

Fiddling for Violinists

Introducing the Queen of the Orchestra to her festive Folk Cousin!

A Thursday evening series with John Blasquez

Looking for extra fun and perhaps a more casual connection with violin? Want to join in at campfire jams, music festivals and Irish sessions? Want to fiddle at square dances? Interested in meeting and playing with violinists headed in those directions?

You're almost there already!

Your command of the violin puts the joy of fiddling well within your reach. If previous attempts at fiddling proved unsatisfying here's your chance to learn essential details and secrets, and refine a reliable approach for effective violin/fiddle cross-training.

Fiddling is about timing nuance, accent patterns, stylistic slur patterns, drones, ornamentation ... and a creative dash here and there. Apply these basics and you'll sound compellingly authentic from the start.

Now rest assured, you won't have to adjust your existing technique. And other than perhaps retuning occasionally you needn't alter your violin in any way ... nor hold the fiddle at your waist!

A typical evening with our fiddles

We'll likely work on a new tune each session, exploring techniques pertaining to its genre, while practicing with a rewarding memorization formula.

Notation / Learning by Ear

Many fiddlers don't teach with notation, because they don't read. I create professional quality notation of the tunes I learn by ear. But please read responsibly! Reading can interfere with memorization, and playing by heart is key to hearing details and playing your best. It can be utterly refreshing. • Learning by ear is the natural language of fiddlers, so we'll demystify that and make that fun.

Improvisation and Creativity

Improvisation is easier than it might seem. A few simple improvisational devices will open many doors; despite what may have heard, you don't necessarily need to know the tune's entire chord sequence, nor arpeggiate each chord. Improv aside, we'll also explore varying, developing and arranging melodies, so you can make your own mark yet still fit in with the group.

We'll explore lots of fiddling styles

In each 6-week series we'll learn tunes, ornamentation, variations while covering rehearsing, jamming and performing in various genres:

- American old-time and southern
- Bluegrass
- Celtic (Irish/Scottish)
- Cajun
- Country
- Jazz, Blues, Swing, Latin!

Fiddling topics / Learning and sharing tunes

- How to effectively use notation to play by heart
- Backward building—memorization made easy
- Mastering and retaining repertoire and technique
- Learning by ear—in person, and from recordings
- Learning in jams—chasing tunes, slow jams
- Cross-tunings: ADGE, GDGD, GDAG, DDAD
- Reading scordatura notation (for cross-tunings)

Thursdays from 8:00 to 9:15 pm

To learn about fiddling topics in upcoming sessions keep your eye on Lamorinda's newsletter and website.

- Started fiddling at any series. • Continue on with us!

Location: The Big Room at Lamorinda Music

2017 dates: Series 1: Sept. 14, 21, 28 & Oct. 5, 12, 19

Series 2: Oct. 26, Nov 2, 9, 16, 30, Dec 7*

* skip Thanksgiving week! (Nov 23.)

Registration: \$180 for each 6 week series. **\$168 pre-reg.**

Pre-register at Lamorinda Music or call **925-385-0963**.

Refunds issued if a series is cancelled due to low enrollment (although that has never happened.)

Ages: 10 through adult. **Class size:** limited to 20

Prerequisite: 2 to 3 years violin or Suzuki Book 3. Classical background not required. Must be able to read comfortably or easily learn by ear. Notation provided in treble clef and usually in tablature too.

Materials: A portable music stand is optional (the Big Room has plenty.) Please bring a binder and pencil.

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Temple Hill

Swing

Traditional Scottish

The first system of musical notation for 'Temple Hill' consists of a treble clef staff in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is written with eighth and sixteenth notes, including slurs and accents. Below the staff is a bass line with fingerings (0, 1, 2, 3) and bowing directions (up and down bows). The first measure has a finger 1 and a down bow, followed by a measure with finger 1 and an up bow, then a measure with finger 3 and a down bow, and finally a measure with finger 1 and an up bow.

The second system of musical notation continues the melody and bass line from the first system. It features similar rhythmic patterns and fingerings, with a final measure ending with a double bar line.

The third system of musical notation continues the melody and bass line. It includes more complex rhythmic patterns and fingerings, such as triplets and slurs, with a final measure ending with a double bar line.

The fourth system of musical notation continues the melody and bass line. It features a variety of rhythmic patterns and fingerings, including a measure with a 'V' marking above the staff, and a final measure ending with a double bar line.

The issue of a previously unneeded lift

Let's say you've studiously practiced a phrase but without holding a particular finger down. Later you decide the hold is worth the trouble and you commit to practicing it. Fixing it would seem to merely entail the addition of the missing finger hold. But many times there's more to it than that. Sometimes the addition of a previously omitted hold means that you must later release that finger, and the release is an additional new motion you'll need to practice in. Hopefully this encourages you to learn all finger holds at the outset.

Some people wonder, "Why was the release previously unneeded?" It's because the finger hold was ignored.

The line below shows a "newly held" first finger (circled) and where it must release for an open A string.

This musical notation illustrates the concept of a previously unneeded lift. It shows a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is written with eighth and sixteenth notes. Below the staff is a bass line with fingerings (0, 1, 2, 3) and bowing directions. A circled '1' in the bass line indicates a newly held first finger, and a dashed line above it shows where it must release for an open A string. The notation includes a measure with a circled '1' and a down bow, followed by a measure with a circled '3' and an up bow, and finally a measure with a circled '1' and a down bow.