



VIOLA

Studio References

by Annette Caruthers

A former student called me recently to ask for recommendations on materials to help her as she begins to teach privately. I have probably 200 books and other publications in my studio (not counting actual pieces or books of music) and her question really got me thinking about which ones I rely on the most, or think are the most helpful for a new teacher. Here is the list I came up with. Please do email me with anything you'd like to add to my list — I will publish your additions in the next issue! Here's my list:

The Viola, Complete Guide for Teachers and Students, Henry Barrett. Second printing 1984, University of Alabama Press. This book of 218 pages contains a wealth of information. The contents lists the following subjects (among others): literature for viola; ways in which people grow; posture; refinement of motion; left-hand technique; bowing technique; the lesson — practice period; music reading; transferring from violin to viola; learning process; learning difficulties; teaching techniques; and an appendix of viola music in print.

Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching, Ivan Galamian. Second edition, 1985, Prentice-Hall, New Jersey. 134 p. Contents here include: technique and interpretation; the left hand; the right hand; on practicing; a few words for the teacher. I know! This is a violinist's book, but so much applies to viola as well, that I do find it valuable.

The Teaching of Action in String Playing, Paul Rolland. Second Revised edition, 2000, ASTA. 228 p. Great pictures and drawings here are a real help for teachers and parents, both. I have often shown his drawings on how to select a chin rest to parents and had them borrow the book in order to help find a better setup for their child. Rolland gets very specific on how to teach vibrato, tone, and actually every aspect of playing.

Playing the Viola, Conversations with William Primrose, David Dalton. 1992, Oxford University Press, New York. 244 p. In this book, David Dalton asks questions of William Primrose on all subjects relating to teaching and interpretation. It is fascinating reading, with good photos and numerous musical excerpts to illustrate points discussed. Included are sections on competitions, including competitiveness needed for a career, and advice on careers. Primrose could be considered "old school" in many respects, but he was a fabulous performer and teacher and has influenced the viola world possibly more than any other single person. Definitely a must-have for a violist.

Marsalis on Music, Wynton Marsalis. 1995, W.W. Norton and Co., New York. 176 p. plus CD. I love this book, which is dedicated: "For all those who continue the struggle to educate youngsters in music." Some chapters do not apply specifically to

string playing, but all music is related in so many ways; and in particular "Tackling the Monster: Practice" really does apply to us all. His manner of addressing the subjects is really engaging and more in a conversational style than an academic one. This book also includes information on reading a score, and a general history of music and various composers. He covers an amazing array of subjects! I always have the feeling my male students enjoy his writing the most.

Basics, by Simon Fischer. 1997, Peters Edition Limited, London. 231 p. The cover describes the book as "300 exercises and practice routines for the violin." It is more than that, but the exercises are what I feel make it such a valuable resource. We all have a few students who seem to need one more exercise to really master something, or a new approach. With this book, you can look up a subject and find a wealth of different ideas you might try.

These are the books I use the most often. What are yours?

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