My First Pieces

Music for Beginning String Players

Teacher's Book

Composed, arranged and compiled by Stephen Chin

Welcome to the wonderful world of sharing music through a bowed string instrument! Working closely with beginning players of all ages is certainly something that many teachers find very satisfying.

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

Students should carefully go over the pages entitled "Some Basics of Music Reading" to help them play the music with greater understanding and ease. Important information appears throughout the books as students need it.

A glossary is found at the back of all the books to find the meaning of musical terms easily.

Piano accompaniments can also be downloaded from the My First Pieces page at www.everythingstring.com. This may help students experience the music in a fuller way at home or away from the teaching studio.

Enjoy!

Everything String

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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 workshops and festivals both nationally and internationally including the Melbourne 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.

Some Notes for the Teacher

My First Pieces has been designed to provide a rich and meaningful experience for both teacher and student. One very important feature is that the teacher is able to accompany the student for each piece on their instrument of choice right from the start as students pluck their open strings. I personally find this musical and personal connection to be crucial to each student's interest, progress and enjoyment of playing music.

The instructions on how to hold the instrument are there to assist both the student and teacher. However, this is by no means the definitive way of holding and playing the instrument. In fact, there are many different and valid playing styles.

Each instrument's book is produced with clear and large musical notes. The note names and fingerings are indicated in the music for the first group of pieces. After that, students are encouraged to work out the fingering for themselves. The pages are uncluttered so that information can be absorbed more readily.

The string pedagogy has been carefully sequenced so that both musical and technical concepts build in a logical yet fun manner. Renaissance, Baroque, Folk, Bluegrass, Romantic are just a few of the musical styles that are presented. The wide array of keys and modes used may provide each beginning player with a greater aural sphere.

A small yet significant point, is that the bass strings are initially presented to the student from the top to the bottom strings. Often when the other string instruments are playing open strings, bassists hear their notes in the opposite direction. It is less confusing once they know that this is the case.

Above all, I trust that you find the material in *My First Pieces* useful and musically satisfying.

Stephen

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Caring for My String Instrument

Student Book - Page 3

Lay your case flat on the floor when taking out both the instrument and bow.

•	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.
- Always remove the shoulder rest or pad before placing the instrument in the case.

Strings (low to high) G D A E C Bout

F Hole

Fine Tuner

Tailpiece

End Button

The Violin

Scroll Pegs Pegs Fingerboard Strings (low to high) C G D A Bridge F Hole Fine Tuner Tailpiece

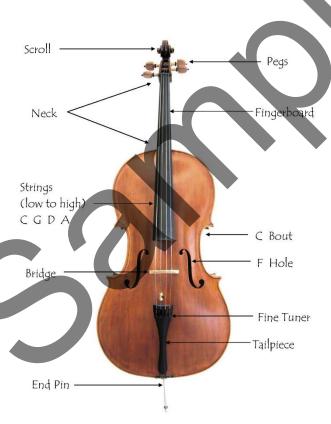
The Viola

The Cello

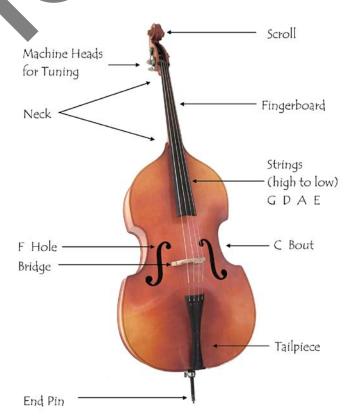
Bridge

Chinrest ·

End Button



The Double Bass



The Violin Bow The Viola Bow Tip Tip Bow Hair Bow Hair - Stick Winding Winding Grip Grip Frog Adjusting Adjusting Screw Screw The Cello Bow The Bass Bow French on Left, German on Right Tip Stick Bow Hair Bow Hair Stick Winding Grip Frog Winding Grip Adjusting Screw Frog Adjusting

Screw

General Posture - Violin

Student Book - Page 6

Standing Position

- Stand with your feet well apart.
- Place the violin on your collar bone and left shoulder.
- Hold the violin well up so the scroll is in line with your nose.
- Keep the left hand fingers relaxed and well rounded.
- Keep the left wrist out slightly.
- Hold the bow lightly with the wood tilted a little away from you.





Seated Position

- Similar to the standing position but sitting at the edge of the chair.
- Always sit so the left shoulder is facing the music stand.
- Place the scroll slightly to the left of the actual music.

General Posture - Viola

Student Book - Page 6

Standing Position

- Stand with your feet well apart.
- Place the viola on you collar bone and left shoulder.
- Hold the viola well up so the scroll is in line with your nose.
- Keep the left hand fingers relaxed and well rounded.
- Keep the left wrist out slightly.
- Hold the bow lightly with the wood tilted a little away from you.





Seated Position

- Similar to the standing position but sitting at the edge of the chair.
- Always sit so the left shoulder is facing the music stand.
- Place the scroll slightly to the left of the actual music.

General Posture - Cello

- Sit on the front part of the chair.
- Cello is set on its spike an arm length from your body then rests back on your sternum.
- The feet are in a "V" shape and are placed: foot spike foot, in a slight outward curve from the seat.
- Keep the left hand fingers relaxed and well rounded.



General Posture - Bass

Student Book - Page 6

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 43, 2 & 1 with the thumb opposite the 2nd finger keeping the knuckles out at all times. The 3rd finger supports the 4th 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.





- 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 Violin Bow-hold

- Holding the bow with your left hand, hang all the fingers over the stick near the frog.
- Raise the little finger, keeping it curved and place it on top of the stick in line with the dot on the frog.
- Move the crease near the nail of the index finger so it is also on top of the stick.
- Gently bend the thumb out and place it between the frog and the stick at around 45 degrees.
- The 2nd finger gently covers the thumb.
- All fingers should be evenly spaced and relaxed.
- Whilst bowing, keep the right hand in line with the "C" bout and the wood of the bow slightly tilted away from you.
- Be aware of the little finger taking the weight of the bow as you bow near the frog.
- ALWAYS strive to make an even and beautiful tone.



The Viola Bow-hold

- Holding the bow with your left hand, hang all the fingers over the stick near the frog.
- Raise the little finger, keeping it curved and place it on top of the stick in line with the dot on the frog.
- Move the crease near the nail of the index finger so it is also on top of the stick.
- Gently bend the thumb out and place it between the frog and the stick at around 45 degrees.
- The 2nd finger gently covers the thumb.
- All fingers should be evenly spaced and relaxed.
- Whilst bowing, keep the right hand in line with the "C" bout and the wood of the bow slightly tilted away from you.
- Be aware of the little finger taking the weight of the bow as you bow near the frog.
- ALWAYS strive to make an even and beautiful tone.



The Cello Bow-hold

- Holding the bow in your left hand, hang the fingers over the stick near the frog.
- The 2nd finger is placed over the metal nut on the frog, whilst the 3rd 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 and the wood of the bow slightly tilted towards you.
- ALWAYS strive to make an even and beautiful tone.



The Bass Bow-hold - French Style

Student Book - Page 7

- Holding the bow in your left hand, hang the fingers over the stick near the frog.
- The 2nd finger is placed over the metal nut on the frog, whilst the 3rd 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 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 and the wood of the bow slightly tilted towards you.
- ALWAYS strive to make an even and beautiful tone



The Bass 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 1st and 2nd fingers are slightly curved and are placed along the stick.
- The 3rd 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 and the wood of the bow slightly tilted towards you. ALWAYS strive to make an even and beautiful tone



The Left Hand - Violin

Student Book - Page 8

- The instrument rests between the base of the 1st finger and thumb.
- Carefully set up all fingers 1, 2, 3 & 4 before playing.
- Knuckles must be bent out and fingernails facing you.
- Keep your wrist out gently at all times.
- 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 lowest to the highest (or the thickest to the thinnest) this way:

Good Dogs Always Eat.



The Left Hand - Viola

Student Book - Page 8

- The instrument rests between the base of the 1st finger and thumb.
- Carefully set up all fingers 1, 2, 3 & 4 before playing.
- Knuckles must be bent out and fingernails facing you.
- Keep your wrist out gently at all times.
- Try to hear the note clearly in your head before placing your fingers.
- Let the fingers feel the strings vibrations as you play.
- Remember the string names **C G D A** from the lowest to the highest (or the thickest to the thinnest) this way:

Camels Go Down Asleep



The Left Hand - Cello

- Carefully set up the fingers 4, 3, 2 & 1 with the thumb opposite the 2nd finger, keeping the knuckles out at all times.
- Keep the fingers and thumb relaxed and well rounded.
- Keep your shoulders low.
- Your elbows need to 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 **C G D A** from the lowest to the highest (or the thickest to the thinnest) this way:



The Left Hand - Bass

Student Book - Page 8

- Carefully set up the fingers 4, 3, 2 & 1 with the thumb opposite the 2nd 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



Some Basics of Music Reading

Student Book - Page 9

STAFF LINES



Music is written on lines called a **Staff** (or stave). A **Treble Clef** tells us that the notes sound fairly high.

The lines from the bottom are named:

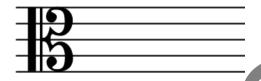
G B

Ε

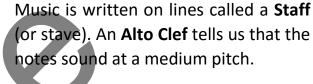
The **spaces** from the bottom are named:

F A C E

Treble Clef Staff lines



Alto Clef Staff Lines



The **lines** from the bottom are named:

F A C E G

The **spaces** from the bottom are named:

G B D F

Music is written on lines called a **Staff** (or stave). A **Bass Clef** tells us that the notes sound at a fairly low pitch.

The notes on the double bass sound an octave lower (eight notes) than written.

The **lines** from the bottom are named:

G B D F A

The **spaces** from the bottom are named:

A C E G

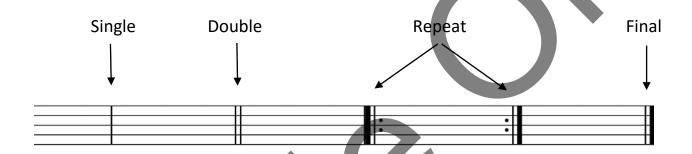


Bass Clef Staff Lines

BAR LINES

Student Book - Page 9

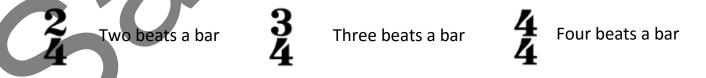
Music is divided up into bars which are separated by **Bar Lines**. The **Single** bar line is the most commonly used. The other bar lines work as follows: **Double** – the end of a section; **Repeat** – play the music again between the signs; **Final** – the end of a piece.



TIME SIGNATURES

Student Book - Page 10

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



ACCIDENTALS & KEY SIGNATURES

Student Book - Page 11

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.

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

Student Page 11

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
Crotchet	}	
Minim		2
Dotted Minim	Various combinations of the above rests.	3
Semibreve	May also be used for a full bar rest with any time signature.	4
Quaver	7	1/2

Getting Ready for My First Play!

(Student Book - Page 12)

Set up the left hand fingers on each instrument's body.

Violin



Viola



Cello



Bass



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

Violin strings, lowest to highest, remember:



Viola strings, lowest to highest, remember:

Camels Go Down Asleep



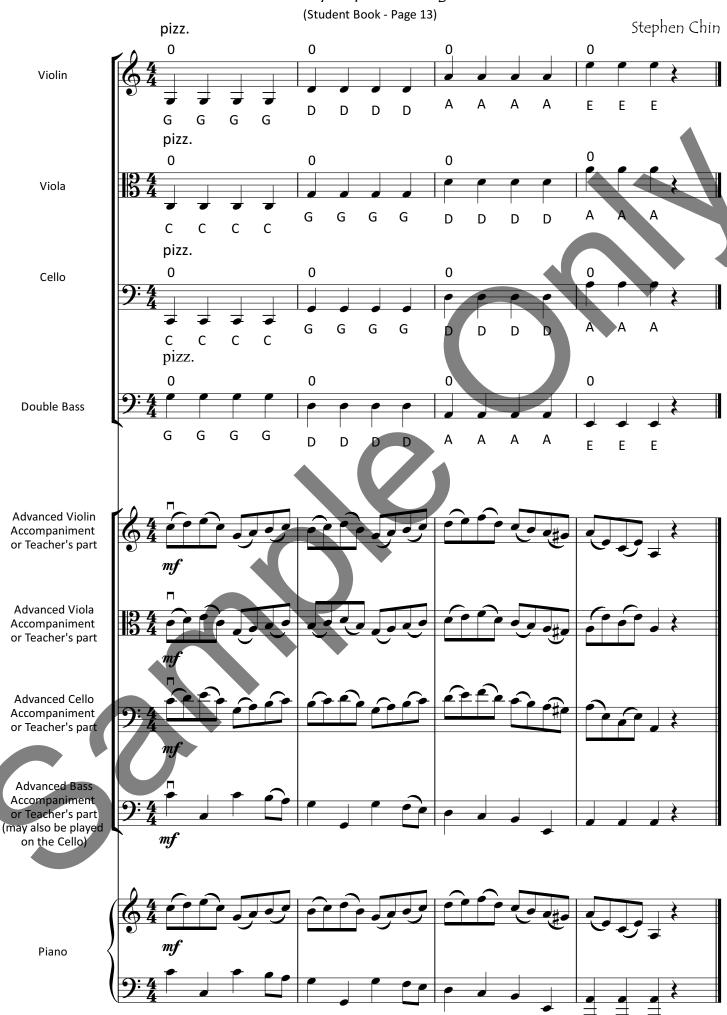
Cello Strings, lowest to highest, remember:



Bass Strings, **highest** to lowest, remember: **G**ood **D**ogs **A**lways **E**at



1. My Open Strings



2. My Open Strings the Other Way Around





4. Gypsy Open D's & G's



5. Hymn on Open G's, D's and A's Stephen Chin (Student Book - Page 13) pizz. Vln. D D D D D D G G pizz. 0 0 Vla. D D G G pizz. 0 0 0 Vc. D D G D D pizz. 0 0 0 DB D D D D G Α G Adv.Vln. mp Adv. Vla. mp Adv. Vc. Adv. DB or Adv. Vc. mp

6. Open Strings for Two

Duet

(Student Book - Page 14)

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

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



7. Crazy Open String Challenge

(Student Book - Page 14)

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



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

VIOLIN & VIOLA



8. Plucking the Note D

(Student Book - Page 15)

VIOLIN - set up your left hand fingers 1 23 4 on D. Lift all fingers just above the string. Keep knuckles bent and wrist gently out.



VIOLA - set up your left hand fingers 1 23 4 on D. Lift all fingers just above the string. Keep knuckles bent and wrist gently out.



CELLO - set up your left hand fingers 4 3 2 1 on D. Lift all fingers just above the string. Keep knuckles bent and wrist gently out.



BASS - set up your left hand fingers 4 3 2 1 on D. Lift all fingers just above the string. Keep knuckles bent and wrist gently out.



8. Plucking the Note D



9. Plucking the Note E Set Up

(Student Book - Page 15)

VIOLIN - set up 1 23 4 on D; lift 4 32, leave on 1.



VIOLA - set up 1 23 4 on D; lift 4 32, leave on 1.



CELLO - set up 4 3 2 1 on D; lift 4 3 2, leave on 1.



BASS - set up 4 3 2 1 on D; lift 4 3 2, leave on 1.



9. Plucking the Note E



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

(Student Book - Page 16)

VIOLIN - set up 1 23 4 on D; lift 4 3, leave on 2 1.



VIOLA - set up 1 23 4 on D; lift 4 3, leave on 2 1.



CELLO - set up 4 3 2 1 on D; lift 4, leave on 3 2 1.



BASS - set up 4 3 2 1 on D; leave all on.



10. Plucking the Note F Sharp (F#)

(Student Book - Page 16)



11. Plucking the Note G

(Student Book - Page 16)

VIOLIN - set up 1 23 4 on D; lift 4, leave on 32 1.



VIOLA - set up 1 23 4 on D; lift 4, leave on 32 1.



CELLO - set up 4 3 2 1 on D; leave all on.



BASS - set up 4 3 2 1 on G; lift all off.



11. Plucking the Note G



12. Plucking the Note A Set Up

(Student Book - Page 17)

VIOLIN - set up 1 23 4 on A; lift all just above the string.



VIOLA - set up 1 23 4 on A; lift all just above the string.



CELLO - set up 4 3 2 1 on A; lift all just above the string.



BASS - set up 4 3 2 1 on G; lift 4 3 2, leave on 1.



12. Plucking the Note A



13. Fun with D's & E's

(Student Book - Page 17)



14. Odyssey in E minor

(Student Book - Page 17)



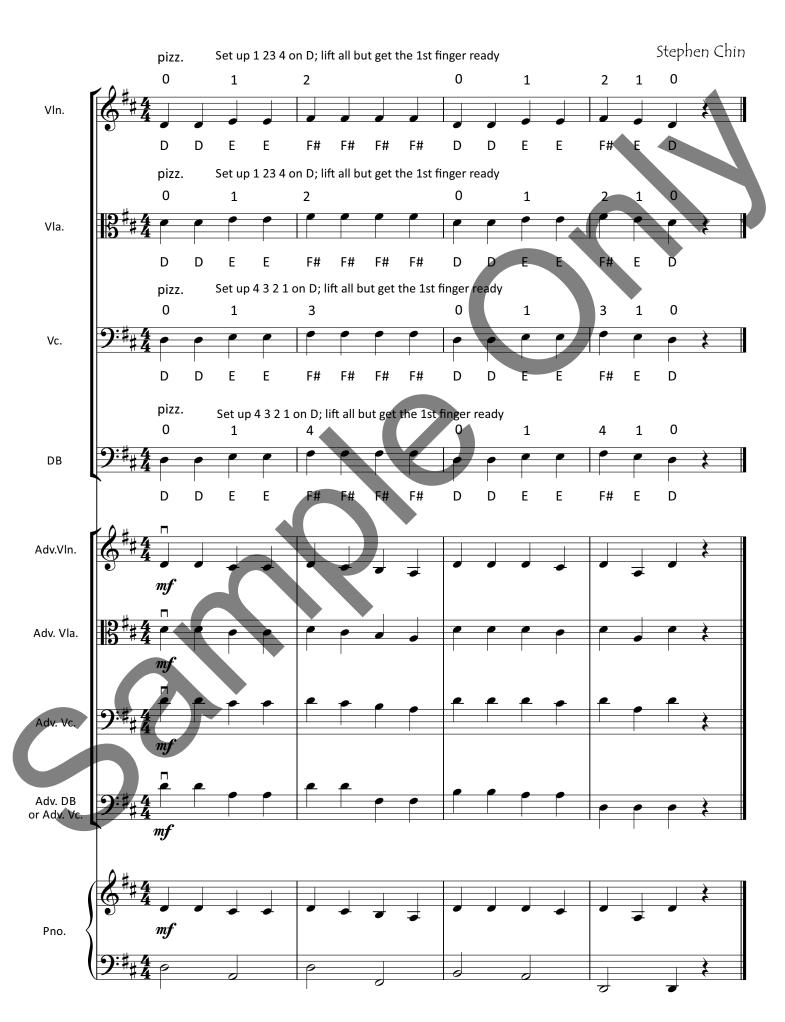
15. Fast & Furious First Fingers

(Student Book - Page 18)



16. Stepping Out with D, E & F#

(Student Book - Page 18)



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.

(Student Book - Page 18)

17. Ancient Echoes



Pages 50 - 263 not included in this sample