

# My First Pieces

Music for Beginning String Players

## Double Bass

Composed, arranged and compiled by  
Stephen Chin

Welcome to the wonderful world of making music with a bowed string instrument! By working with your teacher, following the instructions carefully and practising regularly, you will start a journey that you may continue to follow in the years to come.

The first few pages of each book contain details of each instrument's components, how to look after it and hold it correctly.

Carefully go over "Some Basics of Music Reading" pages as these simple facts will help you play your music easily. Important information appears throughout the book as you need it.

A glossary can be found at the back of the book so you can quickly find the meaning of the terms you have learned.

Piano accompaniments can be downloaded from the My First Pieces page at [www.everythingstring.com](http://www.everythingstring.com). This may help you to experience the music in a fuller way. Your teacher may also be able to play the accompaniment, which is always lots of fun!

Enjoy!

Everything String

# Stephen Chin

M Mus, B Mus, Dip Mus Comp



As a founding member of the Sydney Youth Orchestra, Stephen's interest and enthusiasm for music lead him to undertake further studies at Sydney University where formal training in both violin and composition were completed under former leader of the Australian Chamber Orchestra, John Harding and renowned Australian composer, Peter Sculthorpe respectively. Since that time, he has been invited to perform with such groups as The ABC Sinfonia, The Badinerie Players, The Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra, The Queensland Symphony Orchestra, The Queensland Pops Orchestra and Corda Spiritus.

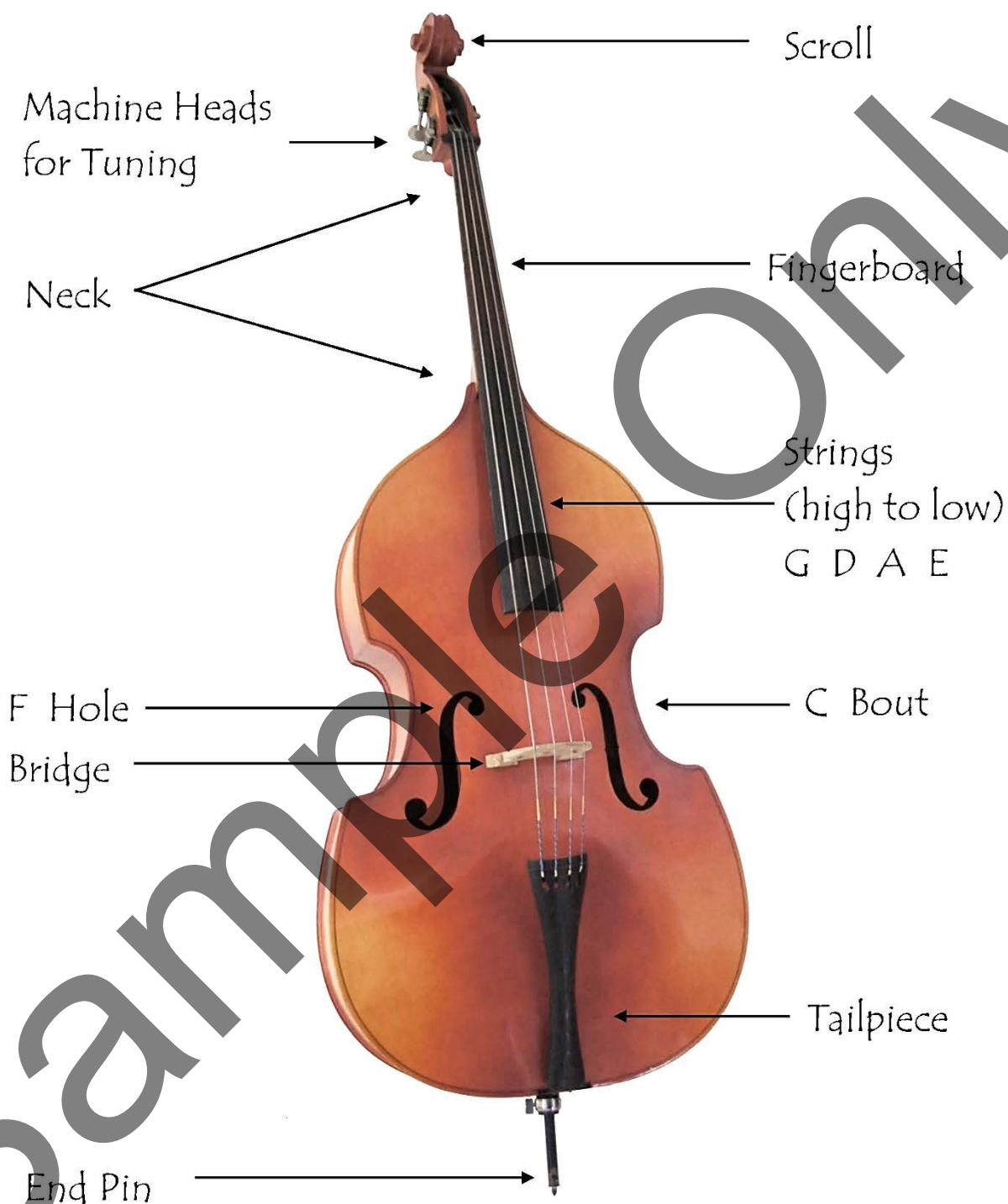
Stephen holds a Master of Music from Queensland Conservatorium of Music Griffith University specialising in violin performance and pedagogy. He is also an examiner for the Australian Music Examination Board (AMEB). In addition to this, Stephen performs regularly with a number of professional chamber ensembles. Stephen publishes a number of string compositions and arrangements which have been used as test pieces for a number of competitions throughout Australia and are also presented as examination pieces for the AMEB. Stephen has been invited many times to adjudicate various eisteddfods and competitions such as Queensland Festival of Music, The Western Australian Schools Orchestra Festival, The Hobart Eisteddfod and the Gold Coast Eisteddfod. He is also in demand as a string and orchestral clinician, regularly conducting a number of workshops and festivals both nationally and internationally including the Melbourne Youth Music Summer School, the Sunwater and Stanwell Winter Music School and the All State Senior Orchestra in New Mexico, USA.

From 2008 - 2013, Stephen was the conductor of the BEL faculty Chamber Orchestra at the University of Queensland. Stephen is presently National President of The Australian Strings Association (AUSTA), Principal String Teacher and Director of Orchestras at Brisbane Grammar School and lectures in String Pedagogy and Practicum at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music, Griffith University.

# Caring for My Double Bass

- Lay your case flat on the floor when taking out both the instrument and bow.
- If you have a soft case, the bow is the first thing to come out and the last thing to be packed up.
- Always make sure the case is closed properly when packing up.
- Always leave your instrument in a place with a temperature that you yourself would be comfortable in.
- Tighten the bow just enough for a pencil to go through the space at the middle of the bow between the hair and the wood.
- Never touch the hair of your bow with your fingers.
- Always rosin your bow before playing – your teacher will show you how to do this.
- Regularly use a clean cloth to wipe off any rosin dust on the instrument and bow.
- Make sure that your bow hairs are loosened before the bow is placed back in the case.

# The Double Bass



# The Bass Bow

French on Left, German on Right



# General Posture

## Seated Position

- Sit on the stool with both knees apart and feet on the first rung of the stool.
- Bass is set on its spike an arm length from your body then rests back on your sternum and on your left thigh.
- Set up the fingers 4, 3, 2 & 1 with the thumb opposite the 2<sup>nd</sup> finger keeping the knuckles out at all times. The 3<sup>rd</sup> finger supports the 4<sup>th</sup> but is not used until the higher positions.
- Keep your shoulders low. Your elbows must be raised a little.
- Keep the left hand fingers relaxed and well rounded.



## Standing Position

- Similar to the seated position but with the instrument turned into you a little more and resting on the stomach area.
- Bass is set on its spike an arm length from your body then rests back on your sternum.



# The Bow Hold – French Style

- Holding the bow in your left hand, hang the fingers over the stick near the frog.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> finger is placed over the metal nut on the frog, whilst the 3<sup>rd</sup> finger is placed in the middle of the frog.
- The little finger is bent and is put in the top corner of the frog.
- The crease near the nail of the index finger is on top of the stick.
- The thumb is bent, flexible and placed half on the frog and half on the stick.
- All fingers are evenly spaced and relaxed.
- When bowing, keep the right hand in line with the “C” bout. Tilt the wood of the bow slightly towards you. . **ALWAYS strive to make an even and beautiful tone.**



# The Bow Hold – German Style

- Holding the bow with your left hand, place the turning screw of the bow in the web between the thumb and the index finger.
- The thumb is slightly curved and is placed on top of the stick.
- The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> fingers are slightly curved and are placed along the stick.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> finger rests in the curve of the frog.
- The little finger is placed under the frog.
- When bowing, keep the right hand in line with the “C” bout. Tilt the wood of the bow slightly towards you. **ALWAYS strive to make an even and beautiful tone.**





# The Left Hand

- Set up the fingers 4, 3, 2 & 1 with the thumb opposite the 2<sup>nd</sup> finger, keeping the knuckles out at all times.
- Keep the fingers and thumb relaxed and well rounded.
- Keep your shoulders low.
- Your elbows must be raised a little.
- Try to hear the note clearly in your head before placing your fingers.
- Let the fingers feel the string's vibrations as you play.
- Remember the string names **G D A E** from the highest to the lowest (or the thinnest to the thickest) this way:

**Good Dogs Always Eat**







## TIME SIGNATURES

A **Time Signature** tells us how many beats there will be in a bar of music. The most commonly used time signatures are:

**2**  
**4**

Two beats a bar

**3**  
**4**

Three beats a bar

**4**  
**4**

Four beats a bar

## ACCIDENTALS & KEY SIGNATURES

**Accidentals** placed before a note are used to change the pitch. Often they are placed at the beginning of a staff to save putting them on every note that needs them. This is called a **Key Signature**. For instance, a sharp placed on the F line or F space means that every F will become F sharp.

We use these accidentals in music:

#

**Sharp** - raises the note a half a tone from its letter name note.

b

**Flat** - lowers the note a half a tone from its letter name note.










♮

**Natural** - returns the note to its letter name note after a sharp or flat has been used.

## NOTE VALUES

A **Note Value** tells us the length of time a sound lasts for. They are matched with a **Note Rest** which tells us how long a silence will be.

The most common note values and rests are as follows:

Note Value	Note Rest	Length in Beats
<b>Crotchet</b> 		1
<b>Minim</b> 		2
<b>Dotted Minim</b> 	Various combinations of the above rests.	3
<b>Semibreve</b> 	 May also be used for a full bar rest with any time signature.	4
<b>Quaver</b> 		1/2

# Getting Ready for My First Play!

Set up left hand fingers  
on the bass body



pizz. - pizzicato - pluck the string  
with the right index finger.

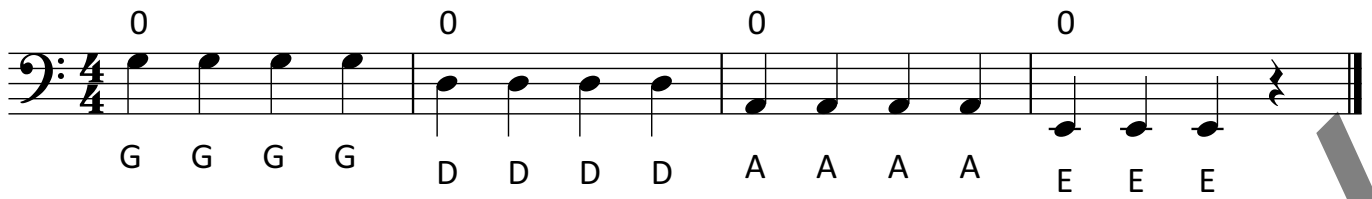


Strings, highest to lowest, remember:  
**Good      Dogs      Always      Eat**

# 1. My Open Strings

pizz.

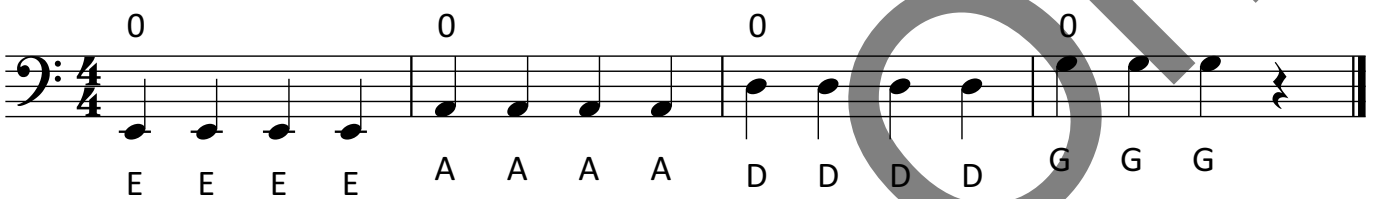
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# 2. My Open Strings the Other Way Around

pizz.

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# 3. Walking in the Park with Open D's & A's

pizz.

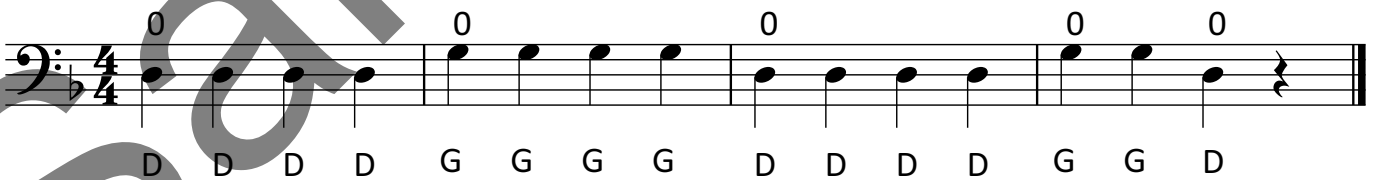
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# 4. Gypsy Open D's & G's

pizz.

Stephen Chin



# 5. Hymn on Open G's, D's & A's

pizz.

Stephen Chin



## 6. Open Strings for Two

Duet

You need to work out your open string notes before playing.

**Duet** - a piece of music written for two separate parts.

pizz.

Stephen Chin

A

pizz.

B

The image shows two staves of music, labeled A and B, in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). Both staves begin with a 'pizz.' (pizzicato) instruction. Staff A contains a sequence of notes: G2 (quarter), A2 (quarter), B2 (quarter), C3 (quarter), D3 (quarter), E3 (quarter), F#3 (quarter), and G3 (quarter). Staff B contains a sequence of notes: F#2 (quarter), G2 (quarter), A2 (quarter), B2 (quarter), C3 (quarter), D3 (quarter), E3 (quarter), and F#3 (quarter). Both staves end with a double bar line.

## 7. Crazy Open String Challenge

You need to work out your open string notes before playing.

Stephen Chin

pizz.

The image shows a single staff of music in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The staff begins with a 'pizz.' (pizzicato) instruction. The notes are: G2 (quarter), A2 (quarter), B2 (quarter), C3 (quarter), D3 (quarter), E3 (quarter), F#3 (quarter), and G3 (quarter). The staff ends with a double bar line.

Practise holding a pencil to get ready for the bow-hold later on.

French style

German style







## 10. Plucking the Note F sharp (F#)

Set up 4 3 2 1 on D.

Leave all on.



pizz.

4



F# F# F#

F# F# F#

F# F# F#

F# F# F#

F# F# F#

Say "Fis" for F sharp

Stephen Chin

## 11. Plucking the Note G

Set up 4 3 2 1 on G.

Lift all off.



pizz.

0



G G G

G G G

G G G

G G G

G G G

Stephen Chin

12. Plucking the Note A

Set up 4 3 2 1 on G; lift 4 3 2.

Keep on 1.

Please note that this A on the G string is higher than the open A string.



pizz. 1

Stephen Chin

A A A A A A A A A A

13. Fun with D's & E's

Set up 4 3 2 1 on D; lift all but get the 1st finger ready.

pizz. 0 1 0 1 0

Stephen Chin

D D D E E E D D E E D D

14. Odyssey in E minor

Set up 4 3 2 1 on D; lift 4 3 2, keep on 1.

pizz. 1 0 1 0 1

Stephen Chin

E E E D D D E E D D E E

## 15. Fast & Furious First Fingers

Set up 4 3 2 1 on D; lift all but get the 1st finger ready.

pizz. Stephen Chin

0 1 0 1 0 1 0

D D E E D D E E D E E E D D

## 16. Stepping Out with D, E & F#

Set up 1 23 4 on D; lift all but get the 1st finger ready.

pizz. Stephen Chin

0 1 4 0 1 4 1 0

D D E E F# F# F# F# D D E E F# E D

### THE SET UP RULE

Set up all your fingers on the string you are to play on then lift as few fingers as possible to play the first note.

## 17. Ancient Echoes

pizz. Stephen Chin

1 0 1 1 0 1 4 1 0 1 0 1

E D E E D E F# F# E D E D E

# 18. Three Note Ping Pong

Duet

You need to work out your fingering and note names before playing.

Remember the Set Up Rule.

Stephen Chin

pizz.

A

B

pizz.

The musical score for 'Three Note Ping Pong' is written for two parts, A and B, in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. Part A starts with a 'pizz.' (pizzicato) instruction. The melody for Part A consists of a sequence of eighth notes: F#2, G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F#3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F#6, G6, A6, B6, C7, D7, E7, F#7, G7, A7, B7, C8, D8, E8, F#8, G8, A8, B8, C9, D9, E9, F#9, G9, A9, B9, C10, D10, E10, F#10, G10, A10, B10, C11, D11, E11, F#11, G11, A11, B11, C12, D12, E12, F#12, G12, A12, B12, C13, D13, E13, F#13, G13, A13, B13, C14, D14, E14, F#14, G14, A14, B14, C15, D15, E15, F#15, G15, A15, B15, C16, D16, E16, F#16, G16, A16, B16, C17, D17, E17, F#17, G17, A17, B17, C18, D18, E18, F#18, G18, A18, B18, C19, D19, E19, F#19, G19, A19, B19, C20, D20, E20, F#20, G20, A20, B20, C21, D21, E21, F#21, G21, A21, B21, C22, D22, E22, F#22, G22, A22, B22, C23, D23, E23, F#23, G23, A23, B23, C24, D24, E24, F#24, G24, A24, B24, C25, D25, E25, F#25, G25, A25, B25, C26, D26, E26, F#26, G26, A26, B26, C27, D27, E27, F#27, G27, A27, B27, C28, D28, E28, F#28, G28, A28, B28, C29, D29, E29, F#29, G29, A29, B29, C30, D30, E30, F#30, G30, A30, B30, C31, D31, E31, F#31, G31, A31, B31, C32, D32, E32, F#32, G32, A32, B32, C33, D33, E33, F#33, G33, A33, B33, C34, D34, E34, F#34, G34, A34, B34, C35, D35, E35, F#35, G35, A35, B35, C36, D36, E36, F#36, G36, A36, B36, C37, D37, E37, F#37, G37, A37, B37, C38, D38, E38, F#38, G38, A38, B38, C39, D39, E39, F#39, G39, A39, B39, C40, D40, E40, F#40, G40, A40, B40, C41, D41, E41, F#41, G41, A41, B41, C42, D42, E42, F#42, G42, A42, B42, C43, D43, E43, F#43, G43, A43, B43, C44, D44, E44, F#44, G44, A44, B44, C45, D45, E45, F#45, G45, A45, B45, C46, D46, E46, F#46, G46, A46, B46, C47, D47, E47, F#47, G47, A47, B47, C48, D48, E48, F#48, G48, A48, B48, C49, D49, E49, F#49, G49, A49, B49, C50, D50, E50, F#50, G50, A50, B50, C51, D51, E51, F#51, G51, A51, B51, C52, D52, E52, F#52, G52, A52, B52, C53, D53, E53, F#53, G53, A53, B53, C54, D54, E54, F#54, G54, A54, B54, C55, D55, E55, F#55, G55, A55, B55, C56, D56, E56, F#56, G56, A56, B56, C57, D57, E57, F#57, G57, A57, B57, C58, D58, E58, F#58, G58, A58, B58, C59, D59, E59, F#59, G59, A59, B59, C60, D60, E60, F#60, G60, A60, B60, C61, D61, E61, F#61, G61, A61, B61, C62, D62, E62, F#62, G62, A62, B62, C63, D63, E63, F#63, G63, A63, B63, C64, D64, E64, F#64, G64, A64, B64, C65, D65, E65, F#65, G65, A65, B65, C66, D66, E66, F#66, G66, A66, B66, C67, D67, E67, F#67, G67, A67, B67, C68, D68, E68, F#68, G68, A68, B68, C69, D69, E69, F#69, G69, A69, B69, C70, D70, E70, F#70, G70, A70, B70, C71, D71, E71, F#71, G71, A71, B71, C72, D72, E72, F#72, G72, A72, B72, C73, D73, E73, F#73, G73, A73, B73, C74, D74, E74, F#74, G74, A74, B74, C75, D75, E75, F#75, G75, A75, B75, C76, D76, E76, F#76, G76, A76, B76, C77, D77, E77, F#77, G77, A77, B77, C78, D78, E78, F#78, G78, A78, B78, C79, D79, E79, F#79, G79, A79, B79, C80, D80, E80, F#80, G80, A80, B80, C81, D81, E81, F#81, G81, A81, B81, C82, D82, E82, F#82, G82, A82, B82, C83, D83, E83, F#83, G83, A83, B83, C84, D84, E84, F#84, G84, A84, B84, C85, D85, 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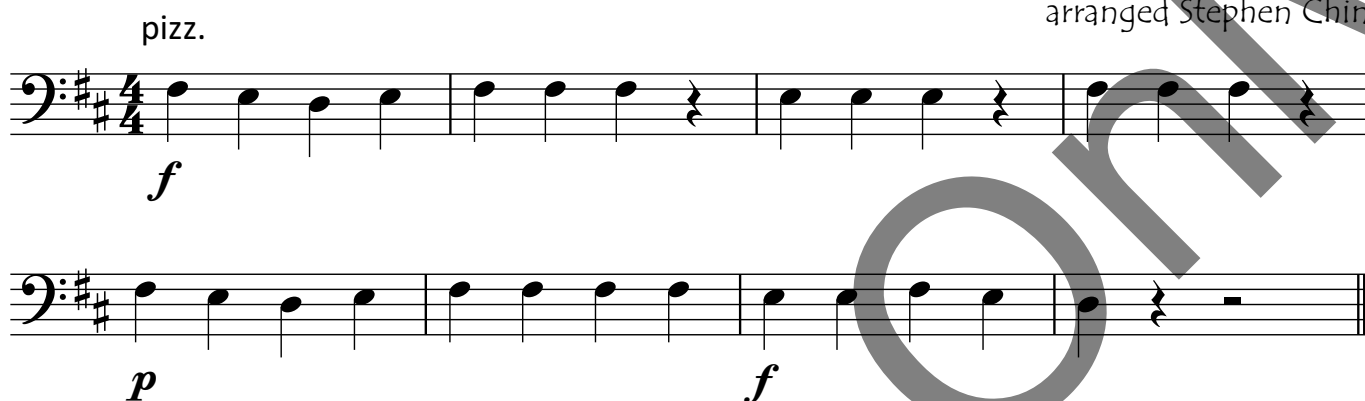
# 20. Mary Had a Little Lamb

(pizzicato version)

***f*** Forte - play loudly      ***p*** Piano - play softly

Remember the Set Up Rule.

Traditional  
arranged Stephen Chin



You can now practise holding your bow.

French style

German style



# 21. Au Claire de la Lune (pizzicato version)

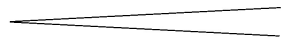
Remember the Set Up Rule.

Traditional  
arranged Stephen Chin

pizz.

Two staves of musical notation in bass clef, 4/4 time, key of D major (two sharps). The first staff begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The second staff begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The music consists of eighth and quarter notes with rests.

# 22. The Finger Twister



**Crescendo** - gradually becoming louder.

Remember the Set Up Rule.

Stephen Chin

pizz.

Two staves of musical notation in bass clef, 4/4 time, key of D major (two sharps). The first staff begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The second staff begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and ends with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The music consists of eighth and quarter notes with rests.

# 23. Mirror Magic



**Decrescendo** - gradually becoming softer.

Remember the Set Up Rule.

Stephen Chin

pizz.

Two staves of musical notation in bass clef, 4/4 time, key of D major (two sharps). The first staff begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The second staff begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The music consists of eighth and quarter notes with rests.

## 24. Bowing the Note D



**Down-bow** - move the bow to the right.



**Up-bow** - move the bow to the left.

**Arco** - play using your bow.

**MB** - Play at the middle of the bow.

Stephen Chin

MB arco

*f*

## 25. Bowing the Note E

Stephen Chin

MB arco

*f*

## 26. Bowing the Note F Sharp (F#)

Play using the bow from now on  
unless the music is marked pizz.

Stephen Chin

MB

*f*

## 27. Bowing the Note G

Stephen Chin

MB

*f*



## 28. Bowing the Note A

**Retake** - lift the bow in a clock-wise circle to play another down-bow.

Stephen Chin

MB  
1

*f*

## 29. Double the Fun!

**♩ = 92** **Metronome marking** - play at a speed of 92 beats per minute.

A down-bow will follow an upbow and an upbow will follow a down-bow unless otherwise marked. This is known as "bowing as it comes".

Stephen Chin

MB

*f* *p*

## 30. Moving in Minims

**Minim** - hold for two beats.

**WB** - Whole Bow.

Be sure to keep the bowhair always at a right angle to the string.

**♩ = 92**

Stephen Chin

WB

*f* *p*

# 31. Hop, Skip and Jump

**LH** - use the lower half of the bow; **UH** - use the upper half of the bow.

Using the bow from LH to the UH is called "dividing the bow".

$\text{♩} = 92$  Stephen Chin

WB UH WB LH WB UH

*f*

The musical notation is on a single staff in bass clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 4/4 time signature. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 92. The piece consists of 12 measures. Above the staff, bowing directions are indicated: WB (Whole Bow) for measures 1, 3, 5, and 7; UH (Upper Half) for measures 2, 4, 6, and 8; and LH (Lower Half) for measures 9, 10, 11, and 12. Vertical lines with 'v' marks indicate the start of each bow stroke. The first measure starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The piece ends with a double bar line.

# 32. Norwegian Folk Song

Be sure to follow the bowing markings to help you play the dynamics (louds and softs).

**Andante** - the speed of an easy walking pace.

**Andante**  $\text{♩} = 72$  Traditional  
arranged Stephen Chin

LH WB LH WB

*f*

UH WB UH WB

*p* *f*

The musical notation is on two staves in bass clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 4/4 time signature. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 72. The piece consists of 16 measures. Above the first staff, bowing directions are indicated: LH (Lower Half) for measures 1, 5, 9, and 13; and WB (Whole Bow) for measures 3, 7, 11, and 15. Above the second staff, bowing directions are indicated: UH (Upper Half) for measures 2, 6, 10, and 14; and WB (Whole Bow) for measures 4, 8, 12, and 16. Vertical lines with 'v' marks indicate the start of each bow stroke. The first measure starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The piece ends with a double bar line. A crescendo hairpin is shown under measures 13-15, and a decrescendo hairpin is shown under measures 10-12.

# 33. Boil Them Cabbage Down

**ff** **Fortissimo** - play very loudly.

**Allegro** - fast and lively.

Traditional North American  
arranged Stephen Chin

**Allegro**  $\text{♩} = 120$

MB

*f* *ff*

The musical notation is on two staves in bass clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 4/4 time signature. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 120. The piece consists of 16 measures. Above the first staff, a bowing direction of MB (Middle Bow) is indicated for measure 1. Above the second staff, vertical lines with 'v' marks indicate the start of bow strokes for measures 3, 7, 11, and 15. The first measure starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The piece ends with a double bar line. A decrescendo hairpin is shown under measures 13-15, and a crescendo hairpin is shown under measures 10-12.

Pages 25 - 61 not included  
in this sample.