

Viennese Bass Method

Lesson 8. Thumb Position: Double Stops

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The thumb position double and triple stops are often configured in a formulaic pattern, so once the basic fingerings are learned these patterns can be applied to almost any composition that features them. In that respect they are actually easier to decipher and execute than the double stops on the modern bass. Here we will introduce this material gradually and also demonstrate its real application on period examples.

It is also important to note that the double stops are used on all four strings and it may be of help if the fingerboard is set to allow easy response on the lower two strings in the thumb position. The famous Mozart's aria "Per Questa Bella Mano" is a prime example of such a double stop use and we will cover its opening measures here too. In regard to the notation practice, you will notice that all strings and fingerings are indicated in "bottom to top" hierarchy, sometimes necessitating many markings that may appear overwhelming. However the performing reality is far simpler than what the volume of markings would suggest. Since most of the material presented here is intended solely for the thumb position, there is hardly any shifting and that convenience should simplify the matter greatly.

Exercise 52. D major Double Stops, Thumb Position

Exercise 53. D major Double Stops and Arpeggios, Thumb Position

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Exercise 58. Sperger, Concerto No. 18, 2nd Movement, excerpt

This exercise presents a complex interchange between the double stops and string figurations that is very characteristic of Sperger's writing. Although the presented fingerings favor the position pattern, the figurations in the "fourth" bar can also be executed on the top A string. You are welcome to try both options and along explore any alternative fingerings that you can discover yourself.

Exercise 59. Double Stops in Thirds

This exercise is designed to demonstrate the variety of shifting and fingering patterns that can be applied to Sperger Cadenzas within the Dittersdorf 2nd Concerto. Although it would appear that the consecutive thirds should ascend in scale-like manner on the top two strings, it is more likely that the position patterns with fewer shifts were used.

