



OPENING MEASURES PRACTICE COMPANION



A Cellist's Monthly Guide for Discovering
Mastery Between the Notes

AN INTRODUCTION TO EXTENDED TECHNIQUES



DR. SOPHIE'S CELLO LAB

WELCOME



HELLO, CELLIST AND WELCOME TO

the PRACTICE ROOM

Whether you're brand new to the Practice Room or returning for another topical training, I'm so glad you're here.

This practice companion is your musical sandbox for the month: a place to explore, stretch, refine, and occasionally laugh at the strange things our hands do when we aren't paying attention.

You'll find a mix of technical focus, real-world application, and gentle prompts to help you listen more closely as your practice — not just to your cello, but to the areas that help us in connecting more intuitively with our wonderful cellos.

Here, we care about tone and tension, yes — but we also care about joy, curiosity, and the kind of attention that leads to lasting growth and artistry.

This is not about checking boxes. It's about showing up with your whole self (awkward shifts and all) and making real progress between the notes.

Take your time.
Bring your experience.
Invite curiosity.
Leave room for lasting discovery.

Let's begin.

Sophie

“Every note has meaning rather as a look or a touch does;
the resulting conversations she has with the music are endlessly absorbing
~LAURENCE VITTES | GRAMOPHONE ”

WELCOME

ABOUT SOPHIE AND THE CELLO LAB

SOPHIE WEBBER



Dr Sophie has performed across the States and in the UK, has received numerous awards and prizes for her playing, and has released three critically acclaimed albums.

With over 25 years of teaching experience, she is a sought-after pedagogue and is frequently invited to give masterclasses across the USA and beyond.

She is also the Founding Artistic Director of Fused Mused Ensemble, a music and mixed media non-profit organization with a mission to amplify voices too often left unheard.

THE CELLO LAB



Inside the Cello Lab, you'll find two distinct paths to grow your playing and artistry: one for deep, foundational focus (*the PRACTICE ROOM*), and one for expressive exploration with high-level support (*the INNER STUDIO*).

the PRACTICE ROOM: For cellist of all levels seeking fresh, focused and foundational exploration for their “practice room” with access to a community of other adult cellists.

Offers monthly themed practice companions, topical trainings, live Q&A interactions, a supportive community, as well as community cello chats.

the INNER STUDIO: For cellists ready to explore artistry, expressive themes, score analysis, interpretations along with foundational focuses.

Offers a creative growth space in a professional online studio environment that includes master classes, small group instruction, private lessons and performance opportunities.

PROGRESS TRACKING

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

QUESTIONS TO BRING TO Q&A:

-
-
-
-
-

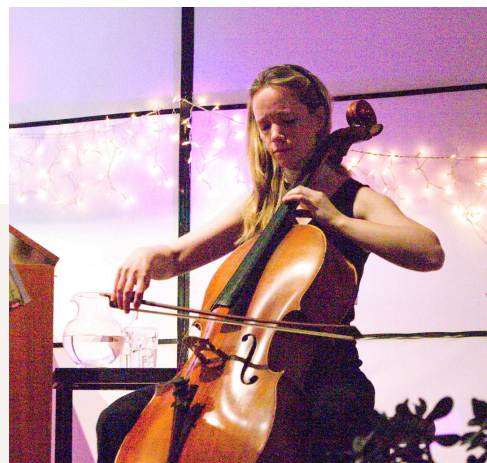


OPENING REFLECTION

Expand your musical imagination

Composers and performers together have stretched beyond traditional techniques and notation to widen their expressive language. In turn, extended techniques have opened a new world of colours, sounds, pops, whispers, snaps, whistles —and imagination! They can range from the percussive (finger taps, snap pizzicato, col legno battuto) to whispered hair against wood (bowing the side of the cello) to high pitched squeaks (bowing the tailpiece and behind the bridge) to new tuning (scordatura) to open flute-like harmonics and much more.

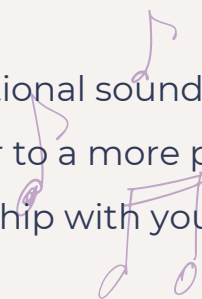
This Companion discusses many of the more common extended techniques (as well as a few more esoteric ones) but it is far from comprehensive.



Composers are at liberty to make up techniques that may be specific to them alone (using words to describe a sound/sound world or technique). On the one hand, notation therefore has the possibility to be extremely specific. But on the other hand, we also become aware of the limitations of notation.

It is my hope that this journey will both pique your curiosity for new extended technique sounds, and also encourage you to search more deeply for evermore expressive sounds in your cello playing in general.

Every unconventional sound you explore brings you closer to a more personal, fearless relationship with your instrument.



OPENING REFLECTION

Let's set your intention and mindset for the month.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR CURRENT RELATIONSHIP WITH EXTENDED TECHNIQUES?

IN WHAT AREAS DO YOU WANT TO IMPROVE YOUR FAMILIARITY WITH EXTENDED TECHNIQUES?

NOTES AND REFLECTIONS:



CONTENTS:

05

OPENING
REFLECTION

08

INTRODUCTION
& OVERVIEW

09

WARM-UP

13

TECHNIQUE
EXERCISE

16

THE STRETCH
ZONE

19

REPERTOIRE
APPLICATION

23

LISTENING &
INSPIRATION

25

INTEGRATION
AND CLOSING

29

WHAT'S NEXT

30

ADDITIONAL
RESOURCES



AN INTRODUCTION TO EXTENDED TECHNIQUES

Welcome to your journey into Extended Techniques!

This month, we'll explore the cello's vast and imaginative sound world—beyond standard notes and into new ways of shaping sound, expression, and touch.

We'll expand our sonic palette just outside the familiar: layered pizzicati, floating sul tasto, icy sul ponticello, and expressive, unconventional gestures. Each technique opens new possibilities for tone, texture, and phrasing—stretching both your ears and your imagination.

To ground this exploration, we'll return to harmonics—those clear, ringing tones that teach us about balance, precision, and the blueprint of the fingerboard. Through them, we'll refine our understanding of fingerboard geography, left arm balance, and the delicate coordination between bow and hand.

Extended techniques aren't just effects—they're invitations to listen differently, to move differently, to play differently.

Let your imagination guide your hands: tap, scrape, pluck, slide, bow behind the bridge. There are no wrong sounds—only discoveries.

Stay curious,
Be bold, and
Let your cello surprise you.



Incorporating This Companion Into Your Practice Routine

To get the most out of this companion, approach it with a sense of curiosity and patience.

Treat each section as a building block in your tool kit development.

Start by incorporating the warm-ups into your daily routine—they're designed to reinforce foundational skills in a way that's both focused and fluid. **Then, on to the technique exercises and STRETCH ZONE,** you'll expand as you challenge yourself as you apply these skills in varied contexts.

The **repertoire application** section will show you how it all fits into real music—

Remember, there's no rush! Consistency over perfection is key.

And, if you stumble along the way, embrace it!

Sometimes the best insights come from those moments —because that's when you pause to discover what you are actually doing you allow what you are focusing on to fall into place.



WARM-UP PREPARATION

Preparatory Tips for Body Awareness:

- ♪ Breathe (long, slow breaths out)
- ♪ “Soften” your body (relaxed stomach, arms, neck)
- ♪ Stretch (eg. windmill arms, wriggle fingers, rotate wrists and forearms back and forth, squats, light jogging on spot --get circulation going!)
- ♪ Shoulders should be low and passive throughout the full length of bow (TIP: be especially cognizant of this in the upper half!)
- ♪ Feet should be grounded (like the roots of a tree!)

Tips for Tone Connection:

- ♪ A firmer approach will generally give you a better tone. This tends to mean A LITTLE MORE WEIGHT and, often, A LITTLE LESS BOW
- ♪ Explore finding a NATURAL WEIGHT (vs “pressing down”) with passive heavy shoulders and arms. The bow should feel like it is sinking into the string.
- ♪ We are looking for an “ENGAGED” SOUND rather than a superficial/skating one where the bow is too fast/too light.
- ♪ Careful your bow direction is parallel to the bridge and not moving up and down.
 - On the A string, the point will move a little closer to you (while your arm moves a little further from your body).
 - On the C string, the point will move a little further away from you (while your arm moves a little closer to your body)



WARM-UP PREPARATION

GENERAL TIPS FOR SUCCESS WITH THE WARM UPS & TECHNIQUE PLANS

TIPS FOR INDIVIDUAL EXTENDED TECHNIQUES

- **Left hand Pizzicato:** this motion is a small, definitive finger motion to the left and slightly upwards (like a spring!)
- **“Bartok” or Snap Pizzicato:** careful to only pull the string as far as needed for it to hit the fingerboard when you release it (no over-zealous string breaking, please ;))
- **Sul Tasto:** this airy sound is achieved primarily in Lanes 1- 2,. Playing with partial hair (turning the stick slightly away from the bridge) can also help achieve this colour
- **Sul Ponticello:** this metallic, overtone-filled sound is achieved primarily in Lanes 4-5. The bow should move rather fast with very little weight so that the bow “skates” across the string surface
- **Bow behind bridge:** little bow weight is needed for this
- **Bow side of cello:** a consistent bow speed across the wood tends to get the best results
- **Bow tailpiece:** quite a lot of bow weight is needed to get this low quasi-groan-like sound
- **Col legno battuto:** tap the string very lightly with the stick (too hard can damage it, so tread lightly!)
- **Tap cello with fingers:** look for different timbres across the instrument

- **Artificial “false” harmonics:** thumb should press down very firmly (in effect, it becomes the new “nut” of the cello as if the string is shorter according to where the thumb is positioned)
- **Scordatura:** note how changing the tuning of any single string slightly changes the feeling and sound of all the other strings

TIPS FOR HARMONICS

- Play with a fast bow
- Bow should be close to the bridge
- Consistent angle between the hand and fingerboard
- The shifting motion between harmonics should be led by the shoulder, with the hand following

TIPS FOR PIZZICATO

- Experiment with as many aspects of your approach as possible to get a sense of the possibilities (amount of flesh of finger making contact with string, size of motion, shape of motion, direction of motion, placement along the fingerboard/proximity to the bridge etc...)

TIPS FOR APPROACHING IMPROVISATION

- Leave judgment at the door. Try thinking either in terms of effects OR have some kind of narrative/formal structure in mind (eg. “AB” or “Start - Journey -Finish”)



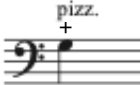

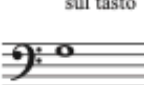
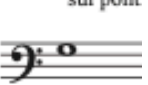


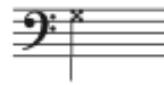




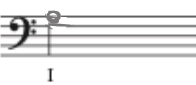
WARM-UP (5–15 minutes)

Time stamps are in the description area to allow you to go directly where you want.

EXTENDED TECHNIQUES

Below is a variety of extended techniques found in 20th century and contemporary repertoire. Each technique creates a unique and unconventional sound.

Experiment on different pitches and strings. Challenge yourself to come up with adjectives, colours and characters to describe each sound. Perhaps make up some new sounds of your own too!

Left Hand Pizzicato <p>With a left hand finger (in context, this is typically the finger that was used to play the preceding note), pull the string gently but firmly to the left</p>	"Bartok" or Snap Pizzicato <p>Holding the string between index or middle finger and thumb, pull upwards and release to create a percussive "snap" as the string hits the fingerboard</p>	Sul Tasto <p>Play close to or on the fingerboard for a more breathy, lighter sound</p>	Sul Ponticello <p>Play right next to the bridge (lane 5+) for a metallic, glassy sound (full of high overtones of the fundamental string tone)</p>	Bow behind bridge <p>Play beyond the bridge (on the "after length" of the string between the bridge and tailpiece) for a high pitched, squeaky sound</p>	Bow side of cello <p>This can be done anywhere on the body of the cello (specified or not) such as the upper /lower C bout or scroll. The effect is like a whisper as the hair moves along the wood</p>
					
Bow Tailpiece <p>The bow is drawn across the tailpiece to produce a rather dark, quiet but resonant sound</p>	Col legno battuto <p>Turns the bow so that the wood or "stick" of the bow hits the string, creating a quiet, percussive effect</p>	Tap Cello with Fingers <p>This can be done anywhere on the cello (specified or not) and creates a soft, percussive, resonant sound</p>	Natural Harmonics <p>Lightly touch the string at specific nodal points (these nodal points are explored in the Technique Exercise). The resulting sound is clear and bell-like</p>	Artificial Harmonics <p>Thumb plays a stopped note while 3rd finger lightly touches the same string a Perfect 4th above, creating a flute-like pitch 2 octaves above the stopped note*</p>	Scordatura <p>Retune one (or more) strings for special timbral effects and the ability to play new chords. Music is often written so notes sound differently to how they appear on the page**</p>
					

*This can also be done lightly touching a Perfect 5th above the stopped note, which creates a pitch two octaves plus a fifth above the stopped note



WARM-UP

REFLECTION ...

WHAT DO YOU NOTICE ABOUT YOUR PLAYING/HOW YOU FEEL AS YOU GO THROUGH THESE WARM-UP EXERCISES?

WHERE DO YOU THINK YOUR FOCUS SHOULD BE GOING FORWARD?

NOTES AND REFLECTIONS:



FINGERBOARD GEOGRAPHY FOR NATURAL HARMONICS (& THE OVERTONE SERIES)

How to Practice:

Demonstrations for each of these steps are agiven in the Technique Video linked above

1) Silently, **trace the left hand up and down the fingerboard**, paying careful attention to maintaining a **consistent angle between the hand and fingerboard** (as well as a loose thumb, and sufficiently buoyant (vs too low) elbow in the lower positions).

The tracing motion should be led by the shoulder, with the hand following. The motion should be fluid and seamless in both directions



2) Playing with the bow, find each harmonic (nodal point), starting with **all separate, full bows, using only the 3rd finger**. Using this finger promotes a good, somewhat “square” (vs angled) hand position in relation to the fingerboard.

Play with a fairly fast bow, **close to the bridge** (lane 5).



3) When ready, try playing more notes to a bow, **working up to 8 notes to a bow** including the fundamental (or as many as you feel comfortable playing), ascending and descending.

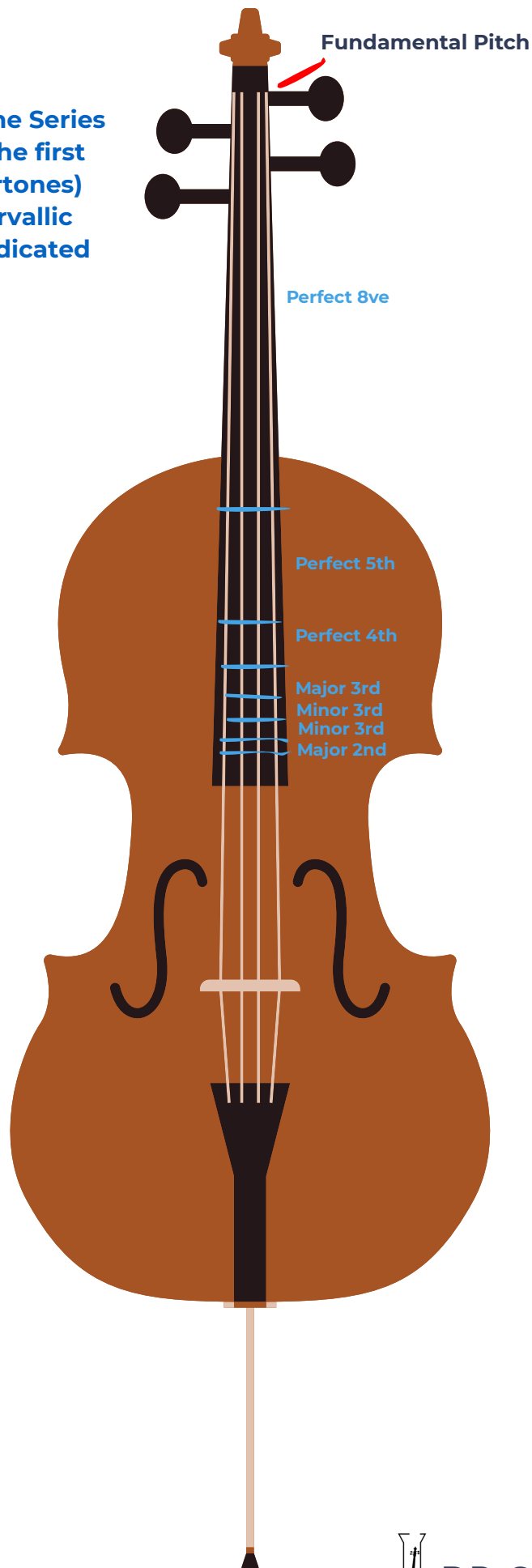


4) Experiment with **different fingerings**.

All notes with a single finger/thumb first

When comfortable with playing with a single finger, the following fingering patternsa good option: **Open String Fundamental -0 -3 -0 -1 -2 -3 -4.**

The Overtone Series
showing the first
seven overtones)
with Intervallic
spacing indicated



TECHNIQUE EXERCISE

Time stamps are in the description area to allow you to go directly where you want

NATURAL HARMONICS (OVERTONES) AND THE “HARMONIC (or “OVERTONE”) SERIES”

Any pitch we play consists of a fundamental note (the pitch itself) PLUS a series of overtones.

These fainter, higher pitched sound waves contribute to the unique tone colour of the sound. They are spaced above the fundamental note according to the “harmonic series.” The first seven overtones in the harmonic series above each open string are given below. The intervallic spacing of the overtones above the fundamental is always the same and is shown for the A string in **blue**. Theoretically, the harmonic series extends indefinitely, although only a certain number of overtones are actually audible to the human ear.

Overtone Series

A String

1st. 2nd. 3rd. 4th. 5th. 6th. 7th

Fundamental

Perfect 8ve

Perfect 5th

Perfect 4th

Major 3rd

Minor 3rd

Minor 3rd

Major 2nd

The Overtone Series showing the first seven overtones) with Intervallic spacing indicated

Fundamental Pitch

Perfect 8ve

Perfect 5th

Perfect 4th

Major 3rd

Minor 3rd

Minor 3rd

Major 2nd

D String

G String

C String



the
STRETCH ZONE
For Advanced and Curious Players

16

Welcome to the STRETCH ZONE

This space is for those of you who feel ready (or just wildly curious) to go a bit deeper.

Whether you're an experienced player looking to refine and reimagine your technique, or someone simply hungry for nuance and challenge, the Stretch Zone is here to meet you where you are—and gently nudge you further.

Each month, we'll expand on the foundational ideas presented in the technique exercise(s) and explore how they can evolve at a more advanced level. You might find layered technical work, interpretive perspectives, or small details that unlock big shifts.

The goal isn't perfection—it's expansion.

Precision with freedom.

Effort with ease.

Curiosity that never stops unfolding.

How to use this section:

STEP 01: Start with the main technique exercise to establish your foundation for the month.

STEP 02: Then, visit the STRETCH ZONE when you're ready to deepen, experiment, or add complexity to what you've already begun.

Think of it as an invitation—not a requirement—to stretch your:

Technique,

Thinking, and

Artistic voice a little further each time you visit the **STRETCH ZONE**

I'm so glad you're here.

Let's stretch,

Sophie



the STRETCH ZONE

For Advanced and Curious Players

17

STRETCH ZONE A

[[STRETCH ZONE A DEMONSTRATION VIDEO](#)]
Time stamps are in the description area to allow you to go directly where you want.

Pizzicati Potpourri!

When a piece of music calls for pizzicato, most cellists will typically think of the right index finger pulling a stopped string fairly firmly to the right (likely close to the end of the fingerboard) in a rather short, straight motion.

In reality, the sound world of pizzicato is extremely varied and full of possibilities. Below is a list of some of the many factors that can go into shaping expressive pizzicati:

Choice of Finger/Thumb

The more flesh that makes contact with the string, the “rounder” the resulting pizzicato will sound. The middle finger (over the index finger) is therefore a great choice to consider if you are looking for a fuller sound. All four of the right hand fingers are an option, and switching fingers within a phrase/passage is also a possibility (for example, the opening of the 2nd movement of the Brahms F Major Cello Sonata No.2, Op.99). The thumb is another great option if looking for a fuller sound.

Size of Motion

Pizzicato can be less projecting (smaller motion, primarily in the wrist and fingers) or more projecting (incorporating more arm, and even torso).

Shape and Direction of Motion

The pizzicato motion can trace a straight line (more direct sound) OR a curve (more resonant, rounder sonority) through the air.

In addition, we have an option of pulling the string to the right (more common) or to the left (with the fingertips or even the nail). An example of a fast back and forth right to left pizzicato motion is found in the first movement (El paño moruno) of De Falla’s “Suite Populaire Espagnole” to imitate castanets.

Choice of Contact Point

Pizzicato can be executed at any point along the string. Most resonance is found around an inch or two from the bottom of the fingerboard, but slight differences in the sonority are found along its full length (including between the fingerboard and bridge).

Alternative Sonorities

Besides the “nail” pizzicato (to the left) mentioned above, other alternative pizzicato sounds include left hand pizzicato and “Bartok” or snap pizzicato.



the
STRETCH ZONE
For Advanced and Curious Players

STRETCH ZONE B

Free Improvisation

Become the composer!

This Stretch Zone is an invitation to put the new techniques and sounds we have been exploring into practice, through free improvisation. This is “play time” where discoveries are made from experimenting, challenging oneself to find new sounds, and imagination.

Technique A: “Effect Music”

Think of creating background music for a scene in a film. Jot down a couple of ideas about what might be happening in the scene (atmosphere/general mood/wind in trees/ chair leg scraping against the floor/busy room chatting/someone knocking at the door etc). Be as specific or as general as you like! Once you have some ideas, create your own background music to go along with the scene, again being as specific or general (“impressionist”) as you like. This kind of background “effect” music is likely to come and go in fits and starts. Don’t forget about the power of silence too.

Technique B: “Creating a line, spoken or sung”

Now try to weave together your favorite sounds from your new extended technique orbit to create the equivalent of a full sentence (which can be spoken or sung) —like a single melodic phrase (or more!). The goal is to create a sense of line. To help you along the way, you might start by applying the sounds to a simple one octave scale, ascending and descending... then keep going with your own melody, but only using the new extended techniques you’ve been exploring. For this, each sound should feel like it somehow leads or “passes” to the next, either in a sustained or staccato way. Have fun, and remember to take judgment out of the equation! Often, our best discoveries happen when we play!

Optional: Try either of the above approaches with a background drone (like one of [these](#))



REPERTOIRE APPLICATION

...CONNECTING TECHNIQUE TO REAL MUSIC...

OPENING MEASURES

SEVEN

-Andrea CASARRUBIOS

Bunraku

-Toshiro MAYUZUMI

On the following Links and pages, you will find the opening measures of these two stirring works.

I recommend playing through these slowly. I hope you will enjoy searching for the harmonics in SEVEN, and experimenting with making a “Bartok” pizzicato in Bunraku. These are wonderful pieces and give a window into how extended techniques can be used for expressive purposes.

[CASARRUBIOS & MAYUZUMI REPERTOIRE PLAY-A-LONG VIDEO](#)

Time stamps are in the description area to allow you to go directly where you want.

SEVEN

~Andrea Casarrubios

Composed in 2020 in New York, SEVEN alludes to that city's 7pm tribute to the essential workers during the global pandemic (hitting pots and pans, shouting in the streets).

SEVEN is a haunting depiction of loneliness, disorientation, lament, fragility and inner human strength.

Bunraku

~Toshiro Mayuzumi

Written in 1960, Bunraku is inspired by traditional Japanese bunraku puppet theatre. Mayuzumi blends musical elements from the East and West, contrasting sections that require an acute sense of exact timing and strict percussive techniques (such as the opening measures) with later sections that are more free flowing and lyrical.



REPERTOIRE APPLICATION

SEVEN Song of Isolation (Opening Measures 1 -16)

Andrea Casarrubios
(1988 -)

c.a. ♩ = 70

p improvisatory, searching

rit. *a tempo, rubato*

mp *pp* *mp* *pp*

5 *getting faster* *a tempo* *accel.* *a tempo*

9 *sul pont* *al ord.* *with vibrato* *6*

14 *poco a poco accel.* *f* *f*



REPERTOIRE APPLICATION

Bunraku (Opening Measures 1 -26)

Toshiro Mayuzumi
(1929 - 1997)

Andante moderato

The musical score is written for a cello in bass clef with a 4/8 time signature. It consists of six staves of music. The first staff begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a 'con vibrato' instruction. The second staff includes a 'pizz.' (pizzicato) marking above the first measure. The third staff features a 'portamento' marking above the eighth measure. The fourth staff starts at measure 13 with a 'port.' (portamento) marking and a 'molto vibrato' instruction below. The fifth staff begins at measure 17. The sixth staff starts at measure 21 and includes a 'V' (vibrato) marking above the first measure. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings.



REPertoire APPLICATION

REFLECTION ...

HOW, IF AT ALL, DO EXTENDED TECHNIQUES ALTER YOUR VIEW OF COMPOSITION AND THE CELLO?

WHICH EXTENDED TECHNIQUE (S) DO YOU FIND MOST HELPFUL TO YOUR GENERAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE CELLO, AND WHY?

NOTES AND REFLECTIONS:



LISTENING & INSPIRATION

THE FOLLOWING RECORDINGS ARE SUGGESTED TO ENCOURAGE LISTENING SKILLS, AND TO DEEPEN MUSICALITY.

What do you notice, like or dislike about each of these recordings and interpretations.

This kind of critical listening is a great exercise; feel free to explore other recordings too!

1

Seven

Andrea Casarrubios (1988 -)

Andrea Casarrubios: [\[LINK\]](#)

(unhurried, unforced, wealth of colours, natural, powerful emotions, declamatory)

Thomas Mesa: [\[LINK\]](#)

(simplicity, directness, sweetness, very convincing)

Pierre Fontanelle: [\[LINK\]](#)

(faster-moving opening harmonics, personal, intimate)

WHAT DO YOU NOTICE ABOUT HOW THESE ARTISTS APPROACH EXTENDED TECHNIQUES AS A POWERFUL MEANS OF COMMUNICATION?



LISTENING & INSPIRATION

2

Bunraku

Toshiro Mayuzumu (1929 -1997)

Tsuyoshi Tsutsumi: [\[LINK\]](#)

(a certain nobility, poise, understated, less resonant acoustic adds to intimacy)

Naoki Tsurusaki: [\[LINK\]](#)

(a little wild, dramatic, length on 16th note slides)

Seungmin Kang: [\[LINK\]](#)

(theatrical performance visually! surprise element highlighted, freer sense of timing)

WHAT DO YOU NOTICE ABOUT HOW THESE ARTISTS APPROACH EXTENDED TECHNIQUES AS A POWERFUL MEANS OF COMMUNICATION?



"When you get something that is unfamiliar or a challenge you know it's never a good idea to say 'Oh that's not possible.' You try it for a while and then you make it work."

~Kaijo Saariaho





01 WHAT CHANGED IN YOUR AWARENESS OR SKILL THIS MONTH?

02 HOW WILL YOU CARRY THIS INTO YOUR NEXT PRACTICE CYCLE OR REPERTOIRE?

03 SET 1-2 GOALS FOR REVIEW OR NEXT EXPLORATION





WHAT WERE YOUR BEST PRACTICE OR A-HA MOMENTS AND HOW CAN YOU INCORPORATE THIS INTO FUTURE PRACTICE SESSIONS?



WHAT AREA(S) DO YOU FEEL YOU NEED TO CONTINUE TO FOCUS ON AND IMPROVE?



“

“The biggest problem with today’s playing is that people want to sound smooth and nice; everything is ironed out flay. Because instrumentalists make sounds without words, we often forget about telling a story.”

~Gautier Capuçon

”



CLOSING

You've opened the door to using harmonics as a tool for listening, learning, and expanding.

May they continue to ground you as you explore the wider, wilder world of unconventional techniques. As this Practice Companion comes to a close, pause and listen to the ringing echoes you've uncovered.

In exploring natural harmonics, you've begun to navigate the fingerboard in new, intuitive ways—not just by shape and shift, but by resonance and feel.

You've refined the balance between the left hand's lightness and the bow's clarity. You've mapped new terrain, not through force, but through skill.

And, in stretching beyond the familiar, you've opened the door to a wider sound world—one where color, texture, and curiosity lead the way.

Let those harmonic tones remind you:
Not all beauty comes from pressure.
Some comes from **release**.

From **precision**.

From **trust in touch**.



Keep listening for those tones worth trusting— They're already under your fingers. And now, so much more is within reach.

A NOTE FROM SOPHIE:

I believe that playing –and practising –the cello should be a joyous thing. Too often, I hear cellists expressing frustration with their playing and practising, unsure how to move forwards and focus their attention. It is my sincere hope that the PRACTICE ROOM gives you the tools to lean into your practice with intentionality and reflection, at your own pace (which, if you're anything like me, should probably be a little slower). Quality always over quantity...

We all need to make space for ourselves to experiment without judgment (perhaps with a little humour, tho ;) and to embrace the journey. I hope you enjoy the PRACTICE ROOM experience as much as I have enjoyed –and continue to enjoy, with your help –creating it.

Happy Cello-ing!

Sophie



WHAT'S NEXT

This month every intentional note, question, and breakthrough you experienced is part of something lasting.

If you're ready to keep going, I'd love to have you join us for another month of grounded, thoughtful discovery inside the PRACTICE ROOM.

Let's keep building together —
one focus,
one phrase,
one step at a time.

[\[Join the next session here\]](#)



Thank you!



WWW.SOPHIEWEBBER.COM



DR. SOPHIE'S CELLO LAB

This curated space is here to support and enrich your monthly practice.

Here, you'll find practical tools, helpful guides, and gentle reminders to help you move forward with clarity and confidence.

Return to these resources as often as you need — they're here to grow with you as you shape your musical journey.

1. Your Monthly Practice Companion

These resources are here to support you every month, no matter the focus. From a structured daily practice plan to helpful notes on play-along videos, these tools are designed to give you clarity, consistency, and confidence in your practice:

- A GUIDE TO OPENING MEASURES –Your Monthly Practice Companion [Page 31](#)
- HOW TO USE YOUR PRACTICE COMPANION [\[ACCESS IT HERE\]](#)
- DAILY PRACTICE TRACKER [Page 32](#)

2. Resources for Current Companion (Extended Techniques)

This month's edition of Opening Measures dives into the world of intonation — how we feel it, shape it, and play it with intention. Here are some useful resources:

- AN INTRODUCTION TO FINGERBOARD GEOGRAPHY (1st to 4th POSITIONS) [\[Access It Here\]](#)
- FINGERBOARD GEOGRAPHY CHART [\[Access It Here\]](#)
- RINGING TONE CHART [\[Access It Here\]](#)

3. Additional Resources on Rhythm

These rhythm-focused tools go beyond this month's core material and are here to deepen your rhythmic awareness across any companion:

- WHAT IS SUBDIVISION? [\[Access It Here\]](#)
- WHAT ARE SPEECH CUES? [\[Access It Here\]](#)
- TIME SIGNATURES/METERS [Page 33](#)



A GUIDE TO OPENING MEASURES PRACTICE COMPANION

I'd like to take a moment to summarize the essence of "Opening Measures," what it offers, as well as a suggestion of a sample daily practice plan.

To start, this is YOUR guide and YOUR practice time, so please feel free to tweak my suggestions or even go in a different direction if that feels right to you.

I highly recommend regular note taking to help you organize your thoughts and practice experience. This will also give your own personalized source of reference material for the future.

Whatever path we each choose, it's important to keep our goals in mind, while staying open to ongoing slight course correction --just like Apollo 11 as it ventured towards the moon!

"Opening Measures" is designed to allow YOU to be at the steering wheel, with a helping hand in terms of...

- **mindset and body preparation** (opening reflection, tips for body awareness and tone connection)
- **practice content and structure** (two core methods to improve rhythm and pulse internalization with exercises and drills in progressive difficulty and optional tempo tracking)
- **mindfulness reminders** (a practice calendar, spaces for notes, observations, reflections, aha moments, and questions)
- **inspiration** (listening integration, quotes from famous cellists and musicians)
- **a companion cellist guide** --that's me! 😊 (lots of play along videos at different tempi --as well as "playing along" with the videos, these are also a great opportunity to observe other aspects of playing that can help, like set up, use of the bow and LH, and entire body, while playing...)



Mindset and physical warm-up away from cello
(see “Opening Reflection” and “Warm Up Preparation”)

.....

.....

--

--

SEVEN ~Casarrubios
Bunraku ~Mayuzumi

--

(optional) NOTES/OBSERVATIONS: other observations/ any Aha moments:

--

TIP: Do keep in mind the immense value of taking breaks... standing up, a quick stretch, brisk walk or cup of tea can do wonders for recentering our focus and gaining a fresh perspective

M	T	W	TH	F	S	S

TIME SIGNATURES/METERS

In western music, pieces are typically written with a time signature, dividing the composition into a number of measures. There are two kinds of time signatures or “meters;” simple and compound meters.

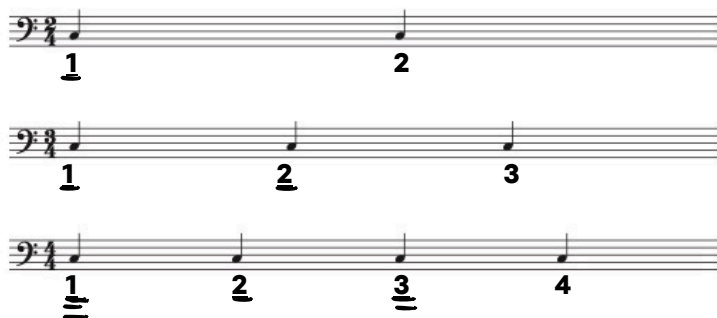
Simple meters are those in which the main beat is divisible by 2. The most common examples are 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4. The bottom number represents the beat (a quarter note, which is divided by 2 to create two eighth notes). The top number represents the number of beats per measure. So there are 2 quarter note beats in 2/4, 3 quarter note beats in 3/4 and 4 quarter note beats in 4/4.

Compound meters are those in which the main beat is divisible by 3. The most common examples are 6/8, 9/8, and 12/8. For these examples, the beat is a dotted eighth note (which is divided by 3 to create three eighth notes). So there are 2 dotted quarter note beats in 6/8, 3 dotted quarter note beats in 9/8, and 4 dotted quarter note beats in 12/8.

Metrical hierarchy

Within each measure, there is a basic hierarchical importance or “stress” given to the placement of each beat, as below (relative hierarchical stress is represented through the number of lines under each beat number, more lines indicates a stronger beat with more emphasis):

SIMPLE METERS (one beat is a quarter note)



Beats listed in order of importance (stress)

1, 2

1, 2, 3

1, 3, 2, 4

COMPOUND METERS (one beat is a dotted quarter note)



1, 2

1, 2, 3

1, 3, 2, 4

