



10 ORCHESTRAL EXCERPTS FOR VIOLIN

**DRAWN FROM AUDITIONS FOR
THE WORLD'S TOP SYMPHONIES**

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Introduction

Getting accepted to a renowned orchestra or school is a significant achievement for any serious violinist. With enough study and practice – along with dedication and strong will – you can do it!

An important way to prepare is to get comfortable with orchestral excerpts from master works that feature the violin heavily. For auditions, orchestras ask violinists to prepare several important passages that showcase high levels of technical ability and artistic sensitivity.

You can create a roadmap for study and audition prep by practicing these and listening to master recordings of the works they represent.

That said, here are ten of the most commonly-requested orchestral excerpts for violin.

These selections are drawn from the violin audition requirements of the **New York Philharmonic**, **Boston Symphony Orchestra**, **Los Angeles Philharmonic**, and **Vienna Philharmonic** in recent years. They'll expose you to a variety of repertoire and technical demands.

We encourage you to listen to some key recordings, think about the technique required, and try your hand at excerpts aligning with your violin journey... and you'll be in a better place to approach an audition, whether that's in your near future or further down the road.

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Beethoven: Symphony No. 3 in E-Flat Major — *Eroica*

Written to celebrate the exploits of Napoleon (that is, until Beethoven was disappointed by the French leader crowning himself emperor) the *Eroica* symphony boldly explores the drama of conquest, defeat, and the way “heroes” triumphantly rise above the challenges of life.

In conveying an epic tale of internal struggle, the 1st movement excerpts for first violin feature sudden shifts between loud and soft. Many moments call for tightly-controlled execution of staccato, interspersed with slurred notes.

The challenge with the 3rd movement (Scherzo) is to maintain the whisper-like pianissimo with spiccato technique, until the sudden loud bursts — and to seamlessly transition back and forth.

Mvt. I (mm. 55–73)

The musical score for the first movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 3, measures 55-73, is presented in three staves. The first staff (measures 55-63) begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and a 2/4 time signature. It features a series of slurred eighth notes, starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a crescendo (*cresc.*) marking. The second staff (measures 64-68) continues the melodic line with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a key signature change to one flat (B-flat). The third staff (measures 69-73) concludes the excerpt with a series of slurred eighth notes, maintaining the forte (*f*) dynamic.



Beethoven: Symphony No. 3 in E-Flat Major — *Eroica*

Mvt. I (mm. 571–585)

571

pp

576

581

Mvt. III (mm. 1–166)

SCHERZO

Allegro vivace (♩. = 116)

pp

sempre pp e staccato

9

sempre stacc.

20

31



Beethoven: Symphony No. 3 in E-Flat Major — *Eroica*

43 *Viola* *sempre pp*

58 *Viola*

70 *Basse* *pp*

84 *A* *cresc.* *ff*

97 *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf*

111 *tr B* *p* *Ob.* *Fl.* *sf* *sf* *sf* *p*

123 *f* *sf* *sf* *sf* *tr* *Ob.* *p* *Ob.* *p* *Fl.* *p*

136 *p* *p* *Fl.*

149 *p* *cresc.*

158 *ff* *1.* *f* *f* *f* *p* *2.* *f* *f* *B.*



Rimsky-Korsakov: *Scheherazade*, Mvt. III

Scheherazade, a symphonic masterpiece that tells a seductive story, is one that violinists are called on to master when it comes to rendering the melody. As the eponymous character from *One Thousand and One Nights* tells tales in hopes of entertaining her husband, the sultan, enough to spare her life — violinists must handle the music with equal depth of emotion and authenticity. This solo, popularly requested in concertmaster auditions, features challenging melodic arcs and rhythmic shifts.

Concertmaster Solo

Reet. Lento

Solo

espress.

4 *Cadenza*

p *pp*

Tempo I

5 **L**

8

11 *cantabile, con forza*

14 *dim.* *ff* *allarg. assai*

Tutti



Mozart: Overture to *The Magic Flute* (*Die Zauberflöte*)

Mozart's Overture to *The Magic Flute* is the opener to a musical comedy tinged with drama.

Written shortly before the composer's death, it would become one of Mozart's "greatest hits" among the general public, as it was written to support a piece of musical theater presented to the common folk of the time.

In this opening movement, the violin parts begin after a slow, somber introduction, while bringing in some liveliness and light-hearted character as the story gets underway. The rapid bounces between piano and forte are among the challenges for the auditioning violinist.

Violin 1

16 **Allegro** 3

p *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *sfp*

25 *sfp* *sfp* *sfp*

33 *tr* *tr*

39 *f*

46 *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf*

53 *p*



Mozart: Overture to *The Magic Flute* (*Die Zauberflöte*)

Violin 2

16 **Allegro**

21

28

34

40

46

52

p *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

sfz *sfz* *f* *p* *f* *p*

tr *tr*

sfz *sfz* *simile* *f*

sf *sf*



Mozart: Symphony No. 39 in E Flat Major, Mvt. IV

One of Mozart's last three symphonies, the 39th shows the dramatic range the composer was capable of in his later years.

The 4th movement is a joyful Allegro, featuring a challenging violin part with a continuous, blistering melody. Violinists must keep up the momentum, while delivering on quick shifts in dynamics through many melodic leaps and knowing which moments to breathe extra life into.

**Finale
Allegro**

p

7

f

14

20

26

31



Mozart: Symphony No. 39 in E Flat Major, Mvt. IV

36

41 **A**

p

48

56

f

64 *tr*

72



Mendelssohn: Scherzo – *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

A master work of music composed for Shakespeare's masterpiece of literature, Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* includes the storied Scherzo, which has a light, lively spirit.

The tightly-constructed melody requires the violinist to keep a steady rhythm, bring out the fullness of each note, and honor the contours of the music.

Scherzo
Allegro vivace

The musical score is written for violin in 3/8 time, key of B-flat major. It consists of six staves of music. The first staff (measures 16-25) begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats, and a 3/8 time signature. It features a melody starting on a whole rest, followed by eighth and sixteenth notes, with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano). A section marker 'A' is placed above the final measure of this staff. The second staff (measures 26-35) continues the melody with a trill (tr) in measure 26 and a crescendo (cresc.) marking at the end. The third staff (measures 36-44) starts with a measure rest, followed by a melody with a dynamic marking of *p*. The fourth staff (measures 45-52) begins with a section marker 'B' and a crescendo (cresc.) marking. The fifth staff (measures 53-62) features a melody with dynamic markings of *sf* (sforzando) and *p*. The sixth staff (measures 63-72) continues the melody with *sf* and *p* markings.



Mendelssohn: Scherzo – *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

70 **C**

pp

79 **D**

p *cresc.*

86

dim. - - - - *al pp*



Shostakovich: Symphony No. 5, Mvt. I

Andrés Cárdenes, former Concertmaster of the Pittsburgh Symphony, refers to Shostakovich as an "archivist" who set out to depict the tragic sufferings of the Soviet populace through his music. The 5th symphony brings this to bear with moving emotional contrasts and complex harmony.

The first movement challenges instrumentalists to keep the melodic "story" that's being told intact. It opens with a compelling narrative carried by the string section. This passage for first violin calls for the utmost sensitivity, with full expression of all notes and close observation of legato.



Prokofiev: Classical Symphony, Mvt. I

The Classical Symphony, written as an intellectual exercise for the composer in homage to the styles of Haydn and Mozart, is tinged with the sensitivities of the Classical era.

The first movement has a light, lilting quality, making several technical demands of violinists often within the same measure — for example, dynamics ranging from pianissimo to fortissimo, slurred and staccato notes, and intervening rests — all while maintaining the *Allegro con brio* briskness.

Allegro con brio ♩ = 100

Measures 1-7: *ff*, *p*, *ff*, *p leggiero*, *pp*, *mp*

Measures 8-14: *pp*, *mp*, *pp*, *ff*, *p leggiero*, *pp*

Measures 15-23: *mp*, *pp*, *mp*, *f*, *p*, *pp*

Measures 24-35: *p*, *f*, *p*, *pizz.*, *arco*, *p*, *pp*

Measures 36-44: *f*, *mf*, *dim.*, *mp*, *p*, *mp*, *mf*, *f*

Measures 45-52: *pp con eleganza sul punto del arco*, *pp*



Prokofiev: Classical Symphony, Mvt. I

53 *pp* sul punto del arco

62 *pp* *unis.* *f subito* *ff* pizz.

77 *arco* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff*

84 *ff*



Bach: St. Matthew's Passion – *Gebt mir meinen Jesum wieder*

Bach's St. Matthew's Passion is a gem of Baroque sacred choral-orchestral repertoire. An oratorio about the passion of Christ, with a libretto by Bach's frequent collaborator and contemporary, the poet Picander, the work recounts the sadness and fervor surrounding the plot to kill Jesus of Nazareth and the events leading to his crucifixion and burial as recorded in the Bible. The violin part for this Aria, the title of which is roughly translated "*Give me my Jesus back!*", features plenty of melodic jumps along with blistering 32nd-note runs.

The image displays a musical score for a Violin Solo in G major, 3/4 time. The score is written on a single staff and consists of 32 measures. It begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The first measure is marked with a forte dynamic (*f*). The score includes several trills, indicated by the 'tr' symbol. Measures 6, 9, 13, 18, 22, and 27 are marked with measure numbers. Measure 13 is labeled 'A (Gebt mir)' and measure 27 is labeled 'B'. The score features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and a prominent 32nd-note run in measure 22. The dynamics vary throughout, with *f* (forte) and *p* (piano) markings. The piece concludes with a final cadence in measure 32.



Bach: St. Matthew's Passion – *Gebt mir meinen Jesum wieder*

32 (Seht)

35

39 C Solo (Gebt mir) *f* *p* *tr*

45

50 D Solo *f* *tr*

56 *tr*

59

63 *p* *f*

Mahler: Symphony No. 5, Mvt. I

Written by Mahler after a near-death encounter with illness, the 5th Symphony is a sometimes plaintive, sometimes stormy exposition on mortality and the fullness of life. The first movement, which Mahler named Trauermarsch (funeral march), takes listeners through dramatic atonal passages as well as a dark, moody harmonic structure. Violinists are asked to sustain all the tension and feeling through floods of high-register notes, huge leaps, and unexpected fluctuations in rhythm.



7

ff sf *mf* *dim.*

ff *sf*

8

ff *sf sf sf* *< ff* *sf sf*

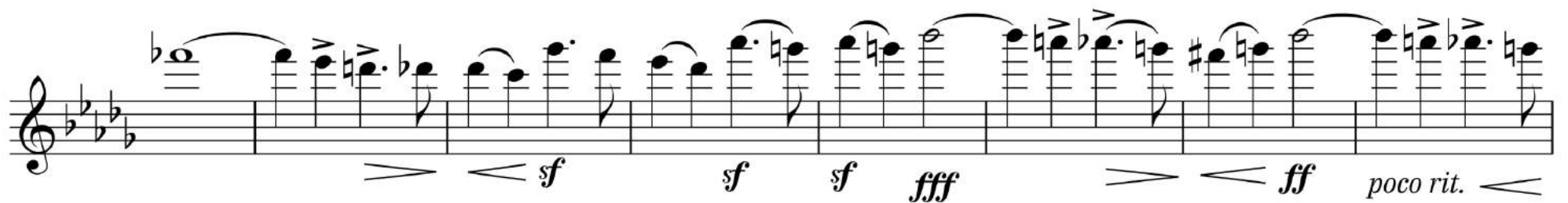


Mahler: Symphony No. 5, Mvt. I

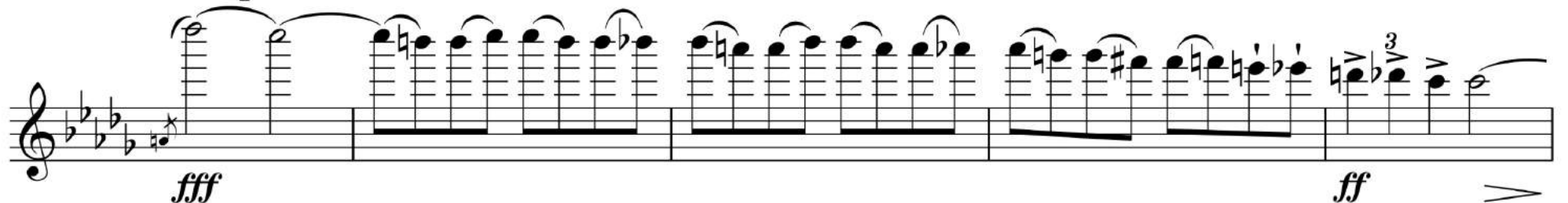
Pesante



9 a tempo



a tempo





Strauss: *Don Juan*

The triumphant *Don Juan* represents the heights of Strauss' technical and emotional prowess.

Violinists have a full range of challenges in playing through the first page of the famous tone poem — it gets fast and slow, loud and soft, with both slurred and staccato notes throughout. There are also interesting rhythmic shifts that a violinist must deftly navigate as they honor the dynamics and accents in each measure.

Allegro, molto con brio

The image displays the first page of the musical score for Richard Strauss's tone poem *Don Juan*, measures 1 through 35. The score is written for a violin in treble clef, with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a common time signature (C). The tempo and mood are indicated as "Allegro, molto con brio". The notation includes various musical elements such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings. The first measure (measure 1) starts with a forte (ff) dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes. The second measure (measure 2) continues with a triplet of eighth notes. The third measure (measure 3) features a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The fourth measure (measure 4) has a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The fifth measure (measure 5) includes a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The sixth measure (measure 6) has a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The seventh measure (measure 7) features a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The eighth measure (measure 8) has a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The ninth measure (measure 9) includes a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The tenth measure (measure 10) has a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The eleventh measure (measure 11) features a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The twelfth measure (measure 12) has a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The thirteenth measure (measure 13) includes a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The fourteenth measure (measure 14) has a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The fifteenth measure (measure 15) features a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The sixteenth measure (measure 16) has a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The seventeenth measure (measure 17) includes a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The eighteenth measure (measure 18) has a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The nineteenth measure (measure 19) features a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The twentieth measure (measure 20) has a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The twenty-first measure (measure 21) includes a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The twenty-second measure (measure 22) has a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The twenty-third measure (measure 23) features a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The twenty-fourth measure (measure 24) has a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The twenty-fifth measure (measure 25) includes a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The twenty-sixth measure (measure 26) has a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The twenty-seventh measure (measure 27) features a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The twenty-eighth measure (measure 28) has a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The twenty-ninth measure (measure 29) includes a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The thirtieth measure (measure 30) has a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The thirty-first measure (measure 31) features a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The thirty-second measure (measure 32) has a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The thirty-third measure (measure 33) includes a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The thirty-fourth measure (measure 34) has a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The thirty-fifth measure (measure 35) features a triplet of eighth notes and a forte (ff) dynamic. The score also includes a section marked "8va" (octave) starting at measure 7 and ending at measure 15, and a section marked "A" (Allegro) starting at measure 16 and ending at measure 35. The dynamics range from forte (ff) to mezzo-forte (mf) and fortissimo (fff). The tempo is marked "Allegro, molto con brio".



Strauss: *Don Juan*

40 **B** *ff* *pp* *ff* 3

47 3 3 *tranquillo* *p flebile* *C molto vivo* *f* 3

52 3 3 3 3 *p* *p* *cresc.* -

57 3 3 3 3 3 3 *ff*

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in treble clef, key of A major (three sharps). It consists of four staves of music. The first staff (measures 40-46) begins with a section marked 'B' and includes dynamic markings *ff*, *pp*, and *ff*, along with a triplet of eighth notes. The second staff (measures 47-51) starts with a triplet, followed by a section marked 'tranquillo' with a *p flebile* marking, and then a section marked 'C molto vivo' starting with a *f* dynamic. The third staff (measures 52-56) features a series of triplets and a crescendo marking. The fourth staff (measures 57-60) continues with triplets and ends with a *ff* dynamic. A decorative graphic consisting of two horizontal grey ovals with four dots between them is positioned below the fourth staff.

We hope you find these excerpts helpful and inspiring as you work towards your auditions!

For even more material to build your violin skills, stay tuned to updates on the launch of tonebase Violin, coming Summer 2022!

To learn more, visit tonebase.co/violin

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