

Viennese Bass Method

Lesson 4. String Crossings

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In this lesson we will cover various string crossing patterns available in the Viennese system. As most bassists are already aware, the Viennese tuning offers a unique triadic convenience that enables easy execution of arpeggios and other chords - sometime with few shifts and sometime not requiring any. This arpeggio technique has almost become a trademark feature of the Viennese solo bass music, and in order for it to be executed well, one should become well familiar with the string crossing options on the Viennese tuning.

Moreover, we will also explore here the common extended position patterns that usually appear in combination with the string crossings. This unique combination can be observed in many instances of period solo and orchestra music, some of which will also be featured here.

The orchestra excerpts in this lesson may already be familiar to the bassists, but it is advisable that all the excerpts be approached as technical exercises in slow tempo first. The idea is to accustom hands to the new fingerings and bowing patterns, before attempting to raise the tempo to the concert standard.

Similar to the scale shifting patterns explained in Lesson 2, the melodic figurations that involve string crossings may also be approached with the Vertical, Conventional and Position fingering patterns. The first three exercises present a typical period figuration with different fingering and string crossing patterns.

Exercise 23. String Crossings - Vertical Pattern, Extended Positions, Bass Clef

I _____

I _____ II I _____

I _____

I _____ II III II I II III II _____ II IV III IV

Exercise 26. String Crossings - Vertical Pattern, Extended Positions, Treble Clef

○ 4 1 ○

1 4 4 1 4 4 1 1 2 4 1 2 1 4 1 4 1 4 4 1

I

4 1 ○ 4 1 ○ 1 1 4 ○ 4 ○ 1 ○ 4 ○ 1 ○ 4 ○ 1 ○ 4 ○ 1 ○ 4 ○

I II I

E E E

1 ○ 4 ○ 1 ○ 4 ○ 4 ○ 1 ○ 4 ○ 1 ○ 4 ○ 1 ○ 4 ○ 1 ○

I

E

2 ○ 1 ○ 4 ○ 1 ○ 4 2 1 2 1 1 1 1 2 1 4 1 ○

I II III II I II III II II IV III IV

Exercise 27. String Crossings - Conventional Pattern, Extended Positions, Treble Clef

2 4 1 2 1 1 4 1 1 1 2 1 2 4 1 2 1 1 2 1 1 1 4 1

II I II I II I II I II I II I II I II I

2 4 1 2 1 4 1 4 1 ○ 4 ○ 1 ○ 4 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○

II I II I II I II I II I II I II I II I II I

E E

4 ○ 1 ○ 4 ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 1 ○ 4 ○ 1 ○ 4 2 1 2 1 1 1 1 2 1 4 1 ○

II I II I II I II I II I II I II I II III II I II III II III IV III IV

Exercise 30. Mozart, Don Giovanni, Overture

In this exercise you are invited to write your own fingerings and explore various other shifting and position options. Try for example to perform the opening measure around the seventh position with first note starting on the 3rd string. See if you can find the more comfortable fingerings than the one suggested previously?

