

# Practicing Before String Camp

If you are not currently taking lessons and in a regular practice routine, it is recommended that you make a point of practicing at least 20 minutes per day during the 3-4 weeks leading up to string camp. You will be playing anywhere from 3 to 5 or 6 hours a day while at camp, which can be physically demanding if you are not used to it.

Personal practice of the music mailed to you before camp will help not just you, but also your whole group. A player who is secure in their own part is more able to listen and respond musically to other members in the group. Learning these ensemble skills is really what string camp is all about, not learning the notes of your individual part.

An inner or bass part can be hard to practice because there is often no tune to hang onto, and sometimes the notes can look as if they are not challenging. However, it is really important to make sure that you can play these parts in rhythm, counting all the rests and coming in with confidence. A metronome is very helpful for developing rhythmic accuracy.

The following scales and arpeggios are suggested as a starting point for a practice routine and can be used to explore a variety of different bow strokes, bowings and rhythms (see below):

Violins:            2 octave scales and arpeggios G and A major  
                      1 octave scales and arpeggios C, D, and F major

Violas and Cellos:            2 octave scales and arpeggios C and D major  
                                          1 octave scales and arpeggios F, G, and Bb major

In addition, make sure you are familiar with the scale and arpeggio for each piece assigned.

- \*Whole bows (use a mirror if possible to make sure that you are really using the whole bow and that *the bow isn't drifting on the string*)
- \*Short notes in the middle of the bow
- \*Short notes at the heel
- \*Short notes at the tip
- \*Slurred notes in groups of 2, 3, or 4
- \*Different rhythms which you can take from your pieces
- \*Using a metronome, practice subdividing into 2 and into 4 (i.e. notes that go twice as fast as the metronome, and then twice as fast again)

Rhythm: Look through your camp music and if there are any tricky looking rhythms, figure out the correct subdivision (i.e. 1&2&, 1ee&da2ee&da) to help determine where in the counting the notes fall. Practice counting aloud and clapping the rhythm, and then try pizz'ing in rhythm on your instrument. Rests are always harder to play than notes!! Make sure you are counting the rests and giving them full value. Your rest is someone else's note!