

Violin Scales & Arpeggios

ABRSM Grade 1

from 2012

Why practise scales?

Welcome to this book of scales and arpeggios for Grade 1 Violin. Practising scales and arpeggios plays an essential part in developing a player's skills. Time devoted to these exercises within each practice session will improve many aspects of technique, such as co-ordination, string crossing, bow control, position changes and tone production. In addition, the sense of key and pattern acquired through familiarity with scales and arpeggios has several benefits: it speeds up the learning of new pieces, builds aural awareness, increases familiarity with the geography of the instrument, and helps develop fine intonation, evenness of line and quality of tone.

For the exam

Tempo

The candidate should aim for a tempo that achieves vitality of rhythm, controlled bowing, good intonation, and a clean, sonorous tone. Slurred patterns should generally be played with the whole bow, while separately-bowed examples should be played with a smooth *détaché*, using no more than half the bow length.

The given metronome marks indicate suggested *minimum* speeds for the exam. Candidates may feel that slurred requirements become more comfortable when played at a brisker tempo than examples with separate bows, such differences in speed being dependent on factors such as size of instrument and length of bow. Experienced teachers will know what their candidates are able to achieve safely, although it is important to avoid accurate yet laboured playing which demonstrates that the pattern has been memorized but lacks the musical fluency needed for a convincing result.

Fingering

Any practical fingering that produces a good result will be accepted in the exam. The decision as to which fingering to adopt will vary between players, taking into account ease of

performance, memorability, and the importance of changing position unobtrusively, and candidates should experiment to find solutions that work for them. (Examiners will not comment on the choice of fingering, unless it interferes with the musical outcome of the performance.)

On the day

All requirements must be played from memory. Examiners will usually ask for at least one of each type of scale or arpeggio required at the grade, and will aim to hear a balance of separately-bowed and slurred requirements.

The examiner will be looking for:

- good intonation across the pitch range
- an even and positive sense of rhythm
- accurate and fluent realization of the different types of scales and arpeggios
- confident, controlled, and consistent tone
- convincing negotiation of technical challenges such as string crossing, position changing, and co-ordination.

Rhythm patterns

For major and minor scales candidates may choose between two rhythm patterns: even notes or long tonic.

In this book, major and minor scales are presented in even notes first, followed by the same scales using the long-tonic pattern.

Reference must always be made to the syllabus for the year in which the exam is to be taken, in case any changes have been made to the requirements.