2018

FIFTHS: AN APPROACH TO VIOLIN TECHNIQUE FOR THE LEFT HAND AS TAUGHT BY RODNEY FRIEND

Jessica Miskelly

University of Kentucky, jessica.miskelly@gmail.com
Digital Object Identifier: https://doi.org/10.13023/ETD.2018.022

Click here to let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

https://uknowledge.uky.edu/music_etds/107

This Doctoral Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Music at UKnowledge. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations--Music by an authorized administrator of UKnowledge. For more information, please contact UKnowledge@lsv.uky.edu.
STUDENT AGREEMENT:

I represent that my thesis or dissertation and abstract are my original work. Proper attribution has been given to all outside sources. I understand that I am solely responsible for obtaining any needed copyright permissions. I have obtained needed written permission statement(s) from the owner(s) of each third-party copyrighted matter to be included in my work, allowing electronic distribution (if such use is not permitted by the fair use doctrine) which will be submitted to UKnowledge as Additional File.

I hereby grant to The University of Kentucky and its agents the irrevocable, non-exclusive, and royalty-free license to archive and make accessible my work in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter known. I agree that the document mentioned above may be made available immediately for worldwide access unless an embargo applies.

I retain all other ownership rights to the copyright of my work. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of my work. I understand that I am free to register the copyright to my work.

REVIEW, APPROVAL AND ACCEPTANCE

The document mentioned above has been reviewed and accepted by the student’s advisor, on behalf of the advisory committee, and by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), on behalf of the program; we verify that this is the final, approved version of the student’s thesis including all changes required by the advisory committee. The undersigned agree to abide by the statements above.

Jessica Miskelly, Student
John Nardolillo, Major Professor
Dr. Michael Baker, Director of Graduate Studies
FIFTHS:
AN APPROACH TO VIOLIN TECHNIQUE
FOR THE LEFT HAND
AS TAUGHT BY
RODNEY FRIEND

DMA Project

A DMA Project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts in the College of Fine Arts at the University of Kentucky

By
Jessica Miskelly

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Professor John Nardolillo, Director of Orchestras

Lexington, Kentucky

2017

Copyright © Jessica Miskelly 2017
This document examines Rodney Friend’s approach to violin technique for the left hand, with specific emphasis on the execution of fifths. The application of this technique plays a valuable role in establishing correct hand positioning, creating consistent intonation, improving vibrato, and adding to the palette of colors available to the violinist. Mr. Friend is an esteemed violinist, a perceptive pedagogue, and a dedicated mentor in today’s music world, and, in those roles, he exemplifies the qualities of beauty, truth, and goodness that characterize meaningful engagement in the arts. His thoughtful teaching style is the product of decades of careful observation combined with a devotion to constant personal improvement. As a performer who has toured the world as concertmaster of classical music’s most renowned orchestras, Mr. Friend’s early and continued success could have easily led him to a justifiable sense of arrival. Instead, he continues to hone his craft daily—both as a performer and as a teacher—always striving to remove the roadblocks from the tricky terrain of violin playing. In Mr. Friend’s words, violin playing is “a whole complicated business that we need to make less complicated.” His keen insights into the mechanics of the trade prove that simplification is possible. I firmly believe that his pedagogical innovations will greatly serve the rising generation of violinists.

Most recently, Mr. Friend has turned his attention to an area of left hand technique that is commonly avoided by violinists in their practice, and often glossed over by teachers: the study of fifths. For the past six years Mr. Friend has been systematically exploring the benefits of this ignored technique. Other pedagogues have had little to offer in specifically addressing this interval because there is a general lack of understanding about the benefits provided by mastering the execution of fifths. Examples of this omission can be seen in pedagogy books by some of the 20th century’s greatest violinists and teachers. For instance, when Leopold Auer discusses the left hand in his book, Violin
Playing as I Teach It, he suggests practicing scales in thirds, fourths, sixths, and octaves, but completely skips over the interval of the fifth. The same omission is also made by Yehudi Menuhin in his instructional text entitled Violin and Viola.

Mr. Friend has developed a systematic approach to mastering this difficult technique that is both simple and effective. He plans to publish his method later this year. Some of the benefits provided to the violinist from the consistent practice of this traditionally difficult and neglected interval include better hand positioning, improved vibrato, and more consistent intonation—the continual quest of every violinist. I have experienced the remarkable benefits of his method in my own playing, which motivated me to seek Mr. Friend’s permission to further explore and document his techniques, and with this monograph to share these benefits with the violin community.

KEYWORDS: Rodney Friend, Fifths, Left-hand Technique, Intervals, Pedagogical Innovation
To Mrs. Anne Lane Vosough, who guided the first steps of my musical journey
To Mr. Rodney Friend, whose instruction and encouragement gave me wings
And
To my father, who gave me my first fiddle
this monograph is lovingly dedicated
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the many people who have walked alongside me through the peaks and stayed with me during the valleys.

Mr. Friend, thank you for your relentless dedication to the craft of violin playing, and for your commitment to sharing your knowledge of and passion for music with your students. Thank you so much for caring and taking the time to show me a better way: Your belief in me helped me to realize that I have something to share. I am forever grateful.

To my committee, thank you for taking on the added work that goes with being part of this process. I am honored to have each of you oversee this project.

Mr. Karp, thank you for sharing your love of chamber music with me through two degrees. Our quartet coachings were truly a privilege; I miss them.

Mrs. Karp, thank you for being the reason I came to U.K. Meeting you changed my life forever, for the better. I would not be the person I am today without your influence. Thank you.

John Nardolillo, “Maestro,” thank you so much for all you have done for me during my time at UK. It is no exaggeration to say that you open doors for students which lead to opportunities that many could never have imagined. I am one such student. Thank you as well for taking on far and beyond what your job description entailed to help me reach this point.

Dr. Brunner, thank you for being the amazing mentor that you are. You are a gift to every person who crosses your path, and I am blessed beyond words to have you in my life.

To the Alfords, thank you for being my Lexington family, my home away from home, and my continual refuge during this writing process. I am more grateful than words will allow me to express. You have lived with me through some of my best and worst moments, and your love and support have sustained me more than you will ever know. I couldn’t have done it without you. Love you always.

Jason Posnock, thank you for believing in me and taking me on that summer at Brevard, ten years ago. You have been a rock in my life over this past decade, and you and your family mean the world to me.

Marcia, there are not enough words to thank you for coming into my life. Little did I know that I was about to meet someone who would become family when I walked to the picnic and sat next to you ten years ago. Your unconditional love and support have been a guiding light in my life. God blessed me when He brought our paths together.
Dr. Yoshioka, I am so grateful that after all these years our paths crossed again. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to present my dissertation at UMBC. It was a joy and privilege.

To the Crosmer’s, thank you for your continual support, for your words of wisdom, and for encouraging me to stand. I’m so thankful for our friendship.
Table of Contents

Acknowledgements ........................................................................................................ iii

List of Figures ................................................................................................................. vi

Part I ................................................................................................................................ 1

Chapter 1: Introduction ................................................................................................. 1

Chapter 2: Biography ......................................................................................................... 3

Chapter 3: Setting the Context ....................................................................................... 5

Chapter 4: Rodney Friend’s Approach .......................................................................... 14
  Why Practice Fifths? ........................................................................................................ 15
  How to Practice Fifths? ................................................................................................... 23

Chapter 5: Fifths in the Preparation of a Piece ............................................................. 27

Chapter 6: Conclusion ..................................................................................................... 31

Part II ................................................................................................................................ 32

Program Notes ................................................................................................................. 32

Bibliography ..................................................................................................................... 38

Vita ................................................................................................................................. 42
List of Figures

Figure 4.1, Violinist Jascha Heifetz ................................................................. 22

Figure 4.2, Violinist Itzhak Perlman.............................................................. 23

Figure 4.3, Hilary Han .................................................................................. 23

Figure 5.1, Opening from Sarasate’s Malagueña .......................................... 29
Chapter 1: Introduction

In this document I examine Rodney Friend’s approach to violin technique for the left hand, with specific emphasis on the execution of perfect fifths. The application of fifths as a technique will play a valuable role in establishing correct hand positioning, creating consistent intonation, and improving vibrato.

Mr. Friend is an esteemed violinist, a perceptive pedagogue, and a dedicated mentor in the world of classical music, and, in those roles, he exemplifies the qualities of beauty, truth, and goodness that characterizes meaningful engagement in the arts. His thoughtful teaching style is the product of decades of careful observation combined with a devotion to constant personal improvement. As a performer who has toured the world as concertmaster of classical music’s most renowned orchestras, Mr. Friend’s early and continued success could have easily led him to a justifiable sense of arrival. Instead, he continues to hone his craft daily—both as a performer and as a teacher—always striving to remove the roadblocks from the tricky terrain of violin playing. In Mr. Friend’s words, violin playing is “a whole complicated business that we need to make less complicated.” His keen insights into the mechanics of the craft prove that simplification is possible. I firmly believe that his pedagogical innovations will greatly serve the rising generation of violinists.

Most recently, Mr. Friend has turned his attention to an area of left hand technique that is commonly avoided by violinists in their practice and often glossed over by teachers: the study of fifths. For the past six years Mr. Friend
has been systematically exploring the benefits of this ignored technique. Other pedagogues have had little to offer in specifically addressing this interval because there is a general lack of understanding about the benefits that mastering the study of fifths will afford the violinist. Examples of this omission can be seen in pedagogy books by some of the 20th century's greatest violinists and teachers, as will be shown in Chapter 3. A broad survey of pedagogical material shows a lack of discussion about the benefits that the study of fifths provides.

Mr. Friend has developed a systematic approach to mastering this difficult technique that is both simple and effective. Some of the benefits provided to the violinist from the consistent practice of this avoided interval include better hand positioning, improved vibrato, and more consistent intonation—the continual quest of every violinist. I have experienced the remarkable benefits of his method in my own playing, which motivated me to seek Mr. Friend's permission to further explore and document his techniques, and with this monograph to share these benefits with the violin community.

I first met Mr. Friend at a music festival in Prague. I so enjoyed his teaching style, and it was at this time that I was first introduced to his thoughts about fifths. Mr. Friend invited me to come to England for further study, and I was privileged to travel twice to London in 2016 for intensive private lessons for a total of three months. My methodology for this research follows the participant observer schema, during which I studied privately, recorded and transcribed lessons and interviews, watched group lessons, and read the materials which Mr. Friend shared with me on the topic.
Chapter 2: Biography

Rodney Friend was born in Huddersfield, England in 1939. He began studies in 1952 at London’s Royal Academy of Music, to which he won a scholarship at age twelve.

At sixteen Mr. Friend made his debut as a soloist with the Halle Orchestra playing the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto under John Barbirolli. Mr. Friend’s London debut was at age eighteen with the Sibelius violin concerto.

As a performer, Mr. Friend’s career has encompassed the three primary paths of orchestral, chamber, and solo violin playing. In 1964, at the age of twenty, he was appointed the youngest Concertmaster of the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Beginning in 1976, he also held the position of Concertmaster in the New York Philharmonic where he played with Leonard Bernstein, as well as being Concertmaster of the BBC Symphony Orchestra starting in 1981. As a chamber musician, he formed the Solomon Trio in 1991 along with pianist Yonty Solomon and cellist Timothy Hugh, and together they toured and recorded for almost a decade. Rodney Friend has appeared as soloist with many of the world’s major orchestras. Among his recordings are the Britten Violin Concerto with Sir John Pritchard and the London Philharmonic Orchestra; Szymanowski’s Violin Concerto No. 1 with Erich Leinsdorf and the New York Philharmonic; and Introit for Violin and Orchestra, by Gerald Finzi, with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Sir Adrian Boult.
As a pedagogue, Mr. Friend has held posts for several decades at two of the most prestigious music conservatories in England, first at The Royal College of Music beginning in 1981, and, later, at The Royal Academy of Music, where he has been teaching since 2015. Mr. Friend has written a two-volume work that is widely used and highly-regarded in the orchestral field: *The Orchestral Violinist*, Volumes 1 and 2, published by the English music firm Boosey and Hawkes. These works have become an authoritative resource for today’s violinists, widely used by musicians in preparing the canon of orchestral excerpts before auditioning for orchestral positions. Mr. Friend’s students have obtained positions as successful performers and teachers around the world.

Mr. Friend is also the founder and artist director of the Cambridge International String Academy, an intensive summer training experience for string players held on the grounds of Cambridge University since 2010.

In 2015, Mr. Friend was appointed by Queen Elizabeth II as a Member of the Order of the British Empire for his services to music.
Chapter 3: Setting the Context

Before delving into the particulars of Mr. Friend’s approach I will define the term fifth and review what existing literature has to say about the practice of fifths as an aspect of left-hand technique, in both treatises and in etudes. Such a survey allows us to place Mr. Friend’s technique within a proper context. This survey begins with the eighteenth century, including some of the earliest books devoted exclusively to violin playing, and covers several of the nineteenth and twentieth century’s greatest performers and pedagogues.

So first, what is a fifth in the context of violin playing? A fifth is the interval created when one finger is placed in a parallel position on two adjacent strings. When the bow is drawn over both strings at the same time, the interval of a fifth is heard. For example, if the second finger is placed on both the D and A strings in first position and played simultaneously, both F sharp and C sharp (or F and C, depending on placement) will sound. This simultaneous sounding of two notes is referred to as a double-stop.

Now that we have defined the fifth, an exploration of the literature is in order. Any work that does not acknowledge Leopold Mozart’s manual on violin playing would be incomplete. His *A Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing*, published first in 1756, was one of the earliest primers written for the professional violinist that dealt with the technical elements of performance. Although Geminiani published a treatise entitled *On the Art of Playing On the Violin* five years before Mozart published his work, and Tartini published a book
on violin playing also in 1756, it is Leopold Mozart’s treatise that has received greater and more widespread recognition.

Concerning the matter of holding the violin the senior Mozart recognized two basic methods of positioning the instrument at the time. The first method entailed merely resting the violin on the shoulder, while the left hand was used to keep the instrument secure in place. Mozart noted that this method inhibited the player from efficient shifting while also presenting the risk of the violin being dropped. The second method, which Mozart seems to regard as the more favorable of the two, relegated the job of holding of the violin in place to the player’s chin, thus allowing the left hand to be dedicated wholly to fingering the notes. Once the correct positions for holding the violin and bow had been explained, Mozart delineated eight rules for guiding such elements as bow stroke and level of the violin. The sixth rule illustrates the accepted position of the left-hand fingers and the angle of their approach to the fingerboard: “Sixthly, the fingers must not be laid lengthwise on the strings but with the joints raised, and the top part of the fingers pressed down very strongly. If the strings are not pressed well down, they will not sound pure.” In other words, Mozart argued that it was the tip of the finger, rather than the pad, that should make contact with the string. This opinion is representative of the general pedagogy of that era, which does not discuss the practice of fifths or their role in forming correct posture.

---

3 Ibid., 60.
Geminiani’s treatise is less thorough and therefore less frequently cited, but his description of the left hand position has made a lasting impact through the centuries. “To place the first finger on the first string upon F; the second finger on the second string upon C; the third finger on the third string upon G; and the fourth finger on the fourth string upon D. This must be done without raising any of the fingers, till all four have been set down; but after that, they are to be raised but a little distance from the string they touched; and by so doing the position is perfect.” This position has come to be known as the “Geminiani hold.” Nowhere in this work does he mention the interval of the fifth, or its relation to correct left-hand position.

Bridging the gap between the treatises of early pedagogues and the giants of the twentieth century are a line of teachers whose etude books are still in wide use today. I will briefly survey a representative selection in chronological order to ascertain the extent to which the study of fifths is addressed in these important pedagogical works.

The first pedagogical work to be considered is the collection of 24 Caprices by Pierre Rode, first published in 1815 and aimed at a fairly advanced player. Multiple exercises are devoted to the execution of specific intervals dealt with the study of intervals: Exercise No. 2 and 18, for example, deal with octaves.

---

4Francesco Geminiani, *An abstract of Geminiani’s Art of playing the violin, and of another book of instructions for playing in a true taste on the violin, German flute, violoncello, and the thorough bass on the harpsichord, with some additions.: Containing the most necessary rules to attain to a perfection on those instruments* (Boston, New-England:: Printed by John Boyles, 1769), 2.
Exercise 16 addresses thirds. And Exercise 5 and 23 returns to the study of thirds and sixths. None of Rode’s caprices are devoted to the interval of the fifth.\(^5\)

Next to be considered are the seminal 24 Caprices of Nicolo Paganini. This work, published in 1820, is comprised of show pieces rather than humble etude, and is today often performed rather than used only for instructional practice. They showcase the extraordinary development of left-hand technique brought to the violin in the early to mid-nineteenth by century by one of its foremost virtuosos. These technical developments must be traced through the works themselves, as Paganini left little in the way of descriptive texts. Double-stops are a frequent feature in the various caprices. Fifths do appear infrequently, but always in the context of a chord. Instances can be seen in measure 5 of Caprice No. 14, and again in measure 31 of the same piece. However, thirds and octaves are the intervals most commonly dealt with throughout the 24 Caprices; no caprice or individual passage is given over to fifths specifically.\(^6\)

Austrian violinist Karl Dont, born in 1815, was a performer, composer, and pedagogue. Although he was a violinist, he preferred composing and teaching over performing.\(^7\) Among his students was the famous violinist Leopold Auer. Dont’s pedagogical works are among those used for advanced students. His *Etudes and Caprices for Solo Violin* feature many pieces dealing with chords and

---


double-stops, but as with the previous examples, none of his exercises address the interval of the fifth.  

Henry Schradieck was born in Germany in 1846. Before immigrating to the United States he held the position of violin professor at the Moscow Conservatory, among other teaching posts. After emigrating from Germany, Schradieck became an instrumental figure at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, where he founded the school’s first orchestra. His extensive pedagogical output focuses on left hand technique. He first published The School of Violin Technique in 1875. Though dedicated to improving the technique of the left hand, it does not include the practice of fifths.

Otakar Ševčík was a Czech violinist and teacher. Born in 1852, his lifetime spanned the 19th and 20th centuries; he died in 1934. He studied at the Prague Conservatory, where he later became head of the the violin department. His Preparatory Exercises in Double-stopping, Op. 9, deal with octaves, thirds, sixths, tenths, left hand pizzicato, and harmonics, but not with fifths.

Carl Flesch’s iconic scale system, which was a supplement to his The Art of Violin Playing, was first published in 1923. It contains eleven exercises for every key. Five of those exercises deal with double stops: Exercise 6 deals with

---

thirds; Exercise 7 deals with sixths; Exercises 8 and 9 deal with octaves; and
Exercise 10 deals with tenths. Again, not one exercise addresses the interval of
the fifth.13

Ruggiero Ricci was an American violin virtuoso. He was born in California
in 1918, and he died in 2012. He premiered Ginastera’s Violin Concerto, Op. 30,
written specifically for Ricci, with Leonard Bernstein and the New York
Philharmonic in 1963. He was a violin professor at Indiana University, The
Juilliard School, and the University of Michigan.14 Ricci enjoyed an international
performing career with orchestras throughout the U.S. and Europe.15 In his book,
Left-hand Violin Technique, Ruggiero Ricci devotes only three lines (contained in
Exercise No. 70) out of his 56 page etude book to the practice of fifths.16 On
page 55, he devotes one sentence to fifths. “Practicing exercises in fifths in
Example 70 (the three lines mentioned above) is a real help to the hand
position.” On page 56, while addressing the distribution of practice time, Ricci
says, “How much time should be devoted to scales alone? For the student with
an untrained ear, perhaps ten minutes on fifth scales, thirty more on scales in
thirds…and five on pizzicato.”17 This brief mention of fifths is the most thorough
discussion of the topic that I have uncovered in my research, which further
demonstrates how little has been written on the subject.

13Carl Flesch, Scale System: scale exercises in all major and minor keys for daily study. (New
15Carl Flesch, Scale System: scale exercises in all major and minor keys for daily study (New
17Ricci, Left-hand Violin Technique, 56.
We will next survey what Heifetz, Menuhin, and Galamian--three of the twentieth century’s most highly regarded violinists--had to say about the impact of fifths on left hand technique.

Jascha Heifetz was a titan of the 20th century. His violin playing set a standard that has shaped the expectations for following generations, and his twenty-five years of teaching helped to mold that next generation. Remarkably, he published no books on violin playing or technique, instead choosing to imprint his methods directly on his students in a masterclass setting at the University of Southern California from 1962-1983. One of the students who participated in those masterclasses, Sherry Kloss, went on to become Heifetz’s teaching assistant. She wrote about her experience with “The Master” for The Strad, and in the article she speaks to technical aspects demanded by Heifetz: “At any time we were responsible for major and minor scales in all combinations of thirds, sixths, octaves, fingered octaves, tenths, beginning from any part of the scale, along with arpeggios in staccato.” This comprehensive list of intervals demanded for technique does not include fifths, which again shows that the interval’s potential had not yet been recognized, even by Heifetz.

Unlike Heifetz, famed violinist and gifted teacher Yehudi Menuhin left his thoughts in printed form for future generations. In his book Violin; Six Lessons, Menuhin describes his view of the optimal position of the left hand in these words:

---

I have already mentioned that the fingers should be soft and rounded, the elbow hanging and the wrist straight, and I have stressed the importance of the flexibility and security of the thumb support. We now must bring the fingers over the strings by slightly rotating the forearm (with the sympathetic adjustment of the hanging elbow) until the knuckles are at an angles almost parallel to the fingerboard. Try this movement, noticing that as the fingers (which should still be soft and curved) are brought over the strings they separate, and a circular shape is formed between the thumb and each finger as in the right hand on the bow. To achieve this shape it is necessary, with the slight rotation of the forearm, for the base joint of the first finger to come away from the neck and that of the fourth finger to come closer to the neck without disturbing the shape and contact of the thumb. Only then will all the fingers, even the shorter fourth one, be rounded and in constant readiness to cross the fingerboard to any string with a minimum of adjustment to the general position.

In addition to this detailed description Menuhin goes on to describe four exercises for developing a correct left-hand position. In none of those exercises are fifths mentioned.

The last giant of the twentieth century, which we will consider, is Ivan Galamian. Galamian was a tour-de-force of violin pedagogy. From his studio came many of the following generation’s top violinists, including names such as Itzhak Perlman, Dorothy Delay, Glenn Dicterow, Jaime Laredo, Jonathan Carney, Pinchas Zukerman, and Sally Thomas. His work *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching*, first published in 1964, offers to the musician an insightful text on the mechanics behind violin playing. His thoughts on the positioning the left-hand rely on similar principles of naturalness that inform Mr. Friend’s teaching. In a section dedicated to the left arm Galamian writes:

The older schools of violin playing required every student to pull the left elbow far to the right. Players with long arms and fingers, who followed this rule, found that their fingers assumed an awkward

---

curve and leaned too heavily toward the G-string side of the fingerboard. The wrong side of the fingertip contacted the string and more often the nail rather than the fleshy part formed the point of contact. The immediate consequence was the development of a severe type of handicap in all kinds of finger motion and especially in the vibrato...The principle that correctly applies to this whole matter designates the fingers as the determining factor. They have to be placed in such a way as to allow them the most favorable conditions for their various actions. Once this is done, everything else--thumb, hand, arm--will subsequently find its corresponding natural position.21

As we will see in the following chapter, Galamian’s description of the left hand aligns most closely with Mr. Friend’s thoughts, though here, too, we find that fifths as an aid for a natural position remain unmentioned.

---

Chapter 4: Rodney Friend’s Approach

As has been noted, Mr. Friend is one of the most highly accomplished of today’s performers and teachers, yet he has remained a lifelong student of the violin. He is driven to continually pursue the most natural, and subsequently the easiest, approach to playing the instrument, a core principle that guides Mr. Friend’s method. During private lessons with Mr. Friend over the course of March and April, 2015, he expressed it in these words: “The whole point of this technique is trying to develop in the easiest and most constructive way that will reveal a result for us. We must have a result. There is no use to practice, without a result.”

Mr. Friend believes that the technical side of violin playing should be made as easy and natural as possible so that, one, the player is able to focus more fully on the interpretation of the music, and two, the player is less likely to become injured from repetitive motions that are unnatural.

Mr. Friend believes that the pedagogy surrounding violin playing is sometimes made more complicated than it needs to be. This is an unfortunate reality partly caused by those who teach while having only a partial understanding of technique, and partly caused when prodigies of the instrument who are masters of technique are not able to clearly and accurately articulate how and what it is that they do so well. Mr. Friend is one of the few prodigies able to bridge the gap from playing to explaining. His intuitive understanding of the mechanics of violin playing combines with his ability to effectively communicate

---

what is actually taking place, and his exploration and insights in the realm of left-hand technique have afforded to the violinist a natural and effective approach.

The approach centers on the practice of fifths, which, as seen in the previous chapter, has been a technique widely neglected in the literature surrounding violin pedagogy. Mr. Friend has written a book that will provide exercises dedicated to fifths and excerpts from the standard repertoire, which are to be practiced in fifths for ease and correctness to be firmly established once the fifths are removed.

So, why the practice of fifths? If ease and naturalness are to be goals, how can one of the most awkward and avoided intervals in violin playing bring something useful to the discussion? The rest of this chapter explores in greater detail first, why the mastery of fifths is beneficial, and second, how to master this technique.

**Why Practice Fifths?**

The mastery of fifths is not an end in itself. Rather, fifths are an effective, efficient means by which to achieve multiple ends. The practice of fifths can yield a more natural finger-hand-arm alignment, better intonation, richer vibrato, greater control of colors, and provide a method that is more physically natural and therefore less taxing on the body. To begin to answer the question of why fifths are vital, Mr. Friend is very clear:

The ability and importance to master with understanding the interval of the 5th, must be established and recognized as a major priority in the development and technical awareness for violinists of every level. The simple fact that the instrument is designed and built with four strings and tuned in three sets of 5ths, and where all the natural harmonics available on the four strings (identical both in
position and number) dictates that all the remaining notes as required by our vast repertoire should be dealt with and tuned accordingly.

In a conversation, he further elaborated on the question:

Why are the fifths so important? Because the instrument is tuned in fifths. We have only four strings, so we have only got three sets of fifths: G-D, D-A, A-E. All the literature is lying inside of them. The fifths form the frame of the hand. The frame being an octave, because everything is inside an octave. So if you fix the parallel and the octave, you are set.²³

In his teaching Mr. Friend points out that fifths are the foundation of the tuning of the instrument as well as being a defining interval in Western music, and thus should be foundational in developing good intonation.

A brief word about why the interval of the fifth is foundational--both for music in general and the violinist in particular--is in order before moving forward. Leonard Bernstein in his 1973 Norton Lectures at Harvard explained the natural phenomenon that has come to be known interchangeably as the harmonic or overtone series. He defined the term ‘harmonic series’ as “the built-in preordained universal,”²⁴ an acoustical phenomenon by which the laws of physics prescribe the intervallic relationships of these vibrating (sound) waves. To build from a basic definition, sound is the aural perception of the vibratory waves which are emitted when an object is struck; the frequency of waves emitted per second determines the pitch that we perceive. For example, the pitch C4 is heard when a uniform object vibrates at the frequency of 132 oscillations

---

per second. Acoustics has shown that within the vibration of a uniform body—a string in the case of the violin—are simultaneous, sub-divided vibrations that produce higher tones, also known as overtones, which are higher than but related to the fundamental pitch. For every fundamental pitch struck, there could be a corresponding harmonic series of progressively higher pitches. Taking the fundamental of C, the first subdivision of vibration is in halves, and the resulting overtone is another C, one octave above the fundamental C. The second subdivision of vibration is in thirds, which produces the pitch of G, which is a fifth away from C and the first overtone to render a separate pitch. The close relationship of the fundamental and the fifth, or tonic and dominant as they are also called, is established because of their close proximity within the harmonic series. From these natural laws the triad, which is bound by the interval of a fifth and is foundational in Western music, is derived. Therefore, tuning the instrument in fifths allows the open, unfingered strings of the violin to best tap into the overtones produced by the physical laws of sound vibration and the most pervasive tonality in Western music.

A more pragmatic reason that the violin is tuned in fifths is that the violinist has only four fingers available with which to stop the string, therefore it works well to tune the instrument a fifth apart so that the fingers are facilitated to reach quickly as many notes as possible before shifting is necessitated.

Now that we have established why the instrument is tuned in fifths, we will return to answering the question of why practicing the interval is beneficial.

---

Firstly, to be able to successfully execute the interval of a fifth demands a certain alignment of the fingers’ pad, the hand, and the arm. In Mr. Friend’s words,

If you find the perfect position for the pad, your hand does not have to adjust, it is already set. The practice of fifths helps one to find the place on the pad of the finger that sets the hand up for success.”

“The pads dictate the correct arm position. It is not the arm that dictates the correct finger position, which is what we are taught."

In other words, rather than dividing the player’s focus between isolated areas while seeking to correctly position the arm, the hand, and the fingers separately, focusing on the fifth places the attention on the pad of the finger directly enables a correct finger-hand-arm posture. (An amazing solution that is simple and elegant!) We will delve into the specifics of what this looks like in the second half of this chapter, but suffice it here to point out the extreme efficiency of this approach.

A second benefit that fifths provide is an enabling of the tuning of parallel notes. This creates a physical memory of hand position that affords a solid foundation for finger location. One of the basic aims of practice is to create muscle memory. The development of muscle memory allows the musician’s mind to focus on the interpretive aspects of making music. By practicing fifths, the violinist is further enhancing his or her muscle memory by practicing the parallel notes simultaneously, for example, G-D, A-E, B-F#, C-G, and so forth. The practice of octaves is often spoken of by teachers as creating the frame of the hand. In combination with Mr. Friend’s thoughts on fifths, I find it useful to think of

---

the octave as helping to form the vertical hand-frame, and fifths as helping to form the horizontal hand-frame. To put it another way, the vertical hand-frame--octaves--deals with the position of lowest and highest notes of the octave, most commonly played by fingers 1 and 4, while the horizontal hand-frame--fifths--deals with the correct parallel positioning of the fingers for every note that lies within that octave. By practicing fifths, a player is doubling the efficiency of his or her practice by creating the correct muscle memory for two notes at a time. In addressing the parallel position of the finger Mr. Friend says, “The pads must be parallel with its neighbor string, always. This is the left hand. This takes care of the frame of the hand as well. The fifths will create the foundation of your whole technique. After that is firmly in place, start adding in the practice with the octaves. Fifths influence the sixths, the thirds, pizzicato.”

A third reason to practice fifths espoused by Mr. Friend in direct correlation to the previous point, is their ability to foster accurate, consistent intonation. As the violinist’s muscle memory is improved and solidified, the violinist will have an increasingly accurate note-bank from which to draw. This approach fosters both physical ease and mental confidence in an area in which violinists can be plagued by insecurity.

Fourthly, the practice of fifths improves vibrato. Mr. Friend states, “Playing with more of the pad gives one a richer vibrato, and the intonation stays within the note, rather than going on either side of the note.” Because the execution of fifths demands that a larger pad area be utilized, vibrato is of necessity initiated

from a broader base, rather than the much more narrow area available on the
fingertip. This difference automatically eliminates the tendency to oscillate
outside of the note, a tendency which can produce a nebulous note quality which
is most undesirable.

A fifth benefit is the violinist’s increased control of colors. Before we
proceed, a word is in order about the use of the term ‘color’—typically used in
visual art—which is here being employed in a non-visual context. Leonard
Bernstein, at the opening of his 1973 lectures at Harvard said, “the best way to
‘know’ a thing is in context of another discipline.” In this spirit of using one
discipline to illuminate another, Mr. Friend as well as other pedagogues often
borrow from the vocabulary of art, using words like ‘color’ and ‘texture’ to
describe a musician’s interpretive choices in the realm of sound. Incidentally,
one sometimes hears visual art described in terms such as “lyrical,” which shows
that vocabulary is borrowed in both directions. Color, in a context of musical
sound, can connote various degrees of intensity available to the musician. Mr.
Friend links the control of color to the pad of the finger, the area which is needed
to properly execute the interval of the fifth. By increasing the strength of contact
between the pad and the fingerboard, the intensity of sound, or ‘color’ is
increased. The converse is likewise true: a lighter pressure of the pad to the
fingerboard evokes a less intense, softer sound. There are varying degrees of

---

26 Leonard Bernstein, The Unanswered Question: Six Talks at Harvard. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard
use.com/words/art/.
intensity and emotion on the spectrum of these two opposites, and the power to control these subtleties of sound and emotion lie within the pads of the fingers.

In a lesson Mr. Friend gave thoughts on the ideas of color and texture, and role of the right and left hand in in the control of these two factors:

The pulse is not a physical thing, it is internal, like a heartbeat. Your music has got a heartbeat as well. Your mind, your music has got a heartbeat. You must always come back to that tempo, even after you improvise, after you use rubato. You can move it around as much as you want, because that’s your conversation, but you move it around with the colors, and that’s where these fifths will start to create the colors for you.
And you know the bow is for a different thing, the bow is for textures. So you have to be able to create these textures in your bow always, whatever texture you want. So when you play a piece, you think of the texture, which is the texture of this piece? Silk, iron, leather? And then you choose what color is the silk? What color is the leather? You have the one in your fingers, the other you have in your bow. And these are your decisions. And you need to develop the independence of the hands with these two logical techniques, the bowing technique, the left-hand technique. Totally different from a pianist, where the technique is the same in both hands. It’s got to be independent, and we have to understand what we are capable in the left hand and what we are capable of in the bow. These two hands bring together your textures and your colors. Your pulse is from inside of you, so this you have got to just develop, because rhythm and balance are important.  

A sixth reason to practice fifths that they facilitate a more natural position which is less physically taxing, and therefore the violinist is less likely to incur playing-related injury. Mr. Friend noted that once he began practicing and performing with these principles in mind, he found that he could play longer with less fatigue. The placement of the fifth allows for the fingers, hand, and arm have

---

been placed by the fifth as naturally as possible, they are not having to work as hard, neither are they as stressed by a more awkward position. This is highly useful for all violinists, but in particular the orchestral violinist, whose long hours of rehearsal and performance often bring with them playing-related injury.

Another reason given by Mr. Friend to practice fifths is that the resulting relationship between finger, a soft wrist, and arm position is the same that is demonstrated by many of leading violinists. Mr. Friend cites players such as Itzhak Perlman, Jascha Heifetz, Joshua Bell, Isaac Stern, Fritz Kreisler, Zino Francescatti, and Ginette Neveu-among many others-as having the very relaxed, natural positioning that the practice of fifths brings about. Mr. Friend says, “All of the master violinists play it this way. They do it automatically. That is why I have developed it.” By practicing fifths the violinist is able to tap into that naturalness of position intuited by the prodigies of the instrument. In the photos of Fig. 4.1-4.3, one can see the finger, hand, arm positioning of three renowned artists:

Figure 4.1, Violinist Jascha Heifetz
How to Practice Fifths

In this next section we will examine exactly how the violinist can achieve successful mastery of fifths.

As the first step toward understanding how to practice and play fifths, let us first define what is meant by the ‘pad’ of the finger. Mr. Friend describes it in this way:

The pad is very large, it’s not just the tip of the finger. The tip of the finger of course is very important, but we don’t play with the tip of the finger. You’ve got to think more of the actual fingerprint; now that becomes a large area to play with. This is the pad. Sometimes
we use more one part of the pad than the other. This is the whole idea of the fifths.  

So, to successfully facilitate the execution of the fifth, the full pad, or ‘fingerprint’ must come into play, rather than just the tip of the finger. By using the concept of the ‘fingerprint’ to reorient how we visualize the area of the finger that contacts the string and fingerboard, our possibility for control of colors, just mentioned, as well as control of vibrato and intonation, is increased. Mr. Friend gives us another way to think about the pad of the finger in these words,

There are simple rules on how the actual thing works. If you were playing a cello, you would automatically be playing with these pads. If you were a pianist, you would be playing with the pads. The same with oboe. Because violinists must play in such an unnatural position actually, we have to realize that the most important ingredient is the point of contact between the pads and the fingerboard. This can only be developed through the fifths. It can’t be developed through the thirds, because you use two fingers in thirds.

If I hold the fiddle in front of me like a cello or guitar, I have a good position. It is not so vertical.

Mr. Friend propounds that it is the practice of fifths which enables us to discover the full extent of this pad area, and the successful mastery of this interval leads to the other important benefits previously discussed.

In order to play with the pad, the angle of the finger, wrist, and arm will be slightly adjusted. The finger will have a less vertical approach to the fingerboard, the wrist will be less arched, and the arm, guided by the elbow, will be positioned with a less forward orientation. About correct posture Mr. Friend states,

We all have the correct position, without realizing it, when we tune with harmonics. We can’t break the rules of the instrument, and it’s

---

never been dealt with. The natural harmonics, because of the fifths, because of the tuning of the instrument, absolutely dictate the position of the hand.\textsuperscript{32}

Mr. Friend suggests that when practicing fifths, focus on one string more than the other: “When practicing the fifths, the finger can cover more of the lower string. Flattening the pads provides more space with which to work. Going vertical with the fingers limits the pad area available, and does not allow for playing fifths in tune. Think more of the lower of the two strings when practicing fifths.”

Mr. Friend prescribes the use of vibrato when practicing fifths. In my own experience, I have heard differing opinions expressed by my professors on the use of vibrato while practicing, especially when practicing for intonation. However, for Mr. Friend, “the vibration is part of the activity of the hand, which must be tuned.”

An interview with one of Mr. Friend’s current students at London’s Royal Academy of Music, Czech violinist Julie Svěcen who has studied with Mr. Friend for over five and a half years, offers a personal view into how and why Mr. Friend’s method has influenced her playing:

Q: Did you practice fifths often before you began lesson with Mr. Friend?
A: Pretty much not at all. Fifths didn’t belong to the traditional way of teaching technique in Czech Republic (where I studied before), so it was all very new, when I started to study with Mr. Friend. I usually practiced only scales and exercises by Ševčík, Dounis etc. which was all very helpful, but for many years certain things took more time to improve and thank to the fifths I realized it can go easier way.

Q: Did you begin practicing fifths more after you began studying with Mr. Friend?
A: Definitely, with his system of fifths, my way of technique practice has changed completely. I started to practice exercises he invented specially made for fifths. It was very intense in the beginning, because I needed help with the way I hold the violin and also position of the left hand and placing fingers on fingerboard, creating vibrato. After certain time I have practiced those exercises I started to mix them with scales and I felt such an ease in my playing for all the ‘difficult’ aspects of technique.

Q: Have aspects of your playing changed/become easier/better since you began studying Mr. Friend’s ideas about fifths?
A: Yes indeed, even short time of practicing fifths I felt the instant difference. Positioning left hand, intonation, placing, coloring notes, vibrato It also came hand in hand with whole body position and bow arm. For example good position of the left hand after playing fifth can unlock many possibilities for creating one note. In words of Mr. Friend: For the left hand there are many colors to make, many rhythms and pulse to feel - all that is like creating a painting and the bow arm is the paintbrush. It is all up to us what create, what we say, but we have to say something. And fifths definitely play the key role, in my own experience.
Chapter 5: Fifths in the Preparation of a Piece

It is important to always keep in mind the important fact that practicing fifths, or any technical detail, is not an end in itself. Rather, the purpose is to allow us to make music more freely, to express ourselves more fully, and to communicate with our fellow musicians and audience more clearly. We can never lose sight of the ultimate objectives when we are in the midst of technical practice. And, by keeping the ultimate objective in mind, we provide ourselves with the motivation that drives us to go after those technical details.

When speaking on the fundamentals of what violin playing is all about, Mr. Friend says, “Always look for quality of the sound. And at the end of the day, however complicated...it boils down to two things: Singing and dancing. Sound and rhythm.” Even at the beginning stages of learning new music, Mr. Friend stresses the importance of keeping a good sound, or tone quality, as the paramount object. And it is the practice of fifths that he believes to be the most expeditious way to achieve the greater goal of expressive musicianship.

At this juncture it will be beneficial to summarize briefly the core ideas which have been discussed and how they can be applied in daily practice.

We will first look at what Mr. Friend has to say about general position for the left arm, wrist, and fingers.

**Arm:** There are really only two positions needed for the left arm. Once the arm is set for first position, the only real adjustment it has to make is at the point of the fingerboard at which the player must navigate the ribs of the instrument. In the first basic position, Mr. Friend recommends that the arm hang as naturally as
possible. Rather than having the elbow pulled inward, toward the right side of the bridge (as viewed by the player), he recommends that the elbow not come as far forward. He recommends that even as the fingers shift upward in position, the arm maintain this posture until that point at which the hand reaches the ribs of the violin. At this point the arm does have to adjust slightly. The elbow moves slightly to the right, moving the arm “forward.” The movement does not have to be drastic, however. The less the violinist has to move the arm forward, the less physically awkward and taxing the position becomes.

**Wrist:** Mr. Friend suggests that the wrist remain much closer to flat than the arched position taught by some pedagogues. As with the arm, his suggestion allows for a more kinesthetically natural posture, which decreases injury.

**Fingers:** To be able to successfully play fifths, Mr. Friend recommends that the finger contact the fingerboard on the pad, rather than the tip of the finger.

When one is approaching a new piece, or tackling a perennially difficult passage, Mr. Friend recommends several steps.

1. Play each note twice, in fifths (the interval can be either above or below the original note). Slur the second iteration into the next note.
2. Next, play each note with slow, even strokes, in fifths.
3. Next, play the pieces in the written rhythm, still in fifths.
4. Finally, play the piece as written, no fifths.

Below is a notated version of the opening from *Malagueña*, by Sarasate, to illustrate the steps just discussed:
When practicing the various steps, always use the fingering that you intend for final performance.

Through each stage, Mr. Friend is adamant that a good tone must always be kept at the forefront. “The most important thing is a beautiful sound. You mustn't play with an ugly sound.” He says, “When you come to a difficult passage in your Bach, or in your concertos, you practice them slowly with a beautiful sound, and in fifths, and you’ll find the correct hand position…And then from there your violin playing will develop incredibly. It’s the easy way, it’s the correct way.”
In a lesson with Mr. Friend he gave me these words of advice: “I want you to practice with the most beautiful sound you have. Do not stop if it is out of tune, just keep playing it until it is in tune. You must vibrate. I don’t mind it being out of tune, it must be beautiful. You must play it with conviction. You must not practice your fifths without vibrato. You must eliminate the fear of playing something wrong. You won’t be able to play everything in fifths, but what you can play in fifths will create the foundation for you whole technique.”
Chapter 6: Conclusion

The practice of fifths is an important and effective way to facilitate a correct left-hand technique. To allow Mr. Friend to summarize in his own words, “The ability and importance to master with understanding the interval of the 5th, must be established and recognized as a major priority in the development and technical awareness for violinists of every level. The simple fact that the instrument is designed and built with four strings and tuned in three sets of 5ths, and where all the natural harmonics available on the four strings (identical both in position and number) dictates that all the remaining notes as required by our vast repertoire should be dealt with and tuned accordingly.”

It is my sincere hope and belief that the ideas learned from Mr. Friend and presented in this document will be a powerful tool in the hands of the rising generation of violinists.
Sonata No. 32, Mozart

Sonata No. 32. K 454, was written in Vienna on April 21, 1784: all in a day’s work for the 28 year old Mozart. He wrote the piece for Regina Strinasacchi, a violinist who studied at Vivaldi’s famous school for girls, Ospedale della Pieta. She went on to tour Europe as a soloist. Strinasacchi and Mozart debuted the sonata for Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II. Story has it that Mozart didn’t have time to write out the piano part, so he accompanied Strinasacchi without music. This legendary account is backed up by the fact that in the autograph copy, the piano part is added in a different color ink under the violin part.

The piece is in three movements. The first opens with a dramatic Largo which establishes the two instruments as equal contributors to the dialogue which is about to follow. The Largo gives way to a spritely Allegro which constitutes the remainder of the first movement. In the Andante, the piano and violin alternately take the primary melodic material while the other instrument supports with an octave accompaniment pervasive throughout the movement. The third and final movement is the Allegretto. In this playful finale the octave expands its role from harmonic underpinning to include the framing of the opening melodic material, and it recurs in both roles throughout the remainder of the piece.


Sonata in A Major for Violin and Piano, Cesar Franck

The Violin Sonata by Cesar Franck was composed in 1886. The piece was a wedding present for Belgian violin virtuoso Eugene Ysaye, who premiered it at his wedding celebration. The work is in four movements: Allegretto ben moderato, Allegro, Ben moderato: Recitative-Fantasia, and Allegretto poco mosso. The work is cyclic in nature, meaning that themes or portions of themes are shared, sometimes subtly, sometimes in almost direct quote, between movements. This compositional
technique was championed by Franz Liszt, and used with great success by Franck. An example of this theme-sharing between movements can be heard when material at the end of the third movement is quoted in different keys throughout the fourth movement. In the fourth movement, we hear a famous example of the use of canon, in which the violin trails the piano by one measure for over 20 bars. An apocryphal but possibly true interpretation of the piece has been handed down through the decades, in which the first movement represents the bliss of new-found love; the second movement mimics the relationship’s first fight; the third movement conjures up the two individual’s contemplation and retrospection on the disagreement; and the final movement portrays joyful, passionate reconciliation.


Tambourin Chinois, Op. 3, Fritz Kreisler

Not much is known about the compositional history of Tambourin Chinois. It is believed to have been written in 1910, and it is one of many short show pieces for violin and piano written by Fritz Kreisler. On the Hyperion label’s recording of the work is a quote from the composer. “The idea of it came to me after a visit to the Chinese theatre in San Francisco—not that the music there suggested any theme, but it gave me the impulse to write a free fantasy in the Chinese manner.” The pentatonic scale underpins the melodic flights of the violin, and the double-stops in fourths and fifths further capture a hint of Chinese tonality. The piece is written in ABA form, with two identical virtuosic passages book-ending a slow, sensual middle section.


Partita No. 3 in E Major, BWV 1006, Johann Sebastian Bach

Bach’s third partita comes from the iconic set of six works for solo violin. Three of the works are sonatas, at the time traditionally performed for a sacred setting, and three are partitas, which were more often for secular settings. Partita No. 3 is in E Major, one of two from the set written in a major key. The piece is in seven movements, six of which are based on dance styles of the period. The
movements are Preludio, is an introductory movement rather than a dance form, and is followed by Loure, Gavotte en rondeau, Minuet I, Minuet II, Bourree, and Gigue. Bach’s solo works were written in 1720.


Spanish Dances, Op. 21, No. 1 Malaguena, Pablo de Sarasate

*Malaguena* was written by Spanish composer and violinist Pablo Sarasate. The piece, Op.21, stands among a collection of other dance inspired pieces, and it is written with the flare of a well-versed performer. *Malaguena* comes from a set of two pieces which comprise the composer’s *Spanish Dances Book I*. The other piece in the set is his *Habanera*. The piece was written in 1878, and performed and recorded by the Sarasate. An outstanding feature of the piece is the use of left-hand pizzicato, which mimics the Spanish guitar.


Sonata No. 8 in G Major, Op. 30, No. 3, Ludwig van Beethoven

*Sonata No. 8* is one of ten sonatas that Beethoven wrote for violin and piano. The piece is in G major and divided in three movements: Allegro assai, Tempo di minuetto ma molto moderato e grazioso, and Allegro vivace. It was written in 1802, when Beethoven was 32 years old.

The opening of the first movement is characterized by a repetition of four notes in the lower register of the violin and played in unison with the piano, and is followed by a quick ascent via arpeggiation to the violin’s upper register. This pattern creates a light and playful mood as it recurs throughout the movement. The second movement, based on the minuet form, is notable for its lyricism and simplicity, while the final Allegro is a mad dash to the finish line for the both violinist and pianist, which is yet punctuated by sudden and unexpected moments of rubato which are then quickly left behind in the relentless drive to the end.
Heroic Variations, Jonathan Crosmer

Heroic Variations is a delightful 21st century piece which is constructed as a theme with variations. The composer offered these thoughts on the work in an email to me: “I composed Heroic Variations in the summer of 2015 for a competition, where contestants had two weeks to write a six-minute theme and variations for violin, clarinet, and piano. Composition has generally come slowly to me, so the idea of writing a piece under time pressure was intriguing. I learned a lot about pouring intentionally into the creative process. Even though feelings and inspiration wax and wane, it is often possible to pursue an idea and nurture it by willpower, just as a performing artist practices daily, regardless of mood. The theme is original, crossing some of the harmonic and melodic language of Brahms with English folk song. Two simple statements are followed by ten character variations, ranging from a funeral lament to energetic dances with ragtime and jazz influences, and a swashbuckling finale. Heroic Variations was first performed in May 2017, when Jessica Miskelly agreed to premiere my arrangement of it for violin, viola, and piano.”

Violin Concerto, Op. 14, Samuel Barber

The Violin Concerto by American composer Samuel Barber stands as his sole concerto for the instrument. Samuel Fels, an American businessman, commissioned Barber to write for the work for violinist Iso Briselli in 1939. The three-movement work was to be premiered by Briselli, a classmate of Barber’s at Curtis in Philadelphia. However, after disagreements between composer and violinist, Briselli relinquished his claim to premier the concerto. The first movement is notable for its soaring lyricism. In the second movement the slightly increased dissonance seems to embody the pre-war tension and offers a sense of foreboding. The final movement, a moto perpetuo, is famous for its furious speed and its departure from the more consonant harmonies of the earlier two movements.


The Four Seasons, Antonio Vivaldi  
Concerto No. 1 in E major, Op.8 RV 269, “Spring”  
Concerto No. 4 in f minor, Op. 8, RV 297, “Winter”

_The Four Seasons_, by Antonio Vivaldi, is a set of four concertos which contain some of the most widely recognized music from the classical canon. The music is highly programmatic, and mimics such things as lighting, thunder, birdsong, and barking dogs. _The Four Seasons_ were published in 1725, and are part of a larger set of twelve concertos which are entitled _The Contest Between Harmony and Invention_. There are four sonnets which correspond to each concerto, and speculation has Vivaldi as the possible author, though the sonnets are unsigned. The solo violin part is virtuosic and imaginative, while orchestral parts primarily serve the function of harmonic and rhythmic underpinning.


Lecture Recital Notes

Thank you so much for having me here today!  
First, a little bit about me. I am originally from Maryland, just a little north of Baltimore, and I studied violin with an amazing lady named Anne Lane Vosough, and when it was time for college, I almost came to UMBC! That’s a long story, but I am currently working on my doctorate at the University of Kentucky. So, how did I come to write about my dissertation topic?  
Two years ago I went to a music festival in Prague, where I met a violinist named Rodney Friend, who is a teacher at London’s Royal Academy of Music. I thoroughly enjoyed working with Mr. Friend, because he had an honestly that was very direct, but also clearly motivated out of a desire to help us become the best we could be. He invited me to come study with him, and last year I was able to spend several months in London working with him. I’ll tell you more about Mr. Friend in just a moment. While I was studying with Mr. Friend, he introduced me to this method of practicing fifths that really changed my playing, made me much more confident in my practice  
So fifths. First of all, I want to ask, how many people here practice fifths on a regular basis? I can tell you just how many hours I spent practicing fifths: 0.  
I have to admit that one of my teachers did tell me to practice them, and so every once in a while I would start to feel guilty for not doing it, and I would
start practicing them just long enough to remember how much I hated doing, and then I would stop.

And the reason I hated it, was because I couldn’t play them. I could never get them in tune no matter how much I tried to correct them, my fingers would slip between the strings as I tried to adjust them; it was a complete mess.

On top of that, I really didn’t see the benefit. I didn’t know how, and I didn’t know why. Studying with Rodney showed me both the why and the how.

The most important aspects of violin playing that are affected by fifths are:

1. Intonation
2. Correct Hand-wrist-elbow-arm angle--Natural harmonics can help us begin to find the pad and the corresponding angles
3. Vibrato within the note
4. Colors

Today’s lecture is going to be broken into two parts: In the first section I am going to share with you my dissertation, and the second half will be an interactive, hands-on demonstration and exploration of Mr. Friend’s ideas.
Bibliography


Geminiani, Francesco. *An abstract of Geminiani's Art of playing the violin, and of another book of instructions for playing in a true taste on the violin, German flute, violoncello, and the thorough bass on the harpsichord, with some additions.: Containing the most necessary rules to attain to a perfection on those instruments*. Boston, New-England:: Printed by John Boyles, 1769.


Vita

JESSICA LEIGH MISKELLY

Education
University of Oxford, Certificate in Theological Studies, expected 2018
University of Kentucky, Doctor of Musical Arts, expected 2017
University of Kentucky, Master of Music, Class of 2012
Bob Jones University, Bachelor of Music, Violin Performance, cum laude, Class of 2008

Employment - Professional activity
Tates Creek Presbyterian Church, Assistant Music Director, 2012-2016
University of Kentucky, teaching assistant, 2009-2015
Adjunct Professor, Asbury University, 2014-2015

Honors, Awards, Distinctions
John Jacob Niles Fellowship for String Quartet
Soloist with violinist Mark O’Connor and University of Kentucky Orchestra, 2009
Dean’s list 6 consecutive semesters
Solo with Bob Jones Chamber Orchestra, Symphonia Concertante, Mozart, Spring 2006
Commencement Finalist, Spring 2006
Soloist with FAME orchestra, Concerto for Two Violins, Spring 2004
Soloist with FAME orchestra, Four Seasons-Spring, Vivaldi, Fall 2004
Soloist with FAME orchestra, Concerto in E minor for Four Violins, Vivaldi, Spring 2003

Orchestral Positions
Lexington Philharmonic, Substitute violin, 2009-2017
Asheville Symphony Orchestra, Substitute violin, 2008-present
Spartanburg Philharmonic, Substitute member, 2007-2009
Bob Jones Symphony Orchestra, Concertmaster, 2006-2007
Concertmaster, Baltimore String Orchestra Camp, Summers 2004-2005