

Kerstin Wartberg  
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# The Journey Through Pre-Twinkle

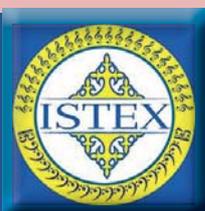
with

Practice Advice for Parents

Illustrations and Short Videos for Young Violin Students

Digital Download of 43 Audio Files and Sheet Music

for Lessons and Home Practice



Preprint Edition: eBook with Digital Download

**ISTEX MUSIC PUBLICATIONS**

Kerstin Wartberg & Charles Krigbaum

## The Journey Through Pre-Twinkle

### Part 1

MP3 Audio Files: Downloading and Streaming  
[www.imtex-online.com](http://www.imtex-online.com)

Lisa Ikegami, Illustrations

Rudolf Gaehler, Violin

David Andruss, Piano and Piano Arrangements

Gino Romero Ramirez, Djembé

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# Dear Parents!

Children can successfully begin violin lessons at a very young age when supported by you, their parents. The responsibility for each child's progress lies with the parents and the teacher. Learning to play the violin is a journey, and during this first stage, you will work together with your teacher to develop the mental, physical, emotional, and musical abilities of your child.

The Japanese violin teacher **Shinichi Suzuki** believed that all children can learn music and achieve an extremely high level when given the opportunity to develop in the proper environment. According to Dr. Suzuki, music is learned in the same way that children learn to speak: by listening, imitation, and repetition.

**Listening is the most important readiness for musical learning.** For children, daily listening to the music they will learn to play on their instrument is essential. By listening, children internalize the sounds they will learn to play before attempting to produce those sounds on their violins.

While listening to music in this way, we create the foundation for the brain to think in music while playing the violin, much like our minds think in words while we are speaking.

**Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star**, the universally known folk song, is the first substantial piece studied by many children all over the world who are learning to play the violin. A successful performance of this beloved piece, which for a young violin student represents the learning of many sophisticated skills and complicated tasks, is an enormous accomplishment.

Children between the ages of 3 and 6 years old need special skills before embarking on a successful attempt at playing the violin. The journey towards Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star can be broken down into very small steps during the **Pre-Twinkle** stage of learning. Every step is carefully prepared and then mastered. Each step must be secure before we add an additional step, ensuring the success of every child. **During this stage, children learn the basic skills of violin technique that will last a lifetime.**

## HOW TO USE THIS E-BOOK:

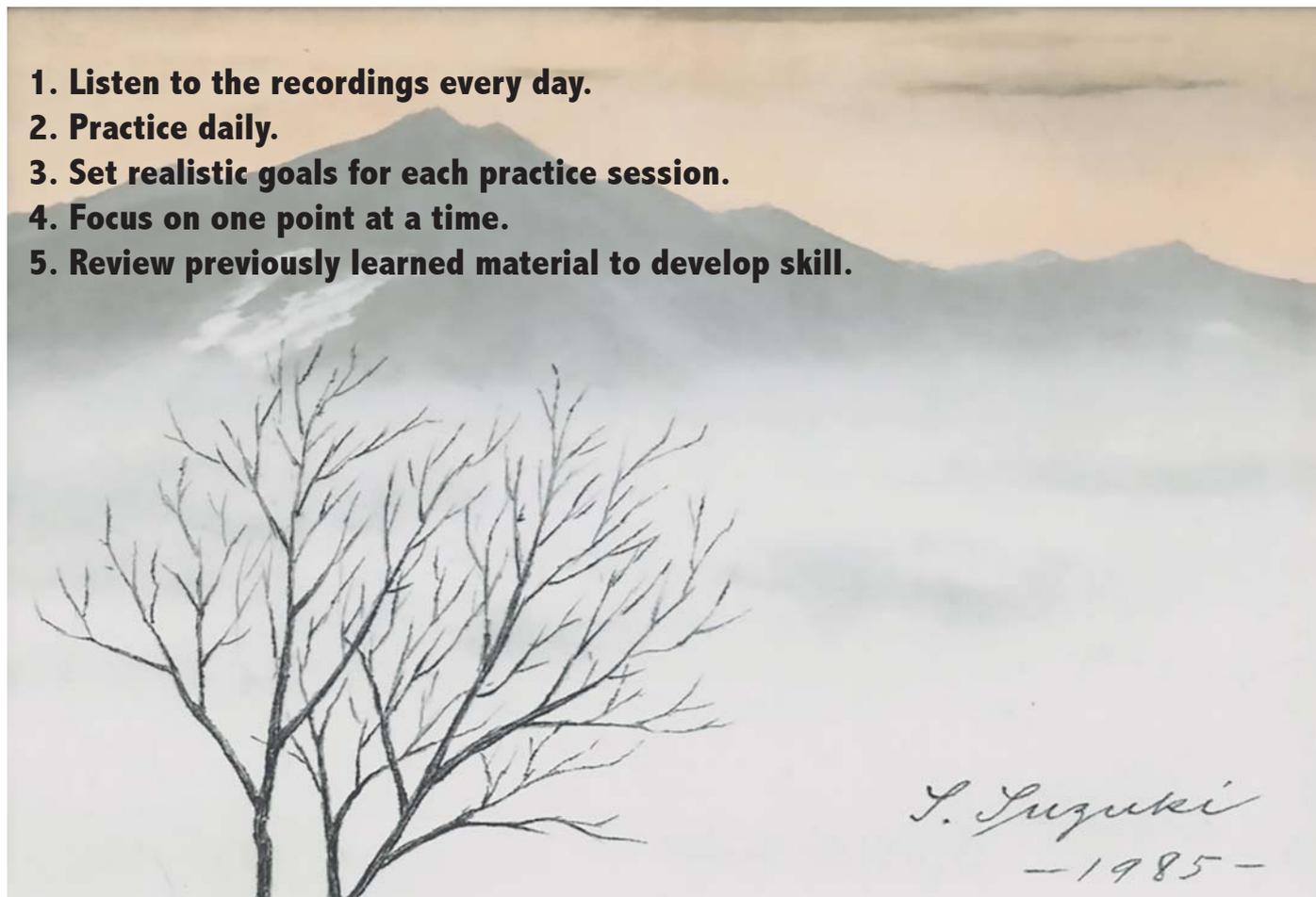
The steps presented in **The Journey Through Pre-Twinkle** represent one possible way to successfully develop the skills necessary to perform **Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star** on the violin.

This book, with practice advice for parents, illustrations and short videos for young violin students, and 43 audio files and sheet music for lessons and home practice, cannot replace the instruction of an experienced, well-trained, and professional teacher.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, families have the possibility of using technology in their learning more than ever before. We present this material in an E-Book format, offering parents and teachers an easy and unique opportunity to help students with their practice at home. Our intention in creating this project is to provide additional resources for parents, students, and teachers for use during the Pre-Twinkle stage, a time when creativity, thoughtfulness, options, and organization are crucial. Our goal is to help parents understand violin technique by providing a resource to see skills presented and demonstrated in a step-by-step manner.

The materials in **The Journey Through Pre-Twinkle** have been developed and tested with students and their parents over many years. The included musical selections turn each step along the journey into a piece of music, and provide a clear structure for practicing with repetitions. The purpose of the text is to clarify and summarize concepts that are commonly presented during beginning violin lessons. Pictures and colorful illustrations are provided to capture the imagination of the child.

We share these ideas with humility, and acknowledge that there are other ways to approach the Pre-Twinkle stage of learning. Your teacher will have many of their own ideas, and present similar concepts in different ways. The authors find this diversity exciting, as there are many paths towards excellence!



## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

**Thank you** to *Lisa Ikegami* for her beautiful illustrations, to our colleagues *Heidi Curatolo* and *Helen Hines* for contributing some additional videos to this project, and to *Daina Volodka Staggs* and *Meg Lanfear* for the use of their photos.

**Thank you** to all of the special young violinists (and their parents) who played for us in the videos. We wish you all the very best as your journey continues.

*Kerstin Wartberg & Charles Krigbaum*

## TUNING NOTES



1. Tuning Note A



2. Tuning Note E



3. Tuning Note D



4. Tuning Note G

# Step No. 1

## *Using the Foot Chart*



During the first lessons, your teacher will make a **foot chart** for your child. The foot chart is for use during lessons and home practice. It provides a clear physical and psychological space for learning to occur. The foot chart will include markings for **rest position** and **playing position**. To start your practice, have your child stand in rest position and **take a bow**.

The bow provides a powerful ritual experience. In lessons and in practices, it is a silent signal that the time for learning has begun! The bow is a symbol that represents mutual respect between the student and teacher during lessons. It also prepares stage presence and teaches children how to present themselves during concerts.

Excellent posture begins on the floor with the foot chart. Always make sure that your child organizes their feet in the proper positions. The placement of the feet in rest position and playing position can be practiced in a game. The following video will introduce you and your child to the **Foot Chart Game**.

Children need both **movement and stillness** to prepare their bodies for learning. By working with the foot chart, children gain an awareness of their bodies. A young child needs to find their feet on the foot chart many times. Once we have established this routine, we will move to standing tall and straight (while keeping still), and eventually to making bow holds and violin holds.

Parents, please know that the body is much slower to learn than the mind. Much of the Pre-Twinkle stage is just that, teaching the body!

**Each physical step requires endurance, mastery, and many repetitions.**

**Rest position**



**Playing position**



**5. Music for the Foot Chart Game**



Video: The Journey Through Pre-Twinkle  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5ja\\_l79eCU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5ja_l79eCU)

# Step No. 2

## *Holding the Bow*



Perhaps the most important skill for a young violinist **to develop is the proper bow hold:**

- ≈ The fingers of a beautiful bow hold are round and relaxed.
- ≈ The thumb is always bent.

**We will spend weeks, and months if necessary,** to develop the skill and endurance required for this complicated task. Careful instructions will be given by your teacher so that the proper results can emerge. Many important points to consider are shown in the video **The Swan.**

Students begin their journey using a dowel bow. We will use the concept of repetition to earn our actual bow.

**Dr. Suzuki believed that it took 10,000 repetitions of an action for it to become a skill.**

Recent neurological research supports his intuition. We will have our first experience with large amounts of repetition in our work with the bow.

Parents and students will receive a “500 Times” project shortly after this concept is introduced.



## 6. Music for the Swan Exercise



Video (Start at 1:51): The Journey Through Pre-Twinkle  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5ja\\_l79eCU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5ja_l79eCU)

# Step No. 3

## *Holding the Violin*



It is important to realize that **the violin is supported by the shoulder and the head.**

**The shoulders must remain soft**, even, and relaxed while the exact turn of the head is learned.

The concept of “**head up and eyes down**” is introduced, and the student begins their journey towards ever increasing focus.

**The left arm must be completely free** and flexible for moving fingers across the finger-board.



In the first stages, children demonstrate that **they can balance the box violin with their head while standing tall** for increasing amounts of time.

They are not distracted by the temptation to play on the real instrument until this skill is mastered.

**The child must be able to keep the violin side of the body quiet while the bow arm is moving.**

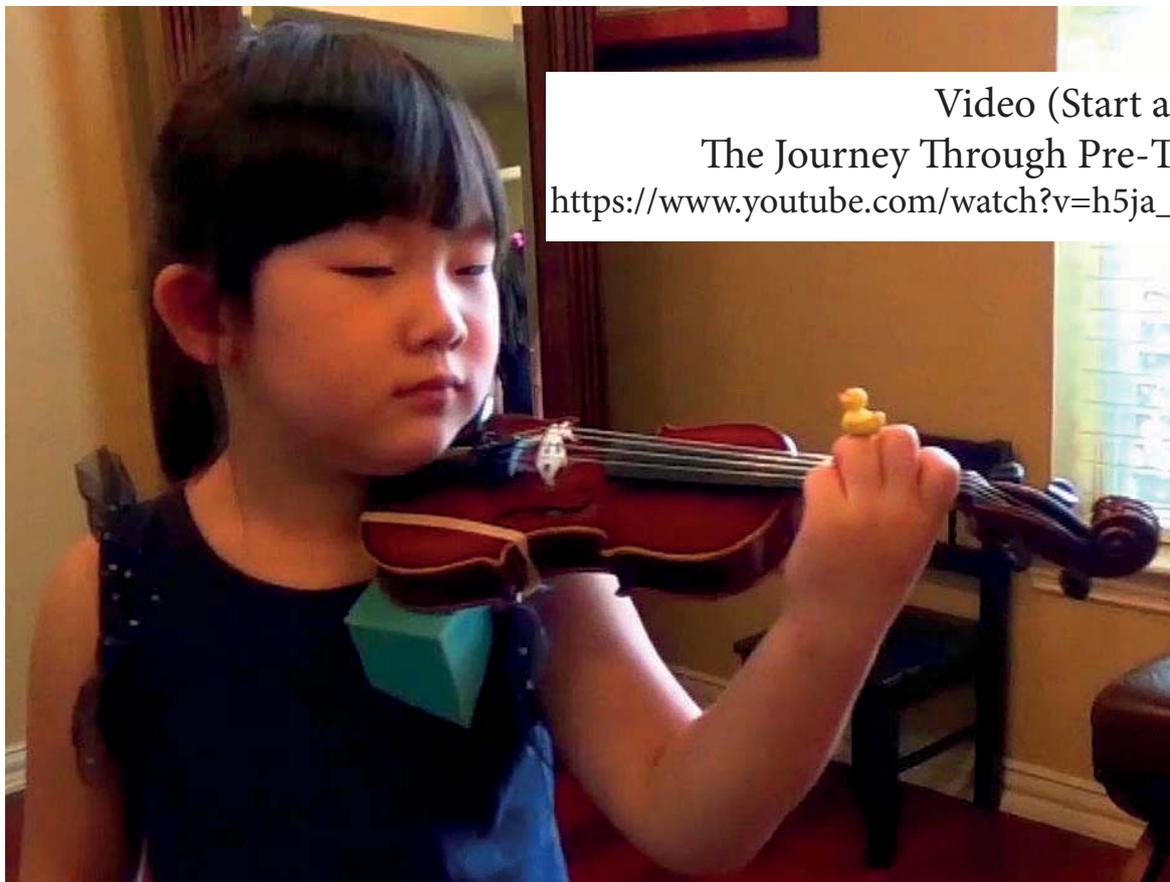
For a young child, this is a significant task in their development.



7. The Bell Song plucked



8. The Bell Song played with the bow



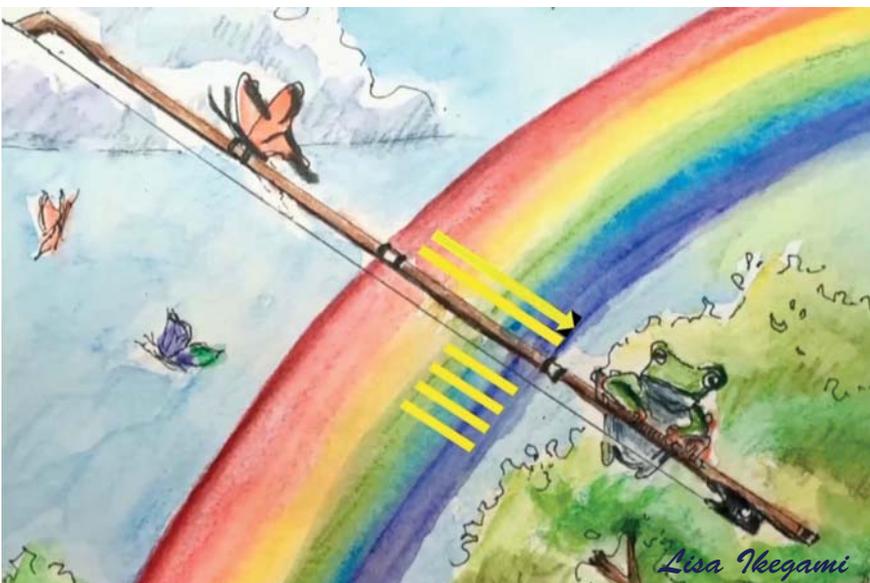
Video (Start at 4:11):  
The Journey Through Pre-Twinkle  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5ja\\_l79eCU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5ja_l79eCU)

# Step No. 4

## *The First Twinkle Rhythm*



In the first lessons, the student is taught the rhythm **“Taka Taka Stop Stop”** and how to chant the rhythm and clap the rhythm. Many successful preparatory experiences are necessary to internalize the rhythm and motions required to perform the **First Twinkle Rhythm** on their instrument. Many teachers use words that fit the rhythms of the **Twinkle Variations**. These rhythms can be spoken, chanted, or sung.



**The use of a recording can assist your home practice as you**

- clap
- chant
- shadow bow
- bow on your shoulder
- “soap” the arm
- play on your violin
- OR ...

# Exercises with a Ball

**What are these children learning?**

**They are listening to and internalizing the first songs. They are learning the other Twinkle rhythms, and strengthening their physical endurance and concentration.**

**These exercises also prepare several basic bowing elements:**

- **bow direction (down-bow or up-bow)**
- **bow speed**
- **bow division**



With these careful preparations in place, we are now ready for our first song:

## Rhythm on E



**Repeat 2 times!**

**This song has an introduction and a postlude.**

**During the introduction, we get ready.**

**During the postlude, the child places their violin in rest position and takes a bow.**

**Getting ready to play is easy with a routine:**

**Check your feet,**



**your body,  
your head,  
your violin hold,**



**your bow hold,  
and relax  
your right arm and shoulder.**

**Place the bow  
on the E string  
in the E String Posture,  
with your right elbow down.**



Everything we have done up to this point to prepare the body is for **the purpose of creating a beautiful tone**. The first experience of putting the bow on the string has been awaited with eager anticipation. We want the first sound that the child makes on the violin to be one that inspires many future attempts. All of the work that has been done to bring a child to this moment should be **rewarded with success**.

**While performing  
Rhythm on E,  
the following points  
should be observed:**

**No. 1:** Clear distinction between  
the connected bows  
and the stopped bows

**No. 2:** The correct angle  
of the bow

**No. 3:** A good bow division

**No. 4:** Exact rhythm

**No. 5:** A full, clear sound

*Lisa Ikegami*



**9. The First Twinkle Rhythm with Drum**



**10. Rhythm on E played by Violin and Piano**



## Step No. 5

### *We Prepare All of the Twinkle Rhythms*

#### **Everything is easier with music!**

While learning the next steps with the instrument the children are listening to the following recordings and internalizing the other Twinkle rhythms.

Other times the children are sitting on the floor, next to their parents and are clapping and chanting. Another time they are walking around the room and move in rhythm with the music.

Or they stand in one place, moving the ball in rhythm, bow on their shoulders, or engage in other activities to strengthen and improve their bow hold or violin posture.



Gradually your child will become acquainted with all of the Twinkle rhythms and their matching rhythm words. Your teacher will introduce these rhythms to you over time. **At first, we will concentrate only on the first and second rhythms.** Listening, imitation, and repetition aid the child's progress. With practice, the child will learn to differentiate between these two rhythms securely.

Many activities can be used to help the beginning violin student internalize these rhythms. Clapping, chanting, movement games with a ball, and bowing on the shoulder are only a few examples of the many possibilities. After thorough practicing of the first two rhythms, the third rhythm can be added. After a few weeks, the child will add the fourth and finally the fifth rhythm.

The child's rhythmic training and exposure to the additional Twinkle rhythms will continue at lessons and during home practice while other new skills are developed.

**At the same time that they are learning the Twinkle rhythms, children will continue learning Steps 5 – 8 with their instrument.**

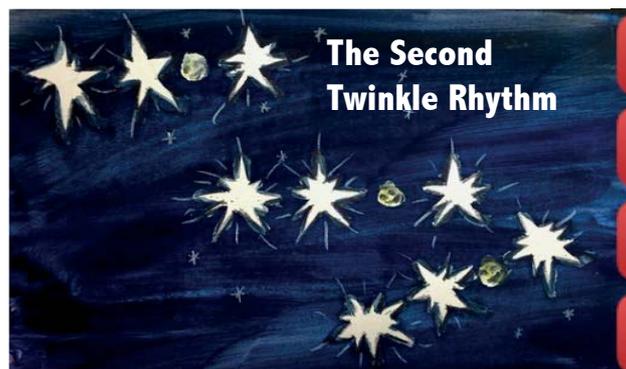
**The following points should be considered while playing the Twinkle Variations:**

All Twinkle rhythms are to be played **between the two tapes**. The space between the bow tapes, for now, is considered the whole bow.

The sixteenth notes are to be played with half of the length that the eighth notes are played.

The word **articulation** refers to the style of bowing being used. Our Pre-Twinkle students are trained to play with two different types of bow strokes resulting in different sounds.

All sixteenth notes are to be played *detaché*, a smooth and connected style of bowing. All eighth notes are played in a separated style of bowing. The bow is moved quickly and stopped clearly. This is an early preparation for the *martelé* bow stroke.



**The Second  
Twinkle Rhythm**



11. The Second Twinkle Rhythm with Drum

12. Rhythm on E

13. Rhythm on E and A

14. Rhythm with Three Fingers



**The Third  
Twinkle Rhythm**



15. The Third Twinkle Rhythm with Drum

16. Rhythm on E

17. Rhythm on E and A

18. Rhythm with Three Fingers



**The Fourth  
Twinkle Rhythm**



19. The fourth Twinkle Rhythm with Drum

20. Rhythm on E

21. Rhythm on E and A

22. Rhythm with Three Fingers



**The Fifth  
Twinkle Rhythm**



23. The Fifth Twinkle Rhythm with Drum

24. Rhythm on E

25. Rhythm on E and A

26. Rhythm with Three Fingers



27. The Clapping Game

All of the Twinkle rhythms will be played one after another. After the piano plays a rhythm, the children should clap the same rhythm.

# Step No. 6

## *String Crossing from E String to A String & Rhythm on A*

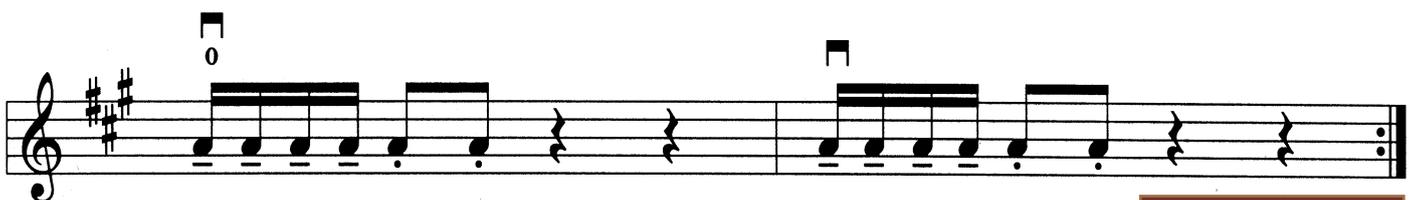


Let's imagine a tiny baby gently rocking in its cradle. We will now perform a silent bow exercise to prepare string crossings. This exercise is called **The Silent Cradle**.

The child places the bow at the lower stripe on the E string and attempts to move silently to the A string and back again to the E string. This silent string crossing exercise should be performed in a **small, slow, and careful motion**. Can you imagine the baby's cradle resting on your bow? **Keep your string crossings quiet**, or we might wake up the baby!

**Keep the weight of your arm in good contact with the string.** The position of your bow arm will change, but only slightly, as the bow travels from string to string.

Our second song, **Rhythm on A**, can be quite tricky at first. Many children accidentally bow on two strings while they are learning to bow on the A string. **It is very helpful to ask your child to look at the bow** where it contacts the string as they play. The act of watching the bow also trains the ear. We learn that specific movements and feelings in our bodies create certain sounds. This is a very important insight for children to discover for themselves!



**Repeat 2 times!**



Once the Silent Cradle and Rhythm on A are thoroughly prepared, your third song, **Rhythm on E and A**, will seem very easy! Now we will play on both strings one at a time. There are two rests between each rhythm to help you to prepare and to perform the silent cradle.

Musical notation on a single staff in G major (one sharp). The first measure contains a whole note G4. The second measure contains a quarter note A4, followed by a quarter rest. The third measure contains a quarter note E5, followed by a quarter rest. The fourth measure contains a quarter note A4, followed by a quarter rest. The fifth measure contains a quarter note E5, followed by a quarter rest. The sixth measure contains a quarter note A4, followed by a quarter rest. The seventh measure contains a quarter note E5, followed by a quarter rest. The eighth measure contains a quarter note A4, followed by a quarter rest. The piece ends with a double bar line. Above the staff, there are two brown boxes: the first contains the letter 'A' and the second contains the letter 'E'. Below the staff, a brown box contains the text 'Repeat 2 times!'.

An illustration titled 'Stamina Training' showing a stack of three gift boxes (red, yellow, blue) on a path. A mouse is on the blue box holding a red balloon. A cardinal is on the yellow box. The background is a green field with butterflies. Three red music note icons are overlaid on the scene, each with a text label: '29. Rhythm on E and A' (top), '28. Rhythm on A' (middle), and '10. Rhythm on E' (bottom). The artist's signature 'Lisa Ikegami' is in the bottom right corner.

Video (Start at 7:16): The Journey Through Pre-Twinkle  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5ja\\_l79eCU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5ja_l79eCU)

## Step No. 7

### *Preparing the Left Hand Fingers*



Your teacher will guide you on placing the left hand in the correct position. Some teachers choose to show the child the points of contact between the left hand and the neck of the violin. Perhaps we can mark these on the hand of the child with two small X's? With these "Magic X's," little games can be played to ensure that the points of contact can be found quickly and correctly. Of course, these points vary from child to child. However, one point of contact is usually just above the knuckle of the first finger and other one at the first segment of the thumb. **The thumb is placed opposite the first finger.**

Next, the left hand fingers are placed one after another very carefully and gently on the fingerboard. It is very important to observe the placement of the fingers in the correct **shape** and using the correct **finger angle**. The teacher or a parent can gently move the fingers to their proper places if they miss their spots. Children will need many repetitions placing each finger carefully and silently in their proper position. Are they in place? **The fourth finger is floating over the fingerboard**; it should hover over the A string. This is the basic left hand shape when all fingers are down on the string.

Now we can proceed. Many teachers are familiar with **The Monkey Song**, a fun way for children to practice playing the notes on the A string in ascending and descending order. This is almost always very difficult for the children at first, but after several weeks of diligent practice, the fingers will be strong enough to do this easily.

Two beats of preparation are included before every rhythm.

The first beat is for the left hand (**Ready**) and the second beat is for the preparation of the right hand (**Play**).

The **Ready-Play Rests** are an important part of Preparation Technique.

We want to train quick reflexes from the very beginning. The rests help us to control the movements and coordination of the child's left and right hands.

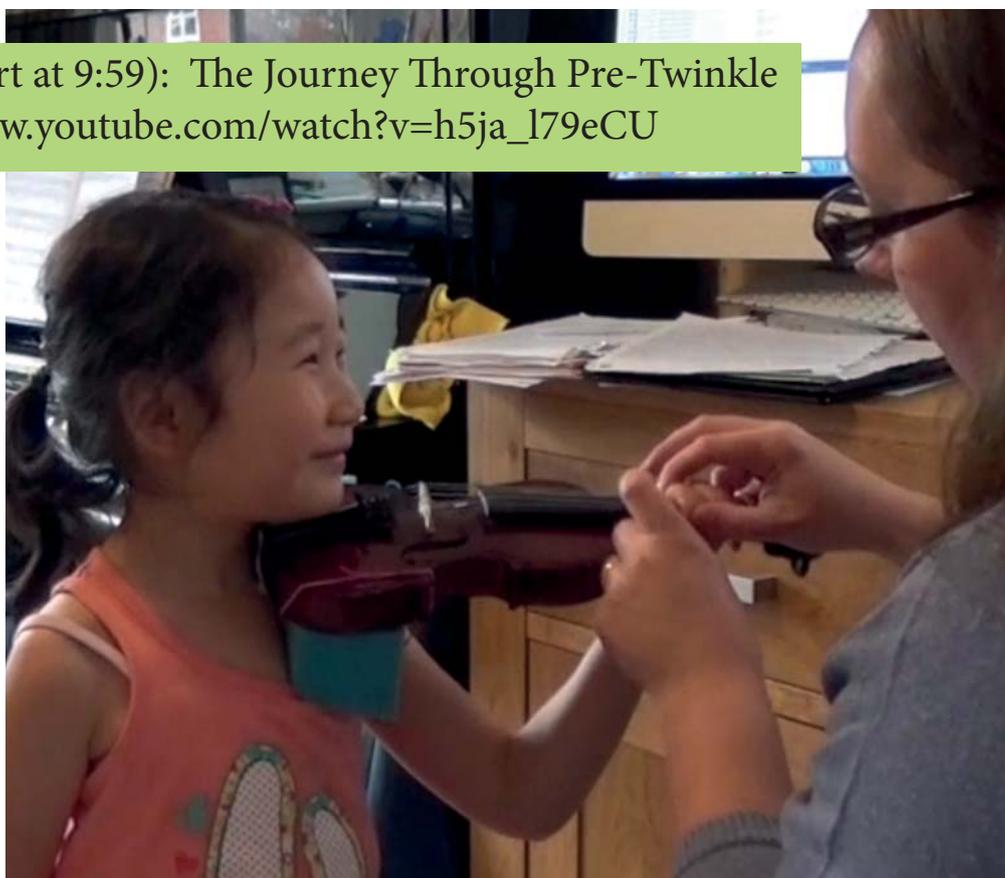


### 30. The Monkey Song



### 31. Rhythm on E and F#

Video (Start at 9:59): The Journey Through Pre-Twinkle  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5ja\\_l79eCU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5ja_l79eCU)



# Step No.8

## *Preparation Technique and Rhythm with Three Fingers*



### 32. Rhythm with Three Fingers

To prepare for our next song, let's take a closer look at a practice strategy we call **Preparation Technique**.

Our practice model consists of **the Twinkle rhythm and two quarter rests**.

During the rests, the teacher speaks the words **Ready-Play**. It is important that these words are spoken rhythmically so that the child learns to feel the basic beat. At the word **Ready**, the fingers of the left hand are placed on or lifted off the fingerboard, and the word **Play** is for string crossings. This means: **Ready** is for the left hand, and **Play** is for the right hand! The child should become accustomed to exercising left and right hand tasks quickly, controlling and coordinating the movements of both hands. To begin, let's practice this technique using the **Rhythm with Three Fingers**.

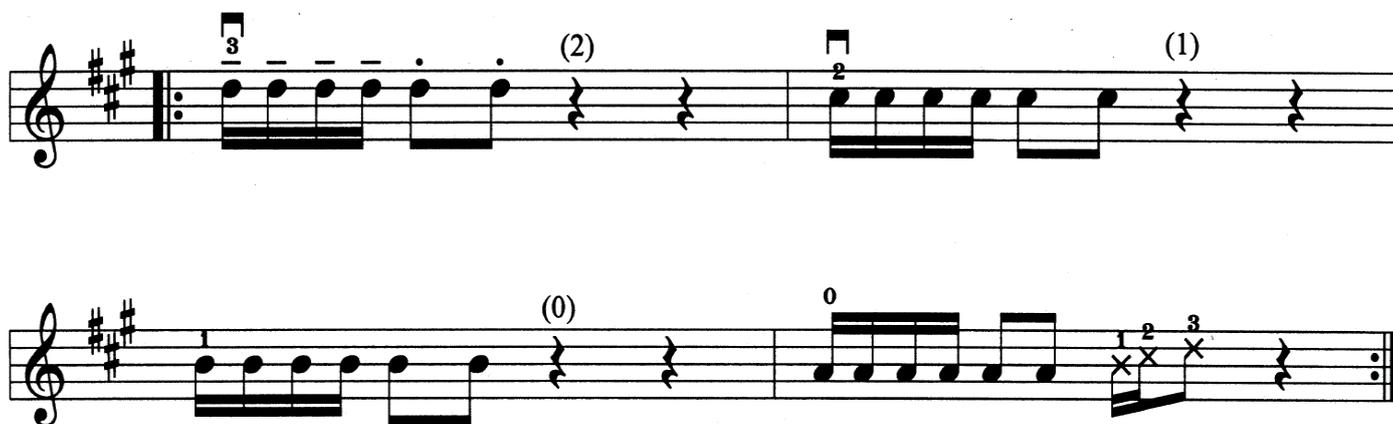
This song also has an introduction and a postlude. During the introduction, when the words "set one – two – three" are heard, the child very gently places the first three fingers on the A string. Now we can start!

The child plays the Twinkle rhythm on the note D.

Then the teacher speaks the words **Ready-Play** and at the word **Ready** the third **finger immediately hops into the air** and the child plays the rhythm on the note C#.

This exercise continues until every note on the A string has been played in descending order.

Every time the word **Ready** is spoken, the playing finger jumps into the air. At first, we can be content if the child watches out for the rests.



**Repeat 1 time!**

**However, the movements will become increasingly more and more precise after each repetition over time.**



Video (Start at 13:23): The Journey Through Pre-Twinkle  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5ja\\_l79eCU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5ja_l79eCU)

# Step No. 9

## *Expanding the Tonal Range*



**Now we would like to expand the tonal range to six notes: A, B, C#, D, E, and F#.**

Here are two exercises for this purpose:

The first one is easy for the children. It's called **Rhythm on E and F#**. The First Twinkle Rhythm is played on the open E string. After the E has been played, we say the words **Ready-Play**. At the word **Ready**, the **first finger is placed** on the E string on the note F#. After F# is played, the **first finger is lifted** from the string and our little piece continues.

Next, we will play **Rhythm on E and D**. This tone combination is the most difficult of our Pre-Twinkle songs.

Of course there is always a rest between the two notes, during which we speak the words Ready-Play. In the first measure, at the word **Ready**, the **first three fingers of the left hand** are placed one after the other without pressure as quickly as possible. **This is our students first velocity exercise!** In the second measure, **all fingers are lifted quickly and simultaneously**. At the word **Play**, the **bow is moved from the E to the A string** and in the second measure **from the A to the E string**. We want to develop quick reflexes from the very beginning.



**The following points should be considered:**

- **Left Before Right or Finger Before Bow**
- **Good left hand posture and correct finger positioning**
- **Point of contact**
- **Clear rhythm**
- **Good bow division**
- **A full, clear sound**



### 31. Rhythm on E and F#



### 33. Rhythm on E and D

**Repeat 2 times!**

# Step No. 10

## *We Play All of the Twinkle Variations & the Theme*



### **Let's Prepare the Bell-Tones for the Theme!**

The theme should be played with a beautiful sound. **We call this the Bell-Tone.**  
The notes should end gently and ring like a bell.

We want to **listen for the resonance.** The bow remains on the string the whole time.

For now, **we will stay between the two bow tapes.**

Later on the child can use more bow. It is important, however, to use the same amount of bow for the quarter notes and the half notes.

This means that we are playing with **two different bow speeds.** The quarter notes use a fast bow, and the half notes use a slow bow.



7. The Bell Song plucked



8. The Theme on the Open E String

## Let's Incorporate the Preparation Technique!

This means that we will place two quarter rests between the notes during which the teacher or the parent speak the words **Ready-Play**. At the word **Ready**, the fingers of the **left hand** are placed on or lifted from the string. **The string crossing** occurs at the word **Play**.

When the student has mastered the preliminary exercises, the rests can be shortened.

- a) **Ready-Play** with two eighth rests
- b) **Ready-Play** with two sixteenth rests
- c) Without rests, just a mental preparation

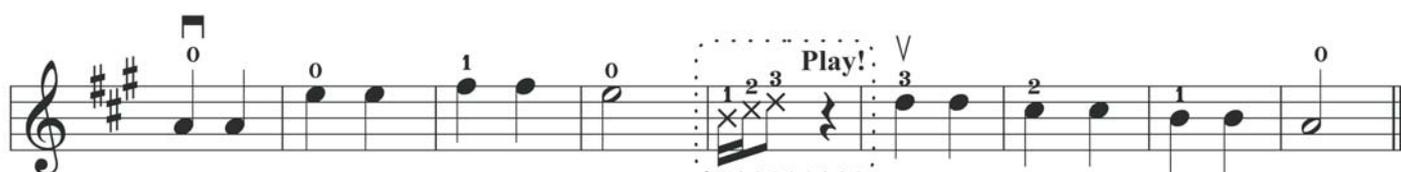
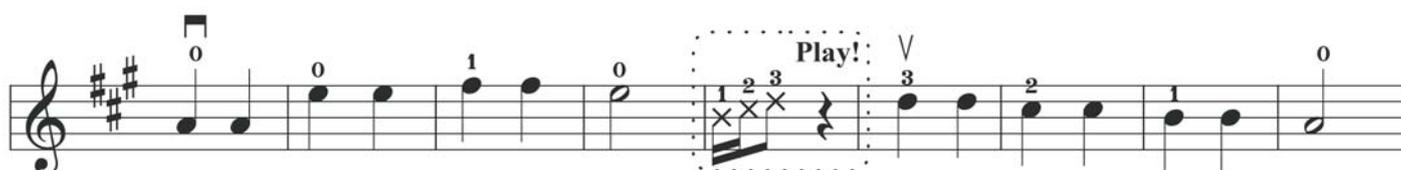
Soon the child will be able to play the theme without rests.

**However, with one exception.**

When the **difficult change** occurs **from the open E string to D (A 3)**, a pause will be necessary until the child's little fingers can find the correct spots quickly enough.



### 34. The Theme with Rests before the Third Finger



In the same way we learned the Theme, we will continue learning all of the variations.

- 35. **First Variation** with Rests
- 36. **First Variation** with Rests Before the Third Finger
- 37. **Second Variation** with Rests Before the Third Finger
- 38. **Third Variation** with Rests Before the Third Finger
- 39. **Fourth Variation** with Rests Before the Third Finger
- 40. **Fifth Variation** with Rests Before the Third Finger
- 41. **All Twinkle Variations and the Theme** without Rests - in slow practice tempo
- 42. **All Twinkle Variations and the Theme** - in practice tempo
- 43. **All Twinkle Variations and the Theme** - in performance tempo



# Rhythm on E

*Canción de la cuerda de Mi*

*Das E-Saiten-Liedchen*

Kerstin Wartberg  
Piano Arr.: David Andruss

Musical score for "Rhythm on E". The score is in E major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. It consists of two systems. The first system has a Violin part and a Piano part. The Violin part starts with a whole rest, followed by a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The Piano part features a complex texture with sixteenth-note runs in the right hand and chords in the left hand. The second system continues the same musical ideas, ending with a double bar line.

# Rhythm on A

*Canción de la cuerda de La*

*Das A-Saiten-Liedchen*

Musical score for "Rhythm on A". The score is in A major (three sharps) and 4/4 time. It consists of two systems. The first system has a Violin part and a Piano part. The Violin part starts with a whole rest, followed by a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The Piano part features a complex texture with sixteenth-note runs in the right hand and chords in the left hand. The second system continues the same musical ideas, ending with a double bar line.

# Rhythm on E and A

*Canción con cambio de cuerdas*

*Das Saitenwechsel-Liedchen*

Kerstin Wartberg  
Piano Arr.: David Andruss

Violin

Piano

This musical score is for the piece 'Rhythm on E and A'. It is written in the key of E major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. The score consists of two systems. The first system includes a Violin part and a Piano part. The Violin part begins with a whole rest, followed by a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The Piano part features a complex texture with sixteenth-note runs in the right hand and chords in the left hand. The second system continues the Violin and Piano parts, with the Violin part ending with a whole rest and the Piano part concluding with a final chord.

# Rhythm with Three Fingers

*Canción con tres dedos*

*Das Drei-Finger-Liedchen*

Violin

Piano

This musical score is for the piece 'Rhythm with Three Fingers'. It is written in the key of E major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. The score consists of two systems. The first system includes a Violin part and a Piano part. The Violin part starts with a whole rest, followed by a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The Piano part features a complex texture with sixteenth-note runs in the right hand and chords in the left hand. The second system continues the Violin and Piano parts, with the Violin part ending with a whole rest and the Piano part concluding with a final chord.