

## Continuous Vibrato

### Eliminate Stopping/Starting

#### Learn

- To play with an uninterrupted vibrato motion.
- To avoid stopping and starting your vibrato motion while changing fingers.

#### Feel

- Imagine your forearm is a dog and your finger is its tail: the dog wags the tail. Vibrato starts at your elbow; your forearm moves your finger.
- Don't squeeze your thumb—it tightens all of your fingers and constricts the vibrato motion. A soft thumb should lightly touch the back of the neck and feel soft against it. Apply this to all vibrato widths and speeds.
- Do not force your vibrato by contracting your bicep muscle. The muscle on the inside of the elbow joint should feel loose and free, not constricted.
- When you choose to use a wider vibrato, feel your finger sink deeper into the fingerboard. You need this "deep anchor" feeling so that the wider motion will not shake the finger loose from the instrument or the pitch center. Watch "Uniting the Hands."
- When using a narrower vibrato, your finger can have a lighter connection to the fingerboard.

#### Think

- Visualize the forearm making the motion. Do not allow yourself to "think" about the individual fingers as they change. Exchange fingers while keeping your mental focus on a continuous forearm oscillation.
- Visualize and feel your entire forearm creating your vibrato. The amplitude of the motion changes, not the basic motion itself.

#### Listen

- "Attach your ear" directly to the vibrato pulsation. Do you like what you hear? Does the pulsation wobble or sound tight? If the music is dramatic, does the vibrato help to increase that sense of drama? If the music is relaxed, does your vibrato have a relaxed sound? Experiment: let your ear guide and modify the motion (slower, faster, wider, narrower) until you like the sound. Your ear and heart guide the motion and tell you if fits the musical moment.
- Ideally, your vibrato should sound the same as you move from finger to finger. Concentrate on keeping the motion in the forearm unchanged--the result will be a similar sound for each finger. "Same sound" means maintaining the same width and speed of the vibrato motion regardless of the finger you are on.
- If you hear brief gaps between notes or if you feel tightness in your arm or hand, it's likely that you're stopping and starting your vibrato motion as you move from one finger to the next. Try watching your vibrato in the mirror or videotaping yourself; you will be able to see if you interrupt the constant flow of vibrato while changing fingers.