Cello Method for the Existing Instrumentalist

Nicholas Nirva
Introduction / Purpose

This cello method for the existing instrumentalists is designed to supplement a class or one on one environment in which an educated player of another instrument wants to gain some level of proficiency on the cello. If one assumes a certain base of knowledge of music literacy and proper phrasing, the only aspects left to learning a new instrument are correct technique and note location. While most method books focus on technique, I have left it to the instructor to cover correct bow position and things of the like. The purpose of this method is primarily to help the student become familiar with the fingerboard and location of pitches on the cello.

I have designed this method in a way that facilitates quick learning of pitches on the cello. There are eight initial etudes, two for each of the first four positions, and two final etudes which incorporate position shifts. For each position, the first etude shows all of the adjacent notes considered to be that position and a piece containing all of the pitches at least once. The second etude is based on the same idea, except with the first finger stretched back a half step. The etudes themselves are varied in style (which can be expanded on by the instructor), however, the primary focus is to learn the notes of that position. Tempos are suggested, but accuracy is the main goal.

Along with the goal of accuracy, careful attention should be paid to intonation. Only with perfect intonation can the student feel the proper distance between fingers and notes in that position. Also, in the back of this text, each etude has been transposed to the other positions (example, the first position etudes transposed to second, third, and fourth). It is recommended that once the initial etudes are learned, the student picks an etude and plays it in all four positions. With proper intonation, this will demonstrate the size difference in positions (first is wider than fourth, etc.) for the student and help them gain a more kinesthetic feel for the instrument.

While this method is not a map to virtuosity, the enterprising student wishing to learn more about the cello will find it very useful. Enjoy!

Nicholas Nirva
December 16, 2005
Etude No. 1
First Position
Nicholas Nirva

Allegretto (C drone)
Etude No. 2
First Position

Moderato

Nicholas Nirva
Etude No. 3
Second Position
Nicholas Nirva

Allegretto
Etude No. 5
Third Position

Nicholas Nirva

Cello

Misterioso
Etude No. 6
Third Position
Nicholas Nirva

Andante
Etude No. 7
Fourth Position

Cello

Larghetto
Etude No. 8
Fourth Position
Nicholas Nirva
The Final Etudes

The two final etudes in this book are intended to test your new knowledge of the cello. There are two included based on tempo. The first is slower and the second a bit quicker. The fingerings included above the notation are not necessarily the easiest way the play them, however, they will test your knowledge of the positions and note placement.
Final Etude No.1

Nicholas Nirva

Andante
The Etudes Transposed
Etude No. 1
Second Position
Nicholas Nirva

Allegretto (D drone)
Etude No. 1
Third Position

Allegretto (E♭ drone)
Etude No. 1

Fourth Position

Nicholas Nirva

Allegretto
Etude No. 2
Second Position

Cello

Moderato

Nicholas Nirva
Etude No. 2
Third Position

Nicholas Nirva

Moderato
Etude No. 2
Fourth Position

Nicholas Nirva

Cello

Moderato
Etude No. 3
First Position

Nicholas Nirva

Allegretto
Etude No. 3

Third Position

Nicholas Nirva

Cello

Allegretto
Etude No. 3
Fourth Position

Nicholas Nirva

Cello

Allegretto
Etude No. 4
First Position
Nicholas Nirva

Cello

Dance Like
Etude No. 5
First Position

Cello

Misterioso

Nicholas Nirva
Etude No. 5
Second Position
Nicholas Nirva

Cello

Misterioso
Etude No. 6
First Position
Nicholas Nirva

Cello

Andante

4
Etude No. 6
Second Position
Nicholas Nirva

Andante

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Cello
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Etude No. 6
Fourth Position
Nicholas Nirva

Cello

Andante
Etude No. 7
First Position

Cello

Larghetto
Etude No. 7
Second Position
Nicholas Nirva

Cello

Larghetto
Etude No. 7
Third Position

Cello

Larghetto
Etude No. 8
First Position
Nicholas Nirva

Cello

Andante
Etude No. 8
Second Position
Nicholas Nirva

Cello

Andante
Etude No. 8

Third Position

Nicholas Nirva

Cello

Andante