

and then goes to half position for the A^b on the G string. Understanding positions at this level is not about finding the notes, but as a means of projecting the wanted sound, dynamic, and tonal color of the musical line desired. The pitch is in his head! When he wants to, he contrasts tenuto 8th notes with staccato as in bars 11 and 12.

From the start Alex Hanna expresses an ideal for the solo and produces a rendition that is agile and light for an elephant. His understanding of a theatrical element is evident throughout his execution of this brief vignette. In bars 17 and 18 he adds slurs and finishes his phrase with two down bows while taking advantage of the open string to land on the first finger G. The second theme also shows his choice of separate bowings in bar 24 (key of E^b) and in bar 28 (key of E), rather than slurred in the original version. Finally, a nice sequence from bar 45 of hooked bows on the B^b to D^b with a retrieve to a down bow followed by two up-bows. And in bar 47 another double down bow with retrieve takes full advantage of the open D to climb to the high E^b. And again bar 51 starts the last three notes all with down bows. The fingerings are presented here and again they serve the musical phrasing—note that sometimes a 3rd finger will appear in the lower positions! All technique serves his vision of the musical scene he presents.

The Godfather Theme by Nino Rota performed by Anne-Gabrièle Douce

<https://youtube.com/shorts/00z4QsKyKJQ?feature=share> No endorsement about the movie or streaming but this music is always recognized. In my current position, a school principal asked me to play this during my interview. This is a good start into thumb position with the harmonic D and only a few other notes. Anne-Gabrièle is a French musician and current content provider who puts out worthwhile videos on both bass and piano. Got to go with an old country European virtuoso for this tune and a reminder to be open to music from all corners and genres when wondering what to play next. Whimsy always has a place in your practice routine, and when your choice combines a beautiful melody that is immediately recognized, you have an added bonus.

Anne-Gabrièle has chosen A minor which really lays well on the bass and gives you a chance to work on your sustained tone and all the sympathetic open string resonance. She uses a common technique of placing the 2nd and 3rd finger parallel for

the E and A on the D and A strings to help connect these two notes for the string crossings. She also has a great command of finger substitutions using a different finger for the same pitch on repeated notes to help with shifting. I like how she plays sections on the darker D string and demonstrates a disciplined expanding/opening of her hand as she goes up to the G harmonic. This is a short but fun piece to play at concerts and parties. In the world of bass solos, lately we see many editors writing in the treble clef, so I have too. It is good to become more familiar with this clef especially with unpublished pieces because you are more likely to find them written for other instruments and you will have to transpose them to the bass—it makes you a better reader too! I recommend playing this down an octave as well as it sounds

particularly good low and fits my image of Marlon Brando's portrayal in the film.

(Another option to listen to is: *The Godfather* by Nino Rota performed by bass quartet the Oslo Fat String Quartet. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=coCnd_WOuiU)

Bassist Alex Hanna's version of Beethoven's Ninth Recitativo

<https://youtu.be/rYEVDikBD3U> I returned to Alexander Hanna for his take on the recitativo from the 4th movement of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*. After his performance he speaks about the frequency of this music on audition lists and the importance for the conversational style to be realized by the performer. In the '70s and '80s there used to be a list of the 40 top excerpts for bass asked to be played at section auditions, and this

The Godfather Theme by Nino Rota — Anne-Gabrièle Douce

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the Godfather Theme by Nino Rota, performed by Anne-Gabrièle Douce. The score is written in treble clef with a 4/4 time signature. It consists of 12 staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The music is written in a melodic style with various rhythmic values and articulations. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4 below the notes. Slurs and bowing directions (V for down bow, U for up bow) are used throughout. The score includes several measures of rests and dynamic markings. The final measure of the piece is a whole note chord consisting of D4, F4, and A4.

Beethoven's Ninth Recitativo, sections 5-6 — Alex Hanna

are culminations of their respective artforms and require deeper understanding beyond the basic elements of music.

Bassist and Composer Steve Swallow tune *Falling Grace*

<https://youtu.be/RdB12HxYvTY> Steve Swallow is one of the jazz world's most impressive bassists since the 1960s and grew up in the standard jazz tradition. His compositions and musical sensibilities helped create a world beyond the standard jazz ensemble. Following the paths of other jazz composers like Wayne Shorter, Gary Burton, Charles Mingus to get their own music published, Steve stretched stylistic boundaries and helped promote the electric bass. Here he plays the double bass, but later the electric bass became his instrument of choice and this helped and opened the door for electric bassists like Jaco Pastorius, Marcus Miller, Victor Wooten, John Patitucci and others to impact jazz and all contemporary music.

Falling Grace is one of his most familiar tunes and it was inspiring to come across this original recording from the album *The Time Machine* (1966). Other later versions from Chick Corea and Bill Evans have slightly altered the melody. This is common with

tunes where the original version is different from the most popular version. Always check out the primary source! I have heard that in some versions of the early *Real Book*, Gary Burton gave his charts to students to aid in the accuracy of his and others' music, but even so sometimes changes occur. If you

want to learn a tune it is essential to find a recording from the composer and learn the notes from transcribing. Usually when you do this faithfully your results will stick with you longer and you will know more about the music you are playing. Gary Burton does some typical rhythmic interpretations that are more common with vibes than when the lead is played on other instruments. Since the vibe is struck with mallets he uses multiple quarter note triplets throughout and even half note triplets in bar 17. In bars 20-23 the lowest note is an A instead of dropping to a G like many fakebook versions. This is the great thing about listening again to music you have played as you always hear more details on return visits. Rarely do you get things wrong once you take the time to be absolutely certain.

Some final thoughts are: watch these videos and notice what draws you in or leaves you cold. I see so many nuances with repeated viewings and I continue to learn by writing down and then playing what I notice. So much is revealed here and all of your efforts will add another dimension to discovering your musical identity. Always go see live music, listen to recordings, and watch videos to figure out and satisfy your curiosity to find where music leads you.

Bassist Tom Pieper is the orchestra teacher at Wayzata Central Middle School. ♪