

Title:

Do More Than Fiddle Around

Word Count:

351

Summary:

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Keywords:

Article Body:

A violin can be an intimidating musical instrument - it's beautiful to look at and listen to but a violin requires an extraordinary amount of education and discipline to be played properly. If you're thinking of taking violin lessons but feel anxious about it, familiarize yourself with the instrument. Here's an introduction to the art of playing the violin.

As you probably know, a violinist rests his or her chin and left shoulder on the conveniently named "shoulder rest" of the violin and sounds the instrument by plucking the strings and/or drawing a bow across them. One reason a violin is so much more difficult to play than a guitar or other stringed instrument, is there are no frets. A violinist must finger a string ever so precisely.

A violin player uses his or her left hand to pluck the strings; beginners might want to put pieces of tape on the instrument to show where notes are located, so they can place their fingers in the correct spots. Moreover, for purposes of learning proper hand placement, a person's index finger is labeled "1," and his or her pinky finger is as expected, "4" - in most instructional booklets, the notes to be played are accompanied by numbers for suggested fingering. There are then various positions of your left hand that you will learn; you will most likely start at first position.

But what do you use your right hand for? And what about the bow? Basically, your

left hand creates the pitches, while your right hand or bow is responsible for the tone, rhythm, dynamics, and articulation of the music.

Once you understand how to read violin music, you can then learn all sorts of ways to pluck the strings, as well as multiple bowing techniques. Soon enough you'll be ready to experiment with the different styles of music, like classical, jazz, and folk (or fiddling).

Learning to play the violin is a rewarding hobby. Lots of people can play the piano, and even more can play the guitar. But how many people can say they are a violinist?