

Classical Repertoire

Suite for Violoncello Solo no. 1 – Menuet I, II and Gigue

J. S. Bach (b. 1685)

This suite by Bach is an exercise in phrasing and smooth string crossings on the double bass. In the menuet, the player is often required to smoothly cross from the E to the G strings in one bow while still maintaining accurate shifts in the left hand and achieving fluid, voice-like phrasing. Learning the proper amount of weight to be placed on the bow is of paramount importance in order to play these pieces well. The menuets are excellent for helping the player learn to change moods quickly, from the upbeat and dance-like menuet I to the somber and dark menuet II. The gigue helps the player with his quick and light bowing technique to assist in developing a delicate touch that still allows the bass to speak clearly.

Concerto for Double Bass and Piano in C Major

Jean Baptist VanHal (b. 1739)

The Concerto for Double Bass and Piano by J.B. VanHal is a standard piece in the classical double bass repertoire. This piece has a rather wide tessitura for a double bass piece of this time period and showcases the player's command over the full range of his instrument with multiple, quick passages in the upper registers.

Concerto for Double Bass in F Major

Antonio Capuzzi (b. 1755)

A solid first concerto study for a double bass student, it gives the player a solid grounding in phrasing and playing technique in the most commonly used registers of the double bass. It offers the player a deep dive into sonata-allegro form for the double bass and the cadenzas remain within the playability of the student.

Reverie for String Bass and Piano

Giovanni Bottesini (b. 1821)

A challenging and lyrical piece at once mournful and sweet with a hint of nostalgia, this piece by the great virtuosic bassist Giovanni Bottesini, is a true study in bow control and dynamics. At every turn, the player is asked to consider the amount of bow remaining in order to properly “sing” each phrase, while flawlessly playing the difficult triplet rhythms interspersed throughout, which contribute to the piece's flowing, almost magical quality.

Sonata No. 5 in E minor for String Bass and Piano

Antonio Vivaldi (b. 1678)

An excellent study in a Baroque sonata for a beginning student, this piece is a proper examination of the practice of Baroque phrasing and allows the player a fantastic introduction to conceptualizing bowings.

Jazz Repertoire

Blue Monk

Thelonious Monk (b. 1917)

This famous blues by Thelonious Monk is a tried and true jazz standard and is required knowledge for any aspiring jazz musician. Employing a typical 12-bar blues chord progression, it allows the player to dig deep into the blues scale and specifically for bassists, allows them to develop solid walking bass lines that will form the foundation of their jazz studies moving forward.

Dexterity

Charlie Parker (b. 1920)

Dexterity is a standard rhythm changes tune by the great, Charlie Parker generally following the pattern of two two-bar turnarounds at the outset, followed by turning the I into a V (V of IV) while the bridge follows a typical iii, vi, ii, V pattern. Rhythm changes are extremely important to know for any jazz musician but especially so for the bass player as since is often the case with Charlie Parker, his tunes are usually played at a very fast tempo, it can be difficult to create meaningful walking lines without knowing the tune inside and out.

Nuages

Django Reinhardt (b. 1910)

Nuages is a medium tempo ballad composed by Django Reinhardt which can be played at the faster or slower limits of this tempo range. As with most ballads, but especially this one, the bass player is consistently asked to determine the best rhythmic placement of notes in his line to most accurately accompany and accent the soloist. “Laying back” and leaving space are true art forms on display in the rhythm section of this piece.

Scrapple from the Apple

Charlie Parker (b. 1920)

This bebop tune is a true showcase of virtuosity in that it can be played at a very fast tempo. The changes are not entirely unusual but do require the player to remain on his/her toes. It is especially interesting to give the bassist the “head” or melody, which, when bowed brings to the forefront the player’s ability to use a jazz bowing technique, which, because of the swing rhythmic elements in the piece is markedly different from any technique learned in the classical style.

Balinese Gamelan Repertoire

Merak Ngelo

Anonymous

This *petegak* or “sitting piece” for the gendér wayang repertoire is a standard opening or welcoming piece meant to be played while the audience is gathering for a performance. It employs many forms of kotekan, or interlocking melodies, such as kotekan telu and kotekan empat and gives the player a good

foundation on developing the independence and dependence of both hands while playing gamelan gendér wayang.

Puspa Warna – Kayumas Style

Anonymous

This piece is also a *petagak* for the gendér wayang repertoire but contains a long, free-metered introductory section known as a *gineman*. During the *gineman*, the players are required to coordinate their timing together based solely on visual cues and intuition, showcasing their musical prowess by maintaining the rhythmic and melodic integrity of the fast and virtuosic phrases running the full range of the instrument.

Taruna Jaya

Anonymous

This is a standard gong kebyar piece with dancers written in the early part of the 20th century. It is incredibly virtuosic, comprising an introductory “kebyar” section which employs very quick, explosive unmetered phrases to be played in unison across a group of 20 to 30 musicians. The piece expresses the constantly shifting moods of youth, from bashfulness to irritability to energy and flirtatiousness.

Suara Sandi

I Nyoman Windha (b. 1954)

Suara Sandi was written by the renowned Balinese composer I Nyoman Windha for the seven-tone gamelan semarandana. It employs a variety of modes and transitions unique to a full Balinese gamelan ensemble and requires the players to fluidly play their kotekan parts while sometimes skipping keys, which can be much more difficult to maintain a high tempo than just playing a neighboring key, such as on the gamelan gong kebyar set.