Position CASMEC, Friday, Feb. 15 Drs. Cindy Moyer and Garrick Woods Humboldt State University

## **Pre-requisites for Learning Positions**

- Stable, defined left hand position (especially bass)
- Relaxed left hand, no squeezing thumb
- Playing in tune in first position
- Fingerboard geography in first position (note names & what is a ½ step)
- Extensions on cello, all finger patterns on violin & viola

#### **Defining Positions**

- 1" position first finger is one letter name above open string
- 2<sup>nd</sup> position first finger is two letter names above open string (on C or C# on the A string)
- Etc.
- ½ position second finger is one letter name above open string
- BASS: Many systems some as described above (with 2 ½ Pos.)
  - Simandl Position Names explained in detail: <a href="https://sites.google.com/a/lsr7.net/mr-tourtellot-s-strings-site/zzzzzzz/posture/posture---double-bass/double-bass-positions">https://sites.google.com/a/lsr7.net/mr-tourtellot-s-strings-site/zzzzzzz/posture/posture---double-bass/double-bass-positions</a>
  - Rabbath/Vance Positions Explained (and exercises):
    <a href="https://doublebassblog.org/2018/05/fundamentals-of-double-bass-technique-part-1-left-hand-fundamentals.htm">https://doublebassblog.org/2018/05/fundamentals-of-double-bass-technique-part-1-left-hand-fundamentals.htm</a>

#### **Learning Positions**

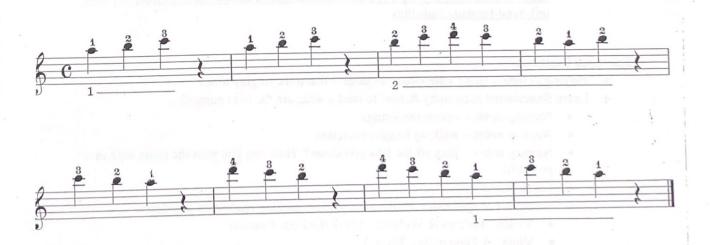
- Playing in tune fingers are closer together listen for ringing tones
- Learn fingerboard geography & how to read what are the note names?
  - Naming notes across the strings
  - Naming notes walking fingers exercises
  - Naming notes play all the Bbs you know? How can you plan the same note in 3<sup>rd</sup> position?
  - Learn M3 vs m3
  - Some sort of systematic book/exercises for teaching reading in positions.
    - Violin: Holmes & Webber: Above the First Position
    - Viola: A Tune a Day, Book 3
    - Cello: Richard Mooney: Position Pieces for Cello
    - Bass: Simandl: New Method for Double Bass
- Hand Shape/thumb position in high positions (4<sup>a</sup>/5<sup>a</sup> Position and above)

From Above the First Position by Holmes and Webber (Carl Fischer)

# FIRST AND THIRD POSITION CHANGES (By Way of Open Strings)



From Suzuki Violn School, Book 4 (old edition), (Summy-Birchard)



### **Shifting Positions**

- Pre-Shifting Exercises
  - Sirens
  - Ski Jumps
  - Left Pinkie Open String Pizzicato alternating with tapping on top of violin on Gstring side
- Shifting on Open String
- Shifting on the Same Finger
- Shifting Changing Fingers
  - Guide Fingers: Shift up on the lower # finger, Shift down on the old finger
- Practicing Shifts
  - Slurs (makes hand more relaxed)
  - Practice the guide fingers, then guide finger plus goal note, then with dotted-rhythm (closer to the real shift timing), then the real shift, (then remove slur if needed)

From Scales and Arpeggios with Shifting Practice by Cindy Moyer (Galaxay Music)



- Common Shifting Problems
  - Tension in Left Hand, Squeezing Thumb (Violin/Viola instrument held by chin & shoulder, Cello saddle balances on sternum, Bass upper bout of instrument balances on hip and instrument rotates to the right)
  - Too much weight on shifting finger (shift on the outside fur of a cat)
  - Shift too fast
  - Thumb not moving with the hand in the shift
  - Shift (esp. violin & viola) comes from elbow wrist should be still move like compass in geometry
  - Changing hand shape for higher positions 4° position or above
    - Violin & Viola thumb moves under neck, touching saddle arm twists to hand more like cello LH – fingernails move from looking at your face to looking sideways – shifting back down thumb and hand shape return to lower position hand shape
    - Cello/Bass elbow and hand open & raise to move around upper bout of instruments, 4\* Position – thumb moves to opposite 1\* finger - higher positions use just 3 fingers (diatonic fingerings like on violin/viola)
  - Bow weight to hide or emphasize shift, timing on changing bows