

## **Bass workshop for string teachers:**

Intro:

Respect for instrumental music teachers. George Vance's advise on teaching.

- All about that Bass: Viol origin, why the name, why it comes in different shapes, sizes , tunings, 3 4 and 5 strings. Low C Extension.
- The coolest, most versatile instrument.
- Overtones : importance of Harmonic series to Bass playing. Richness, fingerboard geography.
- Tone colour / timbre
- Why different bows Overhand / underhand

### **Some important facts you need to know when teaching the bass.**

- greater reach required for L and R arms because of the basses size
- The affect this has on the body ( L shoulder) : bow arm and LH lower positions
- Encourage young players by explaining the importance of the bass lines in ensembles. Give them a chance to "shine" occasionally !!

The Double bass Bow

- Don't overtighten, play on flat of hair!
- Rosin softer than violin. Apply sparingly and warm it up!
- differences to violin /cello heavier and shorter!
- General BOW hold . Bent thumb to reduce tension. Rubber tube
- Use of weight and benefits of standing position.

The Instrument.

- A guide to choosing the right size instrument to the size of the student
- set up ... crucial !!
  - sitting V standing
  - position must allow access the whole fingerboard while maintaining good posture.
- compare bass position to cello position
- allow use of weight, not have to rely on muscles.
- R Hand position : flexibility of the wrist elbow and shoulder

### **Beginning students :**

(playing position having been established)

- Separate Bowing from LH work until they are confident holding the bow.
- Explain jazz Pizz RH position open strings
- Introduce "neck " position ( Rabbath 3rd)
- Open strings and harmonics where possible and "easy" keys.
- keep it simple !!

### **Left Hand**

- traditional and New technique (Simandl v Rabbath/Vance)
- Play on the pads of fingers
- 1 2 4 fingers and hand "shape"
- Space movement and time
- Weight of L arm - leverage and supporting the weight of your arm with fingers.
- Transitioning to thumb position
- **use open strings and harmonics where possible**

### **The Pivot:**

- The concept : to reduce the need to shift.
- NOT an extension
- LH must be relaxed and free to pivot over a range of notes
- Using Torque ( leverage) instead of squeezing.
- develop finger "patterns" for maj and min keys
- Awareness of note names or solfege and the written notes

### **Developing the bow arm**

#### **Placement Speed and Weight**

- **"Son Premier"**

Producing the real vibration for each note so that the instrument resonates properly.

- For each note to resonate the bow has a certain placement point, a particular speed and requires weight of the arm to remain even through the length of the note.

Rabbath: The New Technique

" you must have all the technique in the world to play one beautiful note"

Mechanics of the bow arm. Flexible RH fingers, bent thumb and freedom in the wrist, elbow and shoulder.

How to maintain the weight towards the tip.

No reason bass players can't manage all the bowings of other strings.

