



# TEACHING

## *Ring Tones* to Young Students

by Elise Winters

The best source of consistent, perfect intonation on the violin is being able to hear the ringing of the sympathetic open strings.

Young beginners (and sometimes older ones!) are not easily able to pick up on the subtle sympathetic resonance surrounding the fundamental note. This struggle led me many years ago to give up on teaching “ringing intonation” until the child had progressed further in their studies.

I was delighted (and surprised) to watch a teacher colleague of mine, Daniel Gee, teach one of my youngest students ringing intonation in a master class. His trick? Tapping the sympathetic string several times while the student bowed the primary note. This created a lovely “bell” sound which was obvious to both the student and parent!

Now I use this trick show students these notes—a few at a time—as soon as they can play with straight, full bows and consistent tuning. They delight in playing the notes over and over again. Initially the parent or teacher taps the string, but very soon the young player will insist on tapping the string themselves.

You’ll notice that the instructions below indicate playing in third position, since this is where I start my young beginners. The second finger rings are a bit more difficult than first finger because they require tunneling. That being said, these notes, once found, are very responsive since they match the open strings!

If you are having a student play the exercises in first position, you will most likely use only the first set (3<sup>rd</sup> finger in first position) and omit the second set (notes which match the open strings). Your more adventurous students may enjoy an easy and rewarding “sneak preview” of third position, where they can play both sets.

The original Suzuki Tonalization can be a tricky first ring tone experience because less resonant notes (e.g. B and high G) can divert attention away from the fuller ring tones. Once students find the most resonant notes in groups (e.g. first fingers, second fingers), it is much easier to assemble them into the full Suzuki Tonalization.

I hope you love using these exercises with your students!

Warmly,

*Elise*

P.S. Please feel free to email me with any questions. You can find me at [elise@discoverviolin.org](mailto:elise@discoverviolin.org). It may take me a little while to respond, but I answer every email.

# Ring Tones with *Finger Chimes*

## Finger Chimes on First Finger

The following notes are played with in 3<sup>rd</sup> position with the 1<sup>st</sup> finger. The teacher or practice partner should rhythmically tap the open string corresponding to the note being played. If the note is in tune, you will hear a beautiful bell sound when the string is tapped.

*Internalize the tempo by playing two whole notes at  $\text{♩} = 72$ ; then turn off the metronome and play the exercise.*

## Finger Chime with a Tunnel

The “E” note will be played in 3<sup>rd</sup> position with the 2<sup>nd</sup> finger. The finger must make a “tunnel” around the E string. *Hint: To facilitate the tunnel, bring the violin elbow further in front of the body and play on the corner of the finger.*

Play 2<sup>nd</sup> finger on  
A string with the bow.

Play the open E string, while still holding down your finger.

Repeat this process until the notes match and the open string is free to ring.

Now play this note four times, while rhythmically tapping the E string.

## Finger Chimes on Second Finger

Now play all of the 2<sup>nd</sup> finger ring tones in 3<sup>rd</sup> position.

Internalize the tempo by playing two whole notes at ♩ = 72; then turn off the metronome and play the exercise.

The exercise consists of five staves, each starting with a whole note and three bell icons representing ring tones. The notes are E, A, D, A, and E, all in 3<sup>rd</sup> position. The first staff has four measures, each with a whole note and three bell icons. The remaining four staves each have four measures: the first measure has a whole note and three bell icons, and the subsequent three measures contain a repeat sign (a double slash with a diagonal line through it).

## Finger Chimes on First and Second Fingers Together

Now combine all of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> fingers on all the strings. “*Simile*” (“SIH-mi-lee”) is the musical term meaning “continue in the same way.”

The exercise consists of four staves, each starting with a whole note and three bell icons representing ring tones. The notes are E, A, D, and A, all in 3<sup>rd</sup> position. The first staff has six measures: the first measure has a whole note and three bell icons, and the subsequent five measures contain a repeat sign. The second staff has six measures: the first measure has a whole note and three bell icons, and the subsequent five measures contain a repeat sign. The third staff has six measures: the first measure has a whole note and three bell icons, and the subsequent five measures contain a repeat sign. The fourth staff has six measures: the first measure has a whole note and three bell icons, and the subsequent five measures contain a repeat sign. The word “*simile*” is written below the first staff.