Viola Syllabus

Requirements

1 hour studio class (12:50 PM, Tuesday)
1 hour lesson (cancellations may be rescheduled given 24 hours notice)
1 hour viola magic class (Time TBA)
4 hours orchestra (1:55-4:00, Tuesday & Thursday)

at least 8 (and as many as 19) hours of practice per week

(And there it is, a challenge to each of you. If you want to experience what it truly is to be a music student, you must spend a great deal of time alone in the practice room. You must prioritize your practice over everything else. I swear to you, the results of dedication to an artistic pursuit are spiritual. You will have a sharper, happier mind.)

Texts

Our library has plenty of viola material (though there are notable holes in the collection). I encourage you to peruse the stacks. I also encourage you to purchase good editions of the repertoire you learn. (You might expect to spend between $30-$100 per semester.)

My final encouragement is towards the use of IMSLP.org. This resource provides many important scores in the public domain for free! Just print them out and use them so long as they are not terrible (most of the unedited, user-submitted contributions must be viewed with a great deal of suspicion, but the historical editions are often good).

Grading

You’re not tardy. You’re not absent. You dress and comport yourself professionally. You act with respect and humility towards others. You practice at least 9 hours a week.
You get an A.

You’re tardy. You’re not absent. You sometimes dress and comport yourself professionally. You act with respect and humility towards others. You practice less than you should.
You get a B.

You’re tardy. You’re absent. You sometimes dress and comport yourself professionally. You act with respect and humility towards others. You practice less than you should.
You get a C.

You get the idea.
Expectations

I view my job two different ways. First of all, I am a violist and a viola teacher. From the age of five, I studied with a professional orchestral musician who had fallen under the spell of Shin’ichi Suzuki’s *Mother Tongue* philosophy (which can be summed up as saying that anyone at any age can learn to play music and that music is good for all of us). I attended music camps, music workshops; I competed in music competitions, volunteered my time as a musician. I got a bachelors degree in performance, then a masters degree in performance. Sonatas, concertos, show pieces, etudes, chamber music, chamber orchestra, symphony orchestra, Baroque ensemble, New Music ensemble, etc. . .

The conservatory experience is tried and true since the eighteenth century, the master/apprenticeship relationship is, of course, more ancient than that.

All this is to say that in my experience, the more hours you spend making music, the better you become as a musician. It happens naturally. Fluency comes with repetition. Our brain makes pathways. There’s that 10,000 hour theory… sounds about right to me.

If you practice efficiently, your progress can be direct. But if your practice isn’t seriously impinging on your personal life, you’re not practicing enough. Anyways, that’s first of all.

Second of all, I am a professor at a University in a College of Liberal Arts. So… Grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy. I will be assigning problem sets in arithmetic and geometry every other studio class. Make sure you take a look at the stars tonight. And think about them. Think about how they move.

In all seriousness, folks, I will be paying close attention to your grammar, rhetoric and logic (along with your music). Part of the Pre-Professional Jury is an oral presentation. And you must write program notes for your recitals. So, if you have trouble speaking comfortably to an audience, let me know. Consider taking a public speaking class. As with music, the more you use words, the better you become with them.

And make sure you’re getting enough potassium and enough vitamin B12.

Contact
Stephen Fine, MM
E: STFine@gmail.com
Ph: 352.514.1072