

THE BOW:

“There is no such thing as a straight bow”

~Leonard Rose

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- **COURSE OF THE BOW ARM: Figures of 8, the relationship between arm & hand**

“Paintbrush theory” (influential violin pedagogue, Demetrius Constantine Dounis) —idea of arm already moving in new direction ahead of hand, pleading with sound

**Exercise:**

*i) Trace figures of 8 in air (circular movements in wrist), observing the motion of the arm and hand.*

*ii) Place bow on string at tip (starting with a middle string) and freely run bow hand along length of bow and back; executed correctly, this yields the ideal bow hand and arm motion. **Hand follows arm.***

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- **WRIST VS HAND INITIATION: Long up bows should be initiated by wrist, accompanied by the elbow moving inwards (aka the “paintbrush theory.” Short up bows are initiated by hand (see Paul Tortelier pages in general discussion)**

Exercise:

i) Start long up bows from upper bow, noting wrist movement tilting towards tip (3rd finger in curve of frog plus elbow in contributes to impulse of up-bow) need to bring elbow in, 3rd finger in curve of frog).

ii) Play a series of short up bows (starting anywhere in the bow), noting small circular movements of hand

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- **BOW CHANGES AT THE FROG: transfer of weight from 1st and 2nd fingers to 3rd and 4th, with bent thumb allowing hand to “cap” bow and draw it towards palm of hand.** (see Paul Tortelier pages in general discussion)

NB. Little finger essential to influencing course of bow and for substantial tone in all dynamics.

- **BOW CHANGES AT THE TIP are initiated by wrist (3rd finger in curve of frog plus elbow in contributes to impulse of up-bow)**

**Exercise:**

*i) Practise bow changes at the frog, using short bows (ca 3 or 4”), focusing on the transferral of weight between the fingers, bent thumb and hand “capping” feeling, as described*

*ii) Practice bow changes at the tip, using short bows (ca 3 or 4”), focusing on the wrist initiation with elbow movement inwards, as described*

*iii) Play a long down bow, changing direction at the tip then returning on a long up bow, focusing on the bow changes with the movements described above*

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