

Violin awards Teachers notes

Pre note to teachers.

Each award is designed to be a guide to progression. For each award there is a 'what some learners might be able to do,' which is essentially a guide to identifying the more able pupils. The report quotes at the very bottom are suggested comments you might make for each award. All pupils in a period of a year, either as whole class or large group, should achieve the Mendelssohn award. Most of the musical examples are taken from the vamoosh violin series. You can see these at:-

<http://www.vamooshmusic.com>

Book 1.

Violin awards Teachers notes

1. To achieve the Vivaldi Award

Learners can:

Get my violin ready to have a lesson;

Make a rest position;

Make a playing position;

Know what all the parts and strings of my violin are called;

Play using my fingers (pizzicato) on the open strings;

I might also be able to:-

Play using the bow into their playing and have a good bow hold;

Play and read some form of notation at the same time.

Music that will help learners achieve the award

Jig (Vamoosh open D and A, no notation). If they can get into plucking position, they may well manage playing this pizzicato.

Willow Waltz (Vamoosh - again no notation, just the note letters)

Notes to tutors

The learner should be able to play though a piece with help. They should have a good positional hold of the violin. Use of the bow might only optional dependent on group ability or teacher preference.

Report quote

You have made a really good start playing the violin. You can now play on the open strings and you are making really good progress holding your instrument correctly. You can play different note lengths and you can set up the instrument by yourself. Keep trying your best and see if you can remember all you have learnt.

2. To achieve the Mozart Award

Learners can:

Play my Violin using my bow;

Play a simple piece of music using the open strings either from musical notation or memory;

Play at different speeds;

Make a better sound than the previous award.

I might also be able to:-

Cross more than one string at a time accurately (ie from G to A etc)

Play and identify quavers, crotchets and minims.

Correctly identify the importance of the down-bow and use it at the beginning of a piece or bar.

Have a tone, which is showing real promise.

Music that will help learners achieve the award

Open string exercises and call and response rhythm games to get pupils using full bows and getting their arms relaxed and working on getting an even confident sound.

Jig and Willow waltz Vamoosh, with bow.

Manhattan Blues (faster open string piece). This also has rests to count and features more than one note value.

More advanced players could start to look at Can-Can - still open strings but also uses quavers.

Note to teachers

There should be significant progress made from the first award in terms of using the bow. [Areas covered should be down bow at the beginning of a phrase where appropriate, parallel bow, good right hand wrist movement] The accuracy of playing should be much improved and learners demonstrating more confidence. As such, some pupils should be able to play by themselves phrases or part of pieces.

Report quote

You have worked very hard over the past few weeks. Your playing is steadily improving and you have developed a better sense of rhythm. You can use your bow now and cross strings. You are also able to remember simple music patterns and play them well. Well done and keep trying your best.

3. To achieve the Mendelssohn Award

Learners can:

Start to put my fingers down on at least 1 string;

Start to recognise some form of notation;

Continue to improve my tone;

Play in a concert or class performance;

I might also be able to:-

Use fingers on more than 1 string.

Have an increased ability to play longer pieces either from memory or notation.

Produce a warm sound with a good tone.

Music that will help learners achieve the award

A friend inDEED from the Abracadabra Book 1.

If pupil reading of open notes is pretty good, Do Have a Cup of Tea from the Copper Music Medal book is ideal. This uses first finger on the A string later on so there is room for progression for the more able pupils. As this is a duet with teacher part, there is opportunity for concert performance.

Note to teachers.

Pupils should now be able to play with confidence and use all the open strings and in some cases place fingers on the different strings. The learners should be starting to be able to play some scale and arpeggio phrases. Tempo should be steady and increasing in speed.

Report quote

Fantastic news - you can play lots of notes now and have you noticed the music is much more exciting. You can also do big leaps between notes and you understand what a scale is. Your tone is really improving and you can now phrase notes together to make a good performance. Well done.

4. To achieve the Stravinsky Award

Learners can:

- Put my 1st, 2nd and 3rd fingers down on one or more string;
- Play a piece of music where I cross strings and move fingers at the same time;
- Develop my reading of music or memory for music;
- Play in time with an accompaniment either backing track or live;
- Play a solo entirely by myself in front of others.

I might also be able to:-

- Play a whole piece of music by myself;
- Bow with confidence;
- Play in tune;
- Play with an established and coordinated RH – LH;
- Play with an improving accurate articulation.

Music that will help learners achieve the award

Rolling Hills (Vamoosh): uses string crossing and all fingers. There is both a practice track and full speed track for solo performances.

Ode to Joy (Vamoosh): more regular and faster string crossing here. The quavers could be tweaked slightly to add slurs.

Fiery Fiddler (Vamoosh): This could be kept for the more able players as the whole piece centres on finger changing and string crossing simultaneously. Slow and full speed tracks available.

Note to teachers

It would be great to see some improved articulation at this point if possible. Improved bowing and use of slurs. Learners should start to understand what dynamics are, even if they can't execute them in a piece yet.

Report quote

Well done! You can now play lots of different notes. You can now play lots of good melodies and you are developing a sense of dynamics.

Well done!

5. To achieve the Copeland Award

(Final award - this is aimed as a grade 1 unit)

Learners can:

Play all fingers on all strings (second finger in same position);

Play a piece from some form of notation or be able to play a longer piece from memory;

Cross the strings with accuracy;

Play unsupported with a good fluid rhythm and pitch accuracy;

Have an increasing grasp of traditional notation.

I might also be able to:-

Play second finger in a different position - possibly play the Am and Dm scale.

Music that will help learners achieve the award

Mattachins from grade 1 ABRSM here as it encompasses all strings, fingers, tempo changes and dynamics as well as string crossing (G-D then A-E)

Boat to Inverie to strengthen slurring, dynamics and bow control so maybe this should be the point where learners look at grade I.

Music suggestions from Abracadabra by Katie Wearing

Tudor Dance

Goblins

Note to teachers.

This award should help you assess whether the learner is really able and keen to progress towards ABRSM Grade 1 violin.

Report quote.

Well done indeed. You are now ready to take the next step and look at taking your ABRSM Grade 1. You have the skills to play many different pieces. What an achievement. Very well done to you!