

CELLO: ETUDES

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CONTEMPORARY CELLO ETUDES

Studies in Style & Technique

28 Etudes by

Ashley Bathgate

Mike Block

Stephan Braun

Rufus Cappadocia

Rushad Eggleston

Erik Friedlander

Eugene Friesen

Natalie Haas

Giovanni Sollima

Mark Summer

Jacob Szekely

Matt Turner

Jeffrey Zeigler

MIKE BLOCK

Foreword by Yo-Yo Ma

CONTEMPORARY CELLO ETUDES

Studies in Style & Technique

MIKE BLOCK

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FORWARD, BY YO-YO MA

Dear Fellow Cellists,

Every once in a while, a book of new etudes appears on the scene that becomes the go-to source for advancement in certain techniques. In studying those etudes, cellists develop a familiarity with patterns that appear in the general repertoire, and as a generation of cellists perfects those techniques, the level of playing is lifted for all.

Many of us were raised on David Popper's *High School of Cello Playing*, the study of which has certainly helped propel cello playing to its present-day prominence. Well, here's some good news: Mike Block has joined with some of our inventive cello colleagues to create a book of etudes that may well become the new go-to manual for those interested in mastering modern folk and pop idioms, including the "chop," a technique invented not so long ago on the fiddle that has now gravitated to the cello world. The broad reach of skills included in these etudes can equip a cellist to participate in making music in any part of the world. I urge all cellists interested in contemporary styles to take a look, and to experience and enjoy the world of twenty-first century cello literacy.

Warm wishes to all,
Yo-Yo

PREFACE

Many wonderful musicians have been pioneering the cello's use in a variety of non-classical styles in recent years, and I'm grateful that many of them were able to contribute to this collection. Inspired to use the cello in new ways, today's cello pioneers have been developing their rhythmic playing, improvisation, composition, and use of electronic effects, and some have even become singer-songwriters with the cello. These new musical environments have forced us to reexamine our relationship to the instrument and develop new techniques that we weren't taught in school. The one thing that hasn't changed, though, is the pursuit of comfort and mastery. I hope this book can help you achieve both. I also hope this book will spark your imagination, and expand your vision of what is possible with music, and with the cello. I can't wait to hear the results of your creative journey!

To access the accompanying reference recordings for each etude, go to www.halleonard.com/mylibrary, and enter the code found on the first page of this book. Some of the recorded performances may differ slightly from the precise notations in the book, providing models for the range of stylistically appropriate variations and personal creativity you can amplify these pieces with, after learning them as notated.

We will use the following notation conventions for non-pitched sounds throughout this book, and they will be explained further where they are used.




	<p>Hard chop. A percussive scrape/hit near the frog of bow. The fingers of the left hand lightly touch the string at the location indicated on the staff, without pressing the string down all the way. This muting/dampening prevents possible pitched notes from sounding.</p>
	<p>Soft chop or a ghost note. A ghost note is bowed or chopped lightly, as a non-pitched rhythmic placeholder. The fingers of the left hand dampen the string at the location indicated on the staff.</p>
	<p>Left-hand pizzicato or tapping.</p>

FIG. I.1. Notation Key

ETUDE 1

“Nice Tuxedo” by Mike Block

3:2 Polyrhythm • Aeolian Mode • Improvisation

[BEGINNER]

“Nice Tuxedo” is the first and simplest of six polyrhythmic etudes that were all written from a shared template. Always practice these with a metronome to work on maintaining a strong pulse, unaffected by the subdivisions and accents being performed.

Each of these etudes focuses on a different polyrhythm, and features a different Greek mode, based on the major scale. These are the modes of D major (Ionian).

D Ionian (Major)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1

D Dorian

1 2 b3 4 5 6 b7 1

D Phrygian

1 b2 b3 4 5 b6 b7 1

D Lydian

1 2 3 #4 5 6 7 1

D Mixolydian

1 2 3 4 5 6 b7 1

D Aeolian (Natural Minor)

1 2 b3 4 5 b6 b7 1

D Locrian

1 b2 b3 4 b5 b6 b7 1

FIG. 1.1. Modes of D

The etude titles, when spoken out loud, serve as mnemonic devices to remember and internalize the *composite rhythm*—the sound of both rhythms happening simultaneously. The composite rhythm can be incredibly helpful to hear in your head, even when not playing it fully. Pay close attention to the notated accents, which constantly shift between the contrasting feels of the polyrhythm.

It is important to treat rhythmic accuracy as seriously as you would treat playing in tune, as they are, in fact, closely related. Every pitch we play is the result of a measurable number of vibrations per second, called Hertz (Hz). We traditionally tune to an A that vibrates at 440 Hz, which means the A string is literally moving back and forth 440 times each second! If you lower this speed by a ratio of 1:2 (divide it in half), the result is 220 Hz. This is the sound of an A one octave lower. If you increase 440 Hz by a ratio of 3:2, you get 660 Hz—the sound of the E a perfect fifth above.

If you slow the vibrations down enough, we leave the range of a human's ability to hear pitches, but we enter the realm of rhythm. The metronome marking for this etude is half note = 60 beats per minute, which equals 1 Hz. This "note" is actually a very, very, very low (and slightly flat) C, and is expressed in this etude by accents on every third note. The contrasting accent pattern on every other note is the rhythmic expression of a very, very, very low (and slightly flat) G. When the two rhythms are played simultaneously via the composite rhythm of "Nice Tuxedo," their relationship is mathematically equivalent to that of your open D and A strings played together while tuning. Fascinating, right?! 😊 You can increase your sensitivity to your "rhythmic intonation" by practicing with a metronome and intensely monitoring if you drift "sharp" (rushing) or "flat" (dragging). Becoming as mindful of your rhythmic intonation as you are of your pitch intonation will make the world a better place!



Nice Tuxedo

A 3-against-2 Polyrhythm Etude in D Aeolian

Mike Block

Smoothly $\text{♩} = 60$

1

5

9

13

17 "Nice Tux - e - do!"

21

26 Improve in D Aeolian using the indicated rhythms.

ETUDE 2

“Cradle Song” by Stephan Braun

Fingerstyle Pizzicato

[BEGINNER]

In this caprice, you will use your right hand as a fingerstyle guitar player would. Use your thumb for the bass on the low strings and your other fingers for the melody/chords on the upper strings. Make sure that your wrist is almost parallel to the strings, and don't move your right hand around too much. The closer you can keep your right hand to the strings, using small movements, the faster and more reliably you can play with this technique. It can also help to rest your right forearm against the upper right bout of the cello for increased stability. To prevent the buildup of tension in your left hand while playing three- and four-note chords, release the pressure of the left hand from the fingerboard for a split second right before each new full chord is played.

Preparatory Exercises

Practice these right-hand fingering studies in isolation before you begin work on the whole piece.

Right-Hand Fingering

No. 1

No. 2

No. 3

No. 4

FIG. 2.1. Exercise for “Cradle Song”



Cradle Song

Caprice for Right-Hand Pizzicato

Stephan Braun

Lento $\text{♩} = 60$

1

pizz. *p*

Emi Dsus4 D Emi Dsus4 D

5

mp

G Cmi/G D7/G G/B CMa7(#11) G/B FMa7(#11) Emi Dsus4 D

9

mf

CMa7(#11) Bmi E7 Ami D7 G D7/A Bb7 G/B

$\begin{matrix} 2 & 1 & 4 & 2 & 3 & 1 & 4 & 2 \\ 2 & 1 & 4 & 2 & 3 & 1 & 4 & 2 \\ 0 & 0 & 2 & 1 & 3 & 1 & 3 & 2 \end{matrix}$

13

p

CMa7(#11) Bmi7 E(b9,b13) Ami7 F7 CMa7 Dsus4

$\begin{matrix} 3 & 1 & 0 & 4 & 3 & 2 & 1 & 0 & 4 & 2 \\ 2 & 1 & 4 & 2 & 2 & 3 & 1 & 4 \\ 2 & 1 & 4 & 2 & 3 & 1 & 4 & 2 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & 1 \end{matrix}$

17

mp

G Cmi/G D7/G G/B CMa7(#11) G/B FMa7(#11) Emi CMa7 D

21

p *rit.*

Emi Dsus4 D Emi Dsus4 D G

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FIG. 2.2. "Cradle Song"

ETUDE 3

“Slap” by Eugene Friesen

Pizzicato • Percussion

[BEGINNER]

“Slap” is an etude designed to activate a couple of left-hand techniques that bring rhythmic color and texture into accompanying on the cello—namely, a left-hand slap on the fingerboard (indicated with a e notehead) and the use of muted pizzicato notes for conveying the consistent flow of the pulse. “Slap” also incorporates “pull-offs” (left-hand pizzicato) and “hammer-ons” (striking the string hard enough with the finger to make the note heard without plucking).

Much of my approach to playing pizzicato on cello comes from listening to two African instruments: the kora and the mbira (kalimba, or thumb piano). These instruments have in common the intricate rhythmic interplay of left and right hands. Contemplating these techniques, and loving the music made on them, led me to start experimenting with adding more rhythmic energy in my left hand, a style that I call “Afro-pizz.”

I believe that rhythmic music can groove at any tempo, so, especially while you’re integrating new coordination between left and right hands, practice *slowly* with a drum track, focusing on each bar until you begin to breathe comfortably and your fingers flow smoothly with the pulse. For me, using a drum track to practice with is far more enjoyable than a metronome, and for “Slap,” I would choose a samba or bossa beat. Remember, it can—and should—groove at any tempo! The metronome marking on the music is just a guide; find your own comfort zone. And for that matter, you could choose a hip-hop or swing approach to “Slap.” Playing the piece as written/suggested is not the point; conveying your joy, groove, and energy is. Breathe, groove, enjoy!



3

Slap

Eugene Friesen

♩ = c. 140

Dsus
pizz.

3

mf

Csus

5

Dsus

Csus

f

9

BbMa7

Emi7b5

BbMa7

Emi7b5

13

BbMa7

Emi7b5

BbMa7

Emi7b5

17

Cmi

F7

BbMa7

EbMa7

p

21

Emi7b5

A7

Dsus

D7

25

Cmi7

F7

BbMa7

EbMa7

f

29

Emi7b5

A7

Dsus

D7

To Coda

ETUDE 4

“Kill the Bugs!” by Mike Block

Chopping • Improvisation

[BEGINNER]

The “chop” is a revolutionary percussive bowing technique that has become a fundamental tool for rhythmic string playing in recent years. The isolated chop sound, played on a backbeat (beats 2 and 4, in 4/4 meter), was first employed on a bowed instrument by fiddler Richard Greene to fill in for the missing mandolin chop when the mandolin player was soloing in a bluegrass band. Darol Anger pioneered the addition of chord harmonies and more complicated rhythmic patterns for use in the Turtle Island Quartet. Further pioneers include fiddler Casey Driessen and cellist Rushad Eggleston, who once joked that chopping sounds like smashing insects—an image that inspired the title for this introductory chop etude.

This etude explores multiple chop patterns over a simple blues chord progression. The \int symbol indicates where to chop. The chop is a forward scraping motion of the bow hair against the string, moving “out” away from the body (on the cello this is towards the bridge, however on a fiddle it is away from the bridge). The scrape should be short, quick, and clean. Don’t scrape for too long or cover too much distance. In bowing patterns, the chop will most likely fall where a down-bow would be played. However, if the chop is not a purely forward motion, but contains a bit of horizontal motion towards the right, you will likely get a crunching sound. A crunch is cool too, but it’s not a chop. This new feeling of a purely forward motion can be difficult to coordinate at first, particularly in combination with the horizontal motions still necessary for the pitched notes in the bowing patterns.

Make sure to chop as close to the frog as possible—likely, under the first finger of your bow hold—so that you can use your arm weight to make the sound and not over-engage your wrist. If you chop too far out in the bow (towards the balance point, or middle of the bow), you will likely get a bounce. A bounce is cool too, but it’s not a chop. In fast tempos, you will likely use mostly finger muscles for chopping, but in slow and medium tempos, it can be better to use more of your arm motion and weight.



Kill the Bugs!

A Chop Etude over the Blues

Mike Block

Smoothly $\text{♩} = 90-130$

mf Kill the bugs! Kill the bugs! Kill! Kill! Kill the bugs!

5

9

13 *f*

17 *C7*

21 *D7*

25 *mf*

29

ETUDE 5

“Don’t Ever Rush!” by Mike Block

2:3 Polyrhythm • Phrygian Mode • Improvisation

[BEGINNER]

POLYRHYTHM STUDIES

Work on maintaining a strong pulse, unaffected by the subdivisions and accents being performed. Be aware that the length of the eighth notes stays the same between bars 4 and 5 (and throughout), despite the changes in beaming. Keep your bowing motions fluid and your right hand/wrist relaxed to maintain a continuous sound with smooth bow changes, particularly as you change strings.



FIG. 5.1. D Phrygian



5

Don't Ever Rush!

A 2-against-3 Polyrhythm Etude in D Phrygian

Mike Block

Smoothly $\text{♩} = 90$

mp

5

9

13

17 "Don't Ev - er Rush!"
mf

21

26

30

35 Improvise in D Phrygian
p

The musical score is written in bass clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. It consists of nine staves of music. The first staff begins with a tempo marking of 'Smoothly' and a quarter note equal to 90 beats per minute. The music features a 2-against-3 polyrhythm. The first four staves (measures 1-12) are marked *mp* and consist of eighth-note patterns. The fifth staff (measures 13-16) is marked *mf* and includes the lyrics 'Don't Ev - er Rush!'. The sixth staff (measures 17-20) includes fingering numbers III and II. The seventh staff (measures 21-25) includes fingering numbers III and II. The eighth staff (measures 26-29) includes fingering numbers III and II. The ninth staff (measures 30-34) includes fingering numbers III and II. The final staff (measures 35-38) is marked *p* and is labeled 'Improvise in D Phrygian'.

ETUDE 6

"Krakow" by Stephan Braun

Chopping

[BEGINNER]

In this etude, imagine you are using your bow like a drummer uses a drum stick. To get a nice crisp chop sound, place your bow close to the frog. You will need to develop the power and flexibility of your right-hand fingers. Dampen the strings with your left hand while chopping. To hook up with the groove, it's important to play the strong chops (indicated with slashes) loudly, and everything else much softer. Make sure that you have enough rosin on your bow for a good chop sound. See the "Preface" for a chop notation key.

No. 1 chopping

No. 2

No. 3

No. 4

No. 5

FIG. 6.1. Exercises for "Krakow"



6

Krakow

Caprice for Chopping

Stephan Braun

Allegro $\text{♩} = 100-120$

1 *p*

5

9 *mp*

13

17

21 *mf*

24

27

30 *cresc.*

ETUDE 7

“The Investigator” by Natalie Haas

Celtic Style • Melody • Ornaments

[INTERMEDIATE]

This etude is designed to develop the melodic aspects of your Celtic playing and prepare you for the kinds of right- and left-hand particularities you might come across in Celtic music. These include *ornaments* (such as pull-offs, hammer-ons, rolls, slides, etc.), *bowed triplets* (a deceptive term, as they don't actually sound like evenly subdivided triplets, but are written as two sixteenth notes followed by an eighth note, or two thirty-second notes followed by a sixteenth note), typical rhythmic accent patterns for *jigs* (a dance tune in 6/8) and *reels* (a dance tune in 4/4), a bit of *chopping*, as well as some melodic bowing patterns.

The opening six bars can be played expressively and out of time. However, once the rhythm kicks in at bar 7, keeping a steady rhythm is the most important thing for the rest of the piece. Keep in mind this is dance music! The tempo can slow down a bit going into the reel at measure 68, so as to accommodate all the “bowed triplets” in the upcoming melody.

In general, try to keep your bow on the string (unless you see a rest), and use very little bow on the non-slurred notes. In the reel, treat the rests as *ghost notes* (i.e., keep moving the bow back and forth without making any sound).

IDEAS FOR FURTHER PRACTICE

1. Try reversing the bow direction for the entire piece so you are equally comfortable going both ways, although this is very hard to do with bowed triplets!
2. Make up your own slurs and ornaments!
3. Try making up your own accompaniment by playing along with the recording of the melody.



The Investigator

Natalie Haas

Jig $\text{♩} = 108$

Middle of bow

Rubato
espressivo

7

mf *rit.* *mp*

8

13

19

At balance point

mf

25

31

36

At frog

f

43

Middle of bow

mf

49

f

ETUDE 8

“The Reformer” by Natalie Haas

Celtic Style • Rhythm • Chords

[INTERMEDIATE]

“The Reformer” is intended to be an accompaniment to “The Investigator,” showing the other set of skills it takes to be a cellist in Celtic music! It includes various chord voicings, parallel harmonies, and rhythmic patterns that include chopping, shuffling, arpeggios, and more.

Similar to “The Investigator,” you should keep your bow on the string as much as possible, only picking it up when you see an actual rest in the music. For bars 72 through the end, it’s best to play in the middle of the bow, and to leave the bow on the string, because it is far easier to play in time when you are coming from the string instead of from the air (i.e., treat the rests as ghost notes as you did in “The Investigator”).

IDEAS FOR FURTHER PRACTICE

1. Isolate each rhythmic idea (e.g., bars 7–10, 11–19, 20–27, 28–31, 36–43, 44–47, 52–55, etc.), and practice looping it multiple times along with the metronome. Then carry that rhythmic pattern over (but not the specific pitches) and try practicing it against a recording of a traditional jig or reel, as appropriate. Better yet, go to a Celtic jam session and practice “backup” with all of these rhythmic patterns!
2. Create your own alternative melody to go on top of this etude, using the reference recording online as your backing track.
3. Similarly, once you’ve learned both parts, you could use the play-along of both etudes combined to compose a *third* voice to add to the ensemble!



The Reformer



The Investigator/The Reformer

The Reformer

Natalie Haas

Rubato

mf

rit.

7 *Jig* ♩ = 108
mp

13

19
mf

24

29

34

40

46

ETUDE 9

“Bilateral Coordination” by Erik Friedlander

Coordination • Warm-up Routine

[INTERMEDIATE]

This etude tackles coordination directly and simply, and provides a great quiet warm-up routine. The top staff shows the left-hand pizzicato pattern to be played. The upper number in parentheses indicates the finger that plucks the string, while the lower number indicates the finger that stops the string, creating the notated pitch. The bottom staff shows the arco passage on an open C string, which should be played very quietly in the upper half of the bow, to ensure the left-hand pizzicato is easily heard. When done properly, this exercise is like a meditation, so there should be no tension. The coordination of left and right hands should be clean and precise, and the left hand should dance like a ballerina on pointe shoes, without accumulating tension. If you find any part of the etude difficult, try just working on one hand by itself first. Then, as you relax into it, you can add the other hand back in.

ETUDE 10

“In the Witching Hour” by Rushad Eggleston

Rhythm • Chords • Chopping

[INTERMEDIATE]

This one is best played late at night. Are the Berklee practice rooms still open until 2 A.M.? Either way, “In the Witching Hour” jumps between two modes of playing: “off the string” (with a regularly alternating “down-up-down-up” bowing grid) and “on the string” (played legato with less strict bowing patterns). The first two sections use a pattern imitating the kick and snare of a traditional drum kit. The syncopated notes on the low strings act as the kick, and the backbeat on the higher strings takes the place of a snare. The chop here is used more as a textural accent than a snare, acting as an anti-note (like a left-hand mute).

This etude will also help you explore playing power fifths and full chords without building up tension in the left hand. Try to feel the weight of your left arm pulling through the fingers to press the strings down, and avoid clamping down with just your tiny, weak finger muscles. Slurs into a rest are meant to indicate resonance lasting beyond the note itself, so keep your left hand down for the sound to keep ringing.

In this etude, the left-hand mutes (\downarrow) can be a hybrid note/mute, or vice versa. You’ll feel it.

ETUDE 11

“Bibi’s Blues” by Mark Summer

Jazz Style and Vocabulary • Bowing

[INTERMEDIATE]

“Bibi’s Blues” is a twelve-bar blues that incorporates licks from the jazz style of bebop, providing the opportunity to develop familiarity and comfort with jazz vocabulary, and various jazz bowings, which are used to connect eighth notes over the beat (see figure 11.1a).

You will notice that the etude starts with the text marking “Swing Eighths.” For those unfamiliar with this rhythmic term, swing eighth notes are played unevenly (see figure 11.1b), almost as in a triplet pattern in 12/8 time, with a quarter note followed by an eighth note for each beat. In practice, swing eighths are not actually played precisely as triplets, or as even straight eighth notes. Swing falls somewhere in between these two mathematical notations, often with more emphasis on the short note. The “proper” degree of swing is infamously difficult to define, and has, in fact, changed over the various eras of jazz history. In performance, your degree of swing will also change depending on the speed at which you play, straightening out as you play faster.

Another hallmark of swing feel is that the backbeats are the strong beats. For classically-trained musicians, it can be difficult at first to hear the metronome clicks as showing beats 2 and 4 (instead of 1 and 3), but this is an important step to internalizing the backbeat feel integral to jazz. To get comfortable with this, verbally count out loud with the metronome, saying “2” and “4” in time with the clicks. Then start counting all the numbers “1, 2, 3, 4” out loud, keeping the metronome clicks on “2” and “4”. This will help orient your pulse in relation to the metronome’s backbeat before playing. It is highly recommended for you to always practice this etude with the metronome on the backbeat while developing your swing feel. Play with a light touch, in the upper half of the bow (UH). Begin by playing without vibrato, so you can get used to a more “pure” sound.

ETUDE 12

“I Need to Go Outside” by Mike Block

3:4 Polyrhythm • Mixolydian Mode • Improvisation

[INTERMEDIATE]

The eighth-note values stay the same between measures 2 and 3 (and throughout), despite the changes in beaming. Pay close attention to the notated accents, which regularly shift between the contrasting feels of the polyrhythm.

In the two improvisational sections, play the indicated rhythm using notes of your choice from the D Mixolydian mode.



FIG. 12.1. D Mixolydian



13

I Need to Go Outside

A 3-against-4 Polyrhythm Etude in D Mixolydian

Mike Block

Smoothly $\text{♩} = 93$ 

5



ETUDE 13

“The Chicken” by Mike Block

Singing while Playing Rhythmically • Chopping

[INTERMEDIATE]

Singing while playing cello is like learning how to ride a bicycle. You may hurt yourself, and those around you, but once you get the feel for it, you'll be able to do it forever! This song offers a few different rhythmic grooves and textures to coordinate playing on the cello while simultaneously singing. The \sloperightarrow indicates where to chop. The \times indicates a “resting” or “muting” use of the bow (a scrapeless chop). There are two versions of this etude, with the key adjusted for general low and high vocal ranges.

Pretty much all the details and ornaments notated in the vocal part can be modified to your taste and vocal comfort, and you can also feel free to adjust the key to find the perfect range for your voice. In fact, it's really good practice for your ear to sing songs in multiple keys. There is an opportunity for improvisation during the instrumental section starting in bar 18, where the goal is to present an interesting variation of the melody. Try to also imply the chord progression at the same time if you perform this without someone else backing you up. The general feel of the groove should be relaxed and flowing. Your phrasing should lead into the chops with smooth, on-the-string bowing for the pitched notes. Don't try to bring out every single sixteenth note “crystal clearly.” In fact, the groove will likely suffer, feeling stiff, if every sixteenth note sounds exactly the same!

If you are new to singing-while-playing, practice very slowly at first, maybe even note-by-note in some passages, to build the necessary coordination. Practicing the cello and vocal parts separately can also help get the music into your ear.

When performing this song publicly, do not use the sheet music. It should be memorized, so your mental focus can be on singing expressively. Remember that once you start singing, an audience will see you primarily as a singer. In the heat of performance, it's far better to make mistakes in the cello part than to sing unconvincingly.



LOW VOICE

The Chicken

A Rhythmic Playing-while-Singing Etude

Mike Block

♩ = 65-80

VERSE 1

Why? oh why? Did you

mf

4 go a - cross the road? Why? oh

7 why? Did you know you had to go?

10 PRE-CHORUS I guess we'll ne-ver know,

mp

12 why you had to go!

ETUDE 14

“I Won’t Ever Love You” by Mike Block

4:3 Polyrhythm • Locrian Mode • Improvisation

[INTERMEDIATE]

The sixteenth-note value stays constant between measures 2 and 3 (and throughout), despite the changes in beaming, so take care that all your subdivisions are even, unaffected by the alternating groupings. At measure 47, when asked to improvise around the accented melodic guide tones, it can be helpful to fill in all the sixteenth-note subdivisions and play repeated patterns on each beat, sequencing through the Locrian mode as indicated in the score. The rhythmic ratio of 4:3 is mathematically equivalent to the relationship of a perfect fourth interval, so keep monitoring your “rhythmic intonation” closely!



FIG. 14.1. Locrian Mode



15

I Won't Ever Love You

A 4-against-3 Polyrhythm Etude in D Locrian

Mike Block

Smoothly $\text{♩} = 70$ 

ETUDE 15

“My Toy City” by Stephan Braun

Chopping • Tapping • Coordination • Improvisation

[INTERMEDIATE]

“My Toy City” combines rhythmic patterns and chopping in the right hand with tapping in the left hand (indicated by +). Go slowly, to work on developing coordination before playing at a faster performance tempo. Tapping too forcefully with the left-hand fingers and squeezing the fingerboard after you make contact will build up tension in the hand. Avoid this by exploring the feeling of flinging your hand and wrist into the fingerboard, using your hand’s natural weight instead of muscular force.

ETUDE 16

“Polyphony Utopia” by Giovanni Sollima

Four-Part Harmony with Two Bows

[INTERMEDIATE]

This composition provides the cellist a rare opportunity to create four-part harmony by using two bows simultaneously. Follow these directions to prepare to play with “double bow.”

Loosen one bow all the way so that the screw actually comes out, allowing the frog to be separated from the stick (figure 16.1).



FIG. 16.1. Frog Removed

Insert this separated frog down through the space between the A string and D string, between the bridge and fingerboard (figure 16.2).



FIG. 16.2. Insert Separated Frog Between Strings

17
Calmo

Polyphony Utopia

Giovanni Sollima

mp and free dynamics

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FIG. 16.5. "Polyphony Utopia"

ETUDE 17

“Prelude to a Dream” by Mike Block

Fingerstyle Pizzicato

[ADVANCED]

I've always found that Bach's *Cello Suites* sound great when played pizzicato. In order to pull it off musically, though, one needs to develop some pizzicato techniques not traditionally developed on cello. For this pizzicato etude, I've taken the structure, harmonies, and sequencing that we all know and love from Bach's Prelude #1, and reimagined it with different notes/patterns to create a familiar platform to explore pizzicato on the cello. I took the liberty of writing in fingerings for the right hand under the staff (For example, “T” = thumb) for passages where there was a specific right-hand pizzicato pattern I wanted to share. For the most part, though, you are free to explore any right-hand pizzicato fingering you wish in order to find the approach that feels the most naturally expressive to you.

As when playing Bach's *Preludes*, the tempo, phrasing, slurring, and dynamics are at the player's discretion.

IDEAS FOR FURTHER PRACTICE

1. Disregarding your refined musical taste, explore how fast you can pluck this piece while maintaining accurate and clean pizzicato for every note.
2. Try using only the first and second fingers to pluck with the right hand, like you would in a walking bass line.
3. Play the etude with the bow, and observe if/how your musical instincts change for certain phrases. Try to transfer your bowed phrasing back to your pizzicato performance.
4. Try plucking your favorite movements from Bach's actual *Cello Suites*!

ETUDE 18

“Gaucher” by Rufus Cappadocia

Rhythm • Percussion • Afro-Latin Style

[ADVANCED]

The paradox of notating polyrhythms is that the moment it is measured mathematically, it becomes something else. The act of notating and trying to fix the rhythm in time and space alters the nature of the expression. This etude is really about setting up relationships, and less about a specific mathematical count, or time signature. Polyrhythm is actually more about the flux between polarities than a set piece. Notation is in 6/8 out of convention, but in reality, what is being described is a ratio of 4:3.

All bow strokes are bounces in the upper half of the bow. Begin by bouncing the bow at the tip with a purely vertical motion. Slowly introduce a more horizontal “down” and “up” bow motion, while staying at the tip of the bow. Slowly work down the bow towards the middle. The goal is to let the bow stroke play itself. It can take several months to progress through each step, so don’t try to force it to move before it wants to. At all times, maintain awareness of your breathing; keep it relaxed and even. Breathing independence is the key to being able to play polyrhythms.

The form for this etude is flexible, and you can move through the sections in your own way. For example, although the notated form is ABAB CDE CD, the reference recording is performed as ABCD DE.



18

Gaucher

Afro-Latin Clave Bow Bounce Etude

Rufus Cappadocia

♩ = 70-80

A

III Thumb Position

B

Open A string on all down and up bows

C

D

Third finger remains on the strings

E

IV Thumb Position

D.S. al Fine

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FIG. 18.1. "Gaucher"

ETUDE 19

“I’ll Never Clean My Clothes Again!” by Mike Block

4:5 Polyrhythm • Dorian Mode • Improvisation

[ADVANCED]

The sixteenth-note values stay constant between measures 1 and 2 (and throughout), despite the changes in beaming. Always practice with a metronome, listening carefully for your “rhythmic intonation.” Maintain a strong pulse, unaffected by the subdivisions and accents being performed. At measure 45, when asked to improvise around the accented melodic guide tones, it can be helpful to fill in all the sixteenth-note subdivisions and play repeated patterns on each beat, sequencing through the Dorian scale as indicated in the score.



FIG. 19.1. D Dorian



20

I'll Never Clean My Clothes Again!

A 4-against-5 Polyrhythm Etude in D Dorian

Mike Block

Smoothly $\downarrow = 100$ 

ETUDE 20

“Bebop Bowing” by Matt Turner

Jazz Style and Vocabulary • Bowing

[ADVANCED]

Playing bebop on the cello is challenging without understanding how to comfortably bow in a stylistic manner. Bebop is often played very fast, so using only separate bows or two-note slurs can be difficult to maneuver, and creates a bouncy, hiccup-like effect, preventing us from “swinging hard.” Playing in the upper half of the bow helps smooth out your bow changes and keeps the groove flowing forward. Another thing to keep in mind is that the faster you play bebop, the lesser the degree of swing in the eighth notes. At faster tempos, the eighth notes “flatten out” a bit, somewhere between a triplet swing and a “straight” classical sound.

Learn to swing your quarter notes first. Measures 41–44 offer the opportunity to practice swinging quarter notes on consecutive down-bows. The bow stays in place (middle of the bow, never leaving the string) even as you move to the next down-bow. When done properly, the cellist is able to successfully create ghost notes on the up-bows. We may not hear those notes, but they are implied. If you can swing your quarter notes, you can swing your eighth notes. Equally challenging is fingering bebop passages. Sometimes, we have to break the rules and use non-cellic shifts. I tell my students to think of their left hand as a crawling spider, keeping the pitches all “under the legs” with very little shifting.



21

Bebop Bowing

Matt Turner

Swing $\downarrow = 90-105$

(metronome click on 2 and 4)

Cmi9 F7(alt) B♭Ma7 G7(alt)

5 Cmi9 F7(alt) B♭Ma7 G7(alt)

9 Cmi9 F7(alt) B♭Ma7 G7(alt)

13 Cmi9 F7(alt) B♭Ma7

17 Ami7 D7(alt) GMa7 E7(alt)

21 Ami7 D7(alt) Dmi9 G7(alt)

25 Cmi9 F7(alt) B♭Ma7 G7(alt)

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ETUDE 21

“Going Home” by Mike Block

Singing While Playing Harmonization

[ADVANCED]

Cello music often features “single-line” writing, so it can be hard to train our “cello brain” to think about and phrase multiple lines simultaneously. It gets comfortable pretty quickly, though, and singing in harmony with the cello is one of the most satisfying sounds you can create with the instrument! There are two versions of this etude, with the key adjusted for general low and high vocal ranges. If the vocal part you choose still goes too high/low for your voice, feel free to alter the octave you are singing in to make it more comfortable, while maintaining the notated cello harmonies.

Intonation problems may occur since both voice and cello are vulnerable to being out of tune. The best solution is usually to leave the cello note in place, and adjust the vocal intonation to the cello (which is usually more stable). You will often get into more trouble if you try adjusting the intonation of both vocals and the cello at the same time! The balance of volume between cello and voice can also be a problem, with the cello often being too loud. Try to be sensitive to this, because if you play the cello at full “concerto volume,” the listener will either not understand your lyrics, or you may be tempted to force and strain your voice in order to be heard. In this piece, please don’t feel obligated to sing the rhythms exactly as printed. Just follow the natural rhythms of your speech and breath in order for your singing to feel natural and expressive.

IDEAS FOR FURTHER PRACTICE

1. Improvise or compose your own substitute cadenzas for the melismas starting in bars 9, 19, 41, and 61.
2. Reverse the parts! Sing the notes in the bottom staff while playing the notes on the top staff.
3. Change the key to find the perfect range for your own voice.



LOW VOICE

22

Going Home

A "Singing-While-Playing" Harmonization Etude

Mike Block

Molto Rubato

1
I'm go - ing home. I'm go - ing home to my dar - ling. I'm go - ing

mp *mf* *mf*

7
home to my dar - ling. home!

f

13
O - ver the hills to my dar - ling. O - ver the hills I am climb - ing.

mf *f*

(Sing this as fast as needed to complete phrase in one breath.)

19
Now!

ff

25 More in Tempo, but not strictly

Why now? Why is it time? Be - cause, my heart does pine! That's

mp *mf*

ETUDE 22

“I’ll Escape the Spinning Planet!” by Mike Block

5:4 Polyrhythm • Lydian Mode • Improvisation

[ADVANCED]

In measure 9, it can really help to speak the words to yourself, to help internalize the feel of this composite rhythm. At measure 45, when asked to improvise around the accented melodic guide tones, it can be helpful to fill in all the subdivisions of the quintuplet and play repeated patterns on each beat, sequencing through the Lydian scale as indicated in the score. The rhythmic ratio here of 5:4 is mathematically equivalent to the relationship of a major third interval.



FIG. 22.1. D Lydian



21

I'll Escape the Spinning Planet!

A 5-against-4 Polyrhythm Etude in D Lydian

Mike Block

Smoothly $\text{♩} = 80$

1 *mp*

3

5

7

9 "I'll es-cape the spin-ning pla-net!" *mf*

13

17 *p* **Improvise in D Lydian.**

21 *pp*

25 **Driving** *mf*

ETUDE 23

“The Blue Danube in Budapest” by Mike Block

Pizzicato • Improvisation

[ADVANCED]

This performance piece explores a variety of right-hand pizzicato techniques such as tremolo, finger picking, plucking melody and chords simultaneously, using fingernails on upward strokes, snap pizzicato, slapping the string against the fingerboard, and strumming. Regardless of the technique, try to phrase these melodies with as much shape and expression as if you were using the bow. This will require continual adjustment of the right-hand finger placement on the string (towards the bridge, or towards the fingerboard), as well as different strengths of pizzicato from different fingers, to ensure the melody is always heard above the other notes.

I find the tremolo is easiest with my second finger, angled parallel to the strings by pointing the right palm out towards the bridge (instead of in, towards the fingerboard). Strumming can be done with an outstretched “hitchhiker’s thumb,” where the fleshy side hits the string on the down (left) strokes, and the fingernail catches on the up (right) strokes. Alternately, you can use the tip of your index finger as a substitute for a guitar pick.

IDEAS FOR FURTHER PRACTICE

1. Try incorporating additional percussive elements into the grooves by hitting the wood of the instrument.
2. Compose a new section to insert between measures 105 and 106, before the return to the original melody.
3. Write your own pizzicato piece!



21

The Blue Danube in Budapest

A Pizzicato Etude

Mike Block

Andante Rubato

pizz. *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

8 *f* *mp*

Andante $\text{♩} = 110$

14 *mf* *mp*

20 *mf*

26 *warmly*

32

38 *f*

44 *ff*

ETUDE 24

“A Cat’s Front Door” by Rushad Eggleston

Rhythm • Chords • Chopping

[ADVANCED]

It is advisable when first learning this piece to pretend every pair of sixteenth notes is just one eighth note. The ricochet bowing (“bounce”) here is decorative and not essential to the underlying rhythmic character of the piece. All the sixteenth notes are simply eighth notes split in half, each meant to be played in a single (bounced) bow stroke. **WARNING:** This is a different phenomenon than the vertical bounce you can get by hammering with the very tip of the bow. The bounce of which I speak is a horizontal skip that probably will happen somewhere in the middle of the bow.

The main chord used in this piece is a three-string power chord. I play it with my third finger on the low root, my pinky snuggled in on the fifth degree in the middle, and my first finger on the octave up top. It may take a second to get comfortable with this position. Some people with larger hands may be able to barre the root and 5th with their third finger—whatever works.

Every note in “A Cat’s Front Door” is meant to be played “off the string,” from the air, etc. Even the quarter notes. Some notes are marked “let ring,” meaning: although the bow has left the building, keep your left hand pressed down so as to squeeze all possible ring-juice out of the note-fruit.

IDEAS FOR FURTHER PRACTICE

1. Find other spots where an up-bow bounce could work in the groove.
2. You can take any individual bars or techniques and use them as seeds to plant other little jams of your own!

ETUDE 25

“The Rake” by Jacob Szekely

Pizzicato • Funk Style • Rhythm

[ADVANCED]

Raking is one of the most common and versatile plucking techniques in the electric and acoustic bass world, and can add instant hipness to your funk, rock, jazz, and blues bass lines. Rather than releasing the pizzing finger with an upward motion away from the instrument (as we do in classical pizz technique), raking involves plucking through the string to the right so the finger immediately engages the next lower string. This allows the finger that has just plucked a note on the A, D, or G strings to “slur” down to the lower strings, and continue plucking.

PERFORMANCE AND NOTATIONAL NOTES

1. While playing with the index or middle finger alone is possible, it's recommended that you use an *alternating middle and index finger* approach in the right hand. This is the most common approach bass players take.
2. *Ghost notes* (marked with an X notehead) should be performed by muting the string with the left hand. The “pitch” that is marked by these X noteheads is merely a suggested fingering.
3. *Staccato* indicates a light muting of the left hand where the string should only be pushed down halfway. The pitch will only faintly sound, and then decay instantly. The subtle differences between staccato and ghosted notes are a huge part of this style.
4. *Hammer-ons* and *pull-offs* are both marked as slurs, so the fingerings will clarify which is intended.
5. *BB* refers to a soft percussive drop of the hand on the strings. It should be a quiet touch to help the performer mark time. A strong metallic “slap” sound of the string hitting the fingerboard is not required.
6. The arrows indicate a *quarter-tone bend* (performed as a slide). Slowly bend the note up from E-flat, but release it before it reaches E-natural.



26

The Rake

A Funky Pizzicato Bass Etude

Jacob Szekeley

Intro

♩ = 80

1
pizz.
mp

4
BB

7
BB
III /

9
p f

A
f

13

15

17

19
IV

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ETUDE 26**“1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8!!”
by Ashley Bathgate****Alternating Polyrhythms****[ADVANCED]**

This etude is designed to be practiced with a metronome, slowly at first, then sped up as it is developed. It's just as important to be able to play these rhythms slowly as it is to play them quickly. I encourage you to loop specific bars or phrases until you are comfortable with them in isolation. Fives and sevens are usually less comfortable to play, so hang out with those loops for longer. Try to feel the even distribution of each note within the bar. Don't cheat the rhythms! It can help to think of the mnemonic titles from the other polyrhythmic etudes in this book to hear the composite rhythms clearly in your head while playing.

IDEAS FOR FURTHER PRACTICE

1. Improvise and/or compose your own pitches to the notated rhythms.
2. Practice this etude pizzicato for increased rhythmic clarity.



1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8!!

Ashley Bathgate

♩ = 50-70

0
mp

7

13

17

21

25
mf

28

30

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ETUDE 27

“Caribounteney County” by Rushad Eggleston

Rhythm • Chords • Chopping

[ADVANCED]

This fast, galloping number is all about the bounce. Maybe start by looping the first bar until you get that bounce happening. The first bar should sound like “dun dun dun diggy dun dun dun,” and the last left-hand-muted note is just noisy space. This piece is special because it involves back-to-back bounces, making four sixteenth notes happen in rapid succession, for the price of two. When you get this happening, it’s like flying on a magic carpet and has to be one of the best feelings any musical instrument can offer. But you will need to work up to that. After getting the up-bow bounce together, you can work on the down-bow bounce: “dun dun diggy dun” style. Some experimenting with angles, speeds, and wrist positions will likely be necessary, as it is a pretty different strategic and muscular experience to cause the bow to skip on a down-bow versus an up-bow. It’s also a little different depending on what string you’re on, how many strings you’re playing, and where on the string the note lives.

Unfortunately, because of science and gravity, it can be very difficult to practice the bounce slowly. Here are some loopable steps to ascend the bounce facility pyramid. With a metronome, practice these patterns on open strings first, then with scales, and then in improvisations.

1. dun dun dun diggy <repeat> (down up down up-up)
2. dun dun diggy dun <repeat> (down up down-down up)
3. dun dun diggy diggy <repeat> (down up down-down up-up)
4. dun diggy diggy dun <repeat> (down up-up down-down up)

Good luck, and I hope it doesn’t take you four years to learn this combo bounce like it took me! Please drink lots of caffeine/water, and shake out your hands and stretch them and your back and shoulders often, for safety.

ETUDE 28

“Mirrors” by Jeffrey Zeigler

Electronic Looping • Improvisation

EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

- Pickup (try the Realist Transducer for cello by David Gage)
- Looping pedal (try the Boss RC-20)
- Volume pedal (any brand is fine)
- Two quarter-inch cables (any brand is fine)
- Guitar or bass amplifier (or any sound system to plug a quarter-inch cable into)
- Although it is not necessary for this etude, some cellists prefer to use an electric cello when playing through effects pedals (try a model by Yamaha)

NOTATION SYMBOLS

- * Rec: Left pedal (first tap): Record loop
- **Play: Left Pedal (second tap): Play over recorded loop
- ***Dub: Left Pedal (third tap): Record additional loop on top of first loop
- XX: Hold Right Pedal for three seconds: Delete all recorded loops



29

Mirrors

Etude for Looped Cello

Jeffrey Zeigler

XX

A

$\text{♩} = 78$

* Rec
pizz.
p

4

7 ** Play
arco
subdivide!

B

* Rec
pizz.

16

19 ** Play
arco

C

* Rec
pizz.

28

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ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTING COMPOSERS

Ashley Bathgate



Cellist Ashley Bathgate is a soloist and chamber musician living in New York City, and is a member of the award-winning ensemble Bang on a Can All-Stars. She has performed/recorded with DJ Spooky, Ben Frost, Philip Glass, Glenn Kotche, Yo-Yo Ma, Meredith Monk, Richard Reed Parry, Lee Ranaldo, Steve Reich, and Terry Riley. www.ashleybathgate.com (Photo by Steven Taylor)

Stephan Braun



Stephan Braun studied classical and jazz cello. He worked with Melody Gardot, Gil Goldstein, Till Brönner, and the Berliner Ensemble among others. Stephan has won first prize at the Bucharest (Brönner) International Jazz Competition, played at many festivals and concert halls around the world, and now teaches jazz at HMTM Hannover and Jazz-Institute Berlin. www.stephanbraun.com (Photo by Stephan Haeger)

Rufus Cappadocia



Rufus Cappadocia is a cellist renowned for his cross-cultural collaborations and compositions. He has performed/recorded with "Bonga" Jean-Baptiste, Ross Daly, Yacouba Moumouni, Vishal Vaid, Vernon Reid, David "Fuze" Fiuczynski, Peter Yarrow, and Odetta. He is currently a member of Bethany & Rufus, the Vodou Drums of Haiti, Paradox Trio, and Stellamara. www.rufusmusic.com

Erik Friedlander



Cellist Erik Friedlander is a composer, improviser, and a veteran of NYC's Downtown scene. Erik has released over twenty recordings as a leader and performed and recorded on hundreds of others, including projects by John Zorn, Dave Douglas, and Joe Lovano. www.erikfriedlander.com (Photo by Angelo Merendino)

Rushad Eggleston



Rushadicus is a cello-shaped spaceship captain/knower of harmoogian zarf weasels/acrobatic blurk dancer/world inventor/tongue shaper/mind blower/joy spreader/Stratocaster shredder/professional jazz kazooist/explorer of the unknown/fearless improviser/musical innovator/parnickthian poet/twangy yowler/rimniscuous rapper/decomposer/and many things which have never been. www.rushad.net (Photo by Nic Coury)

Eugene Friesen



Eugene Friesen is a multi-GRAMMY winner, known as an improviser. He has performed/recorded with the Paul Winter Consort, Dave Brubeck, Toots Thielemans, Will Ackerman, Joe Lovano, and Dream Theater. He is the author of *Improvisation for Classical Musicians*. An alumnus of Yale University, he teaches at Berklee College of Music. www.eugenefriesenmusic.com (Photo by Jeff Day)

Natalie Haas



Natalie Haas is one of the most sought-after cellists in Celtic music today. She and Scottish fiddler Alasdair Fraser have toured as a duo for seventeen years, wowing audiences at festivals and concerts worldwide with their unique sound. A graduate of the Juilliard School, Natalie is currently based in Boston, where she is an associate professor of cello at Berklee College of Music. www.nataliehaas.com

(Photo by Irene Young)

Giovanni Sollima



Giovanni Sollima is an Italian cellist and composer, known for incorporating Baroque, rock, and folk styles. He co-leads 100 VIOLONCELLI, an annual gathering in Italy of cellists of all levels. The Chicago Symphony Orchestra commissioned his double cello concerto, which he premiered alongside Yo-Yo Ma in 2014. www.GiovanniSollima.it

(Photo by Gian Maria Musarra)

Mark Summer



GRAMMY-winning cellist Mark Summer, thirty-year former founding member of the Turtle Island Quartet, has toured/recorded with Kenny Barron, Paquito D'Rivera, Tierney Sutton, and Cyrus Chestnut. A Cleveland Institute of Music alumnus, he is celebrated for his tour de force, *Julie-O*. Mark teaches at the International Cello Institute and in the San Francisco Bay Area. www.marksummer.net

(Photo by Peter Serling)

Matt Turner



Matt Turner, cellist and pianist, teaches improvisation at Lawrence University. Turner improvises in myriad styles, and appears on over one hundred recordings. He has performed in Canada, Europe, and Asia, often with Bill Carrothers and Hal Rammel. Turner is a Yamaha and D'Addario Performing Artist. www.improvcellist.com

(Photo by Ken Cobb)

Jacob Szekely



Jacob Szekely, cofounder of String Project Los Angeles, has been hailed by *Strings* magazine as "one of the leaders in the creative string community." In 2013, he founded an online learning community for creative cellists at www.TheImprovisorsGuide.com. www.jacobszekely.com

(Photo by Michael Roud)

Jeffrey Zeigler



Jeffrey Zeigler was the cellist of the Kronos Quartet for eight seasons. He has released dozens of recordings on Nonesuch, Deutsche Grammophon, and Smithsonian Folkways and appears with Norah Jones on Blue Note Records. Zeigler currently teaches at Mannes School of Music at The New School. www.jzcello.com

(Photo by Axel Dupeux)

ABOUT MIKE BLOCK



Mike Block is a pioneering multi-style cellist, singer, composer, and educator, hailed by Yo-Yo Ma as the “ideal musician of the 21st century,” and acclaimed by the *New York Times* for his “vital rich-hued solo playing.” While studying at the Juilliard School, Mike joined the Silk Road Ensemble, with which he has toured extensively, and won the GRAMMY Award for Best World Music Album. Mike is also an active recording artist of original material, folk music, and cross-cultural collaborations, and he has an ongoing project to record all of the Bach cello suites in acoustically glorious bathrooms of famous concert halls, via www.BachInTheBathroom.com.

As an educator, Mike is passionate about emphasizing creativity and collaboration, which led him to the founding of the Mike Block String Camp in 2010. MBSC provides players of all backgrounds the opportunity to learn from a world-class faculty in a variety of styles, while exploring and developing their own artistic voices in small bands. In 2015, Mike created the online Multi-Style Cello School at ArtistWorks.com, with an extensive library of instructional videos, and he is the founding Director of *Silkroad's* Global Musician Workshop, bringing together musicians of diverse backgrounds from around the globe. In 2012, he was appointed associate professor at Berklee College of Music.

Mike plays on a cello made in 2014 by Fabienne Gauchet, with D'Addario strings, a David Gage Realist pickup, and stands while performing using the patented cello strap of his own design, the Block Strap. www.MikeBlockMusic.com

CELLO: ETUDES

Learn the contemporary techniques and practices of the modern cello. These études were composed by a dozen of today's most noteworthy and pioneering cellists, from a variety of styles. The collection is a vital exploration of 21st-century cello techniques that every contemporary cellist should know when playing music outside of the standard classical repertoire.

By exploring techniques such as chopping, pizzicato, improvisation, chords, ornaments, modes, polyrhythmic playing, and more, you will be prepared to play in a variety of contexts, including folk (bluegrass, Celtic, old-time), rock, funk, jazz (traditional and modern), world music, and accompanying yourself while singing. Each étude is introduced by its composer, with advice on the techniques/style covered, and an audio performance of the composition is available online. The collection is introduced with a foreword by Yo-Yo Ma.

You will learn:

- 28 cello études, from beginner to advanced difficulty levels, suitable for both study and performance
- techniques for rhythmic and chordal playing, including the percussive chop
- stylistic ornaments, phrasing, and vocabulary emblematic of folk, rock, funk, and jazz styles
- pizzicato techniques such as strumming, fingerstyle, walking bass, tremolo, and tapping
- contemporary rhythm techniques, such as polyrhythms (2:3, 3:2, 4:3, 3:4, 4:5, 5:4), and stylistic grooves
- strategies for melodic improvisation
- techniques for using electronic looping

Etudes in this volume were compiled and edited by Mike Block, and composed by Ashley Bathgate, Mike Block, Stephan Braun, Rufus Cappadocia, Rushad Eggleston, Erik Friedlander, Eugene Friesen, Natalie Haas, Giovanni Sollima, Mark Summer, Jacob Szekeley, Matt Turner, and Jeffrey Zeigler.



Mike Block is a pioneering multi-style cellist, singer, composer, and educator who tours internationally in the Grammy Award-winning Silk Road Ensemble, as well as his own projects. He graduated from the Juilliard School, founded the Mike Block String Camp, and is an associate professor at Berklee College of Music.

"The broad reach of skills included in these études can equip a cellist to participate in making music in any part of the world. I urge all cellists interested in contemporary styles to take a look, and to experience and enjoy the world of twenty-first century cello."

—Yo-Yo Ma, Multi-GRAMMY® Award-Winning Cellist,
Founding Artistic Director of Silkroad

"Block assembled an extraordinary group of cellists who are giving out their 'inner secrets' to practicing modern cello techniques. Any cellists who want to expand their vocabulary beyond western classical music and into the twenty-first century must get this fantastic book!"

—Maya Beiser, Founding Cellist of the
New Music Group Bang on a Can All-Stars

"We need more 'outside the orchestra' material like this that explores the versatility of the coolest instrument in the world."

—Steven Sharp Nelson, Cellist (the Piano Guys)

"This new contemporary étude book is a wonderful addition to our cello teaching materials. Each étude has its own unique qualities. Teaching polyrhythms, as well as different types of position exercises, help all cellists to further understand the endless possibilities of cello technique. I wish to thank all the collaborators of this book; they truly have enriched our cello repertoire."

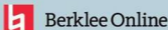
—Richard Aaron, Professor of Cello at The Juilliard School
and University of Michigan

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