

# THE DOFLEIN METHOD

## The Violinist's Progress

A course of violin instruction  
combined with musical theory and practice in duos, trios,  
by

Erich and Elma Doflein

*Text translated by* ...

Volume I: The first position ... ED 4751  
... N 976...

Volume II: Development of technique ... ED 4752  
Volume III: The second position ... ED 4753  
Volume IV: Further technique ... ED 4754  
Volume V: The higher positions ... ED 4755

*Pieces for three violins*

Volume I ... Volume II ... 757 ... Volume III ... ED 5160



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already in the early stages, so that the course also serves as an introduction to good music in all its variety. The beginner even is to get to know not only the various ways of playing on the violin, but also the elements of those musical styles which he must later understand when studying the works of great masters. That is why more pieces are included than exercises, and typical "violin music" is only included when it represents a certain style. This is training, but not as on the athletics field—it is rather a journey through many lands of music and the music of many lands. Experience has taught us that this combination is possible.

The music of our own time was also to be represented. Distinguished composers declared their readiness to cooperate and to provide examples of their art for the single stages of the course. We owe to Béla Bartók, Paul Hindemith,

Carl Orff, Matyas Seiber and other composers many pieces and studies which form an important component part. They rub shoulders with pieces by Mozart or from the period of Händel and Bach, and have their place among pieces by even earlier masters and examples from the 19th century. The whole together forms our music; and the art of playing it can only be learnt from this music itself.

But music as an art can only fulfil an educative function if it appeals to us in a new form, that is, if it is new. In case, if the pieces for the first stage are not new, and if the single-voice examples are not new, the accompanying part in order to suit the needs of the student was necessarily specially to be written. The examples of older music, and of the new music, of other kind of music, published in the first volume, are also new.

## Preface Volume I

The first volume of a violin school must present the beginner with the problems whose solution will enable him to acquire stage by stage the basis of a good sound and of playing. But at the same time he must be given the opportunity of training his ear and developing his sense for musical sound, of becoming gradually acquainted with the compass of his instrument, of learning to translate musical symbols into the movements of playing, of learning the elements of musical knowledge, of becoming acquainted with the notes, time signatures and the symbols of the staff, of getting a first understanding of the musical language, of learning combinations which are common music, of learning to do justice to the music of the past and the present. The "Violin" Proper is a collection of pieces in all the keys of the open strings. Any student who has a good ear and a good sense for musical sound will find it possible to play these pieces quite early. The pieces are used on each string. This limitation is necessary as that the technical basis of playing, namely the position of the left hand, the manner of stopping and of manipulating the bow, can be learnt without the distracting difficulty of string-crossing. The position of the fourth finger from the very beginning is absolutely necessary to assure a correct position of the left hand. This "correct" position is most surely achieved through the stops of the D and A strings. A correct position of the hand when stopping the E string is much more

difficult, and the G string is in most cases too high for the beginner. Furthermore, the notes of the D and A strings are in a pitch which makes it possible for the student to sing the notes he has to play at the same time. This is an important prerequisite if he is to acquire a correct conception of notes. For this reason the text of many of the songs has also been printed. The limitation to a range of five notes furthermore gives the beginner the opportunity of acquainting himself with notation at first in a small compass.

The musical form of the pieces for playing has also been as simple as the beginning: rhythms demanding a uniform speed of bowing, such as  $\frac{3}{4}$   $\downarrow \downarrow \downarrow$  or  $\frac{4}{4}$   $\downarrow \downarrow \downarrow \downarrow$  have been avoided in the first chapter in favour of those rhythms which may be executed with strokes of different length but of constant speed, e. g.  $\frac{4}{4}$   $\downarrow \downarrow \downarrow \downarrow \downarrow \downarrow$ . The student must have full control over the speed of bowing and must be accustomed to playing with every part of the bow (also the nut!) before any differentiation of bowing is attempted. He must naturally have mastered the elements of bowing at the beginning of his studies before beginning to train the left hand. For that reason bowing on the open strings should be practised extensively as a preparatory and continuous exercise.

The keys, which are first only conceived of in a compass of five notes, are then extended during the course of study first to the compass of a sixth, then to that of an octave. Playing alternately on two strings is at first very carefully introduced within the compass of a sixth, as a new task for the right arm (bow), for the left hand and for the ear. Practice in this is increased by examples and pieces in the

compass of an octave. The "exercises in invention" for each compass of notes are to contribute to the strengthening of the student's note-consciousness. At this stage it is not necessary for the beginner to be able to give the notes their actual names, or to be consciously aware that he is playing F sharp, G sharp or C sharp, for instance. For players without any knowledge of reading music, a key-note sign has been included, which prescribes the order of the notes of the major key from each of the key-notes chosen. The pupil learns at first only the names of the notes of the open strings. In order to give names to the other degrees it is best to employ the relative tonic syllables of the "tonic sol-fa" method (doh, ray, me, fah, soh, la, te), which are in any case more suitable for developing note-consciousness than the alphabetical names. The use of the tonic syllables of this method is of advantage, but not necessary for all students.

The conscious acquaintance with the notes of the staff and their alphabetical names follows when the other attitudes of the fingers are met with. These other attitudes of the fingers are gained by transposition of the already known (chapters 5 and 7), a method which makes the altered positions of the fingers particularly well comprehensible. If the third finger then stops the key-note, the way is open to playing in C major. When the key of C major is extended over all four strings, the most correct attitude of the fingers crops up, the finger being drawn back to the first finger (chapter 8). The position of the hand in the steps indicated by the key-note sign which corresponds to the position of the half-tone sign, and the position by the treble clef when used without sharps or flats, the notes can now be named alphabetically. It is unnecessary to be observed that the names of the notes are unknown to the student, as he has only learned the names of the other notes (F, G, A) already. Working on this basis, the chapter on the five major keys is a first introduction of the whole of music. In the five major keys he has already learned the names of the notes, and all on his note-consciousness. The names of the notes are included in this chapter, but it is not necessary to learn them if he already knows them.

certain knowledge of musical notation. The songs and pieces for playing in the chapter immediately following can then be approached with a sure facility for reading music, and this facility can also be further strengthened.

The student is also introduced gradually into the tonality of the *minor mode*. At first he learns 5, then 6 notes, just as he did when learning the major tonality, in order to have a sure and active conception of the whole compass of an octave. In this volume we only give the "Aeolian" minor, since the changeable character of the harmonic and melodic minor is not suitable for the purpose to stopping for the beginner. The study of notes must be carried together with the study of rhythm, and the study of rhythm goes hand in hand with the beginning. New rhythmic values are introduced gradually and are fully apprehended by the student, once more and in the way from what he has heard when and where he has already mastered to the new, difficult, and the new conscious formation. The study of the "well known" is not familiar to the student, it is possible for the teacher to explain it to him.

It is not in the teacher's judgement to depart from the order in which the problems are presented here, but to adapt the order to the age, ability and requirements of the student. He may, for instance, postpone examples which are too difficult to begin with, or pass over problems which are not potent enough, or commence with the study of minor tonality (chapter 11) whilst still working on chapter 7, or in special cases introduce the study of the finger before the second.

Technical instructions regarding the execution of the technical problems of playing have been left quite intentionally to the teacher and his method. For it is the chief object of this work to provide a great abundance of material for making music, from which a planned course of study for all technical and musical problems is built up. It was the authors' especial desire to offer the beginner a treasury of genuine and valuable material for playing, such as has not been offered before.

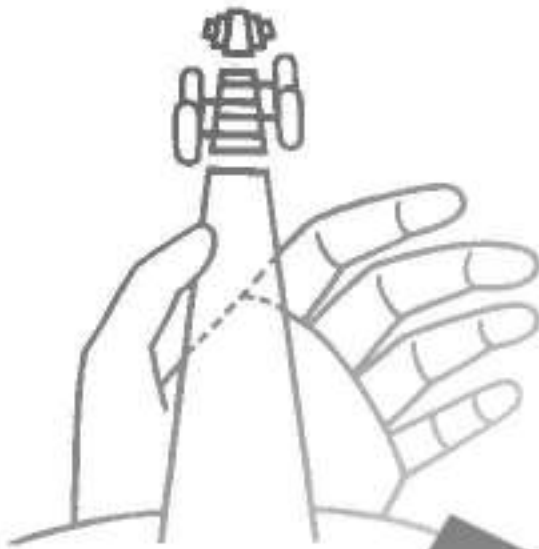
Erich and Elma Doflein

## How is the correct position of the left arm and the left hand to be found?

- a) The violin is raised to the correct position between shoulder and chin with the help of the right hand. It should be able to be held here in a horizontal position without the support of the hands, simply by the weight of the head which is inclined to the left.

However during the following exercises for the position of the left arm it is of advantage to hold the body of the violin with the right hand as well to ensure the necessary looseness of the whole body.

- b) The left arm, which hangs loosely, is extended and raised to the level of the violin, so that it comes nearly to the level of it. It is then turned over so that the thumb is at the top,



1. The arm is now bent and raised to the level of the violin. The neck of the violin is loosely enclosed by the fingers and thumb, so that it is to be held near the nut (finger rest) by the first joint of the forefinger.

2. The arm is carried inward, the hand and the violin turned to the right of the violin, so that the left hand and the right hand form together an inverted V-shape.



3. The arm and the hand are now turned far enough to enable the fingers to be held over the D string. For this they must be bent, the forefinger most, the little-finger least.

- b) The hand, made ready in this way, is moved along the finger-board until it reaches the place at which the 4<sup>th</sup> finger can touch the D string where the note A is stopped; that is the note of the next-highest string.

- c) The 4<sup>th</sup> finger is placed firmly into position; it should be determined whether the right note is stopped by plucking the string. The other fingers hang loosely above the string. Now the 1<sup>st</sup> finger is placed on the string too. Whilst the 4<sup>th</sup> finger remains in position, the 1<sup>st</sup> finger is drawn back on the string until it reaches its position.

This approach of the left hand to the fingerboard should be adopted until it is no longer necessary.



## Holding the bow

It is not good to take up the bow at once in any old way and then to change and improve the position of the fingers, until — perhaps! — the bow is held in a more or less correct manner. It is better to try to hold the bow correctly at the outset.

1. a) The bow is turned round so that the hairs are on top and is held by the nut with the left hand. It is to be observed that the parts of the stick enclosed later in the fingers of the right hand are not touched by the left hand.
- b) The upper part of the right arm lies loosely by the body; the hand is raised to the level of the elbow with the palm upwards. During this the fingers are extended so that they are only slightly bent. The natural spaces between the fingers are not changed. The thumb is moved slightly to the side. It will not be employed in holding the bow until the end!
- c) Now lay the stick of the bow upon the fingers of the right hand in such a way that they are touched by it obliquely, in a line from the tip of the little finger to the middle joint of the forefinger.
- d) Now draw the stick of the bow along this line through the fingers until the middle finger comes to rest opposite the edge of the nut.
- e) The space between the fingers is considered a hollow and the fingers except the little-finger are bent so as to enclose the nut and the side of the bow-stick with its tip. Observe carefully the position of the thumb.

The little-finger is only bent slightly; it only touches the bow-stick. The thumb still plays no part in holding the bow. Now both forearms with the bow towards the left so that the stick lies above the right arm. The moment has now arrived for the thumb to be led to its correct place: it is bent and so placed that its tip touches the back of the bow underneath at the edge of the nut. The work of the left hand is now no longer necessary.

This approach of the right hand to the bow should be adopted until it is no longer necessary.





## 2 Values of the notes

### The Rests

	Four times one beat	
Quarter notes (Crotchets)		
	Twice two beats	
Half notes (Minims)		
	Four beats	
Whole note (Semibreve)		

### Notation for Exercise 1e)

A string:  $\nabla$  = down bow  $\nabla$  = up bow  $||$  = Repetition sign  
 D string:  $\nabla$  = down bow  $\nabla$  = up bow  $||$  = Repetition sign  
 E string:  $\nabla$  = down bow  $\nabla$  = up bow  $||$  = Repetition sign

If the strokes of the bow are faster and the strokes with half the bow, the exercise can also be written with  $\nabla$  and  $\nabla$ .

H.B. = with half the bow  
 W.B. = with the whole bow  
 H.B. W.B. H.B. W.B.

## 3 Exercises for the left hand (plucked)

The key-note sign  $\nabla$  indicates which note is the key-note. A succession of whole-tone and half-tone steps (whole—whole—half—whole) is also built up on the same string, so that the first note is the same as the note of the next highest string.

### a) D string

Place the fingers on the string one after another and, by plucking the string, determine whether each finger is stopping the right note. Each finger should remain in its place. Then raise them and repeat the exercise with the fingers in the position they occupy when the 4th finger is placed on the string.

### A string

As indicated on the D string,

the numbers indicate how long each finger is to remain in position.

### Stopping the string and bowing together (To be practised on the D and A strings.)

Before the motions of the left hand are combined with those of the right, the player must be capable of drawing the bow correctly across the strings "blindly", that is, without visual assistance.

To make sure that the left hand from the outset adopts a position in which the fourth finger can be placed on the string easily as well, all the five notes should be played ascending slowly before each exercise and melody.

All the exercises are first to be plucked without the bow.