

## Teaching Vibrato to Children

Vibrato is a fundamental technique in violin playing that enhances a beautiful tone quality and is a key element in creating musical style. Teaching vibrato to children requires preparation, repetition of vibrato exercises over time, assistance from the parents, and integration into the repertoire. When a student begins to incorporate vibrato into their performance, the quality of sound is forever transformed!

- Conditions for vibrato readiness are established.
- Introduce the vibrato rhythms (*cheese, pizza, pepperoni*) with the egg shaker.
- Get students comfortable performing the rhythms with the metronome ( $\text{♩} = 60$ ).
- Introduce exercises for developing flexibility in the distal joint.
- Incorporate other movement exercises, both with and without the instrument.
- Using guided awareness, prepare the cooperation between the finger and wrist. Teach the parent how to guide this at home.
- As preparation for Dr. Suzuki's "**two-tone vibrato exercise**," the students first learn to perform one oscillation per bow, and then two.
- Set up the entire "**two-tone vibrato exercise**" using the vibrato rhythms and the metronome. The journey, over many months, is from  $\text{♩} = 60$  to  $\text{♩} = 200$ .
- Vibrato exercises can also be practiced away from the metronome, in a more musical setting. Introduce Kerstin Wartberg's exercises *Ghost Tones*, and *The Little Ghost*.
- Begin incorporating vibrato attempts into repertoire, beginning with longer notes in review pieces.

Book 3 is an excellent time to study vibrato in depth. The pieces in Book 3 are transformed with vibrato. New layers of expression become possible, artistry develops, and a student's sound becomes their own. A well-developed vibrato ready for use in the concertos of Book 4 is an important goal.