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# THE DOUBLE BASS- VOICE: A HOW-TO GUIDE

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MODERN PEDAGOGY  
FOR THE SOLO  
DOUBLE BASS-VOICE  
REPERTOIRE

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# Introduction

The main purpose of this book is to develop the simultaneous use of the voice while playing double bass. A significant number of works in the solo contemporary double bass repertoire (and also a small number of ensemble pieces) incorporates some sort of vocal technique, and this number is constantly growing. These pieces usually contain instructions for interpreting the vocal notation, but never has there been a guide or reference material for how to develop this technique and how to practice these works effectively. This book will NOT train the performer how to be a professional opera singer, but rather it will provide only the most fundamental yet essential information required for performing this unique field of repertoire.

This book is divided into four sections: “Using the Voice as a Practice Aid,” “Vocal Tools and Techniques,” “Exercises and Etudes,” and “Notation Examples.” In “Using the Voice as a Practice Aid,” this book will demonstrate how simple vocalization can assist one’s practice habits. This section will also help develop necessary coordination between the using the voice and playing the instrument simultaneously. “Vocal Tools and Technique” will provide sufficient fundamental information regarding vocal technique and methods for a non-vocally trained instrumentalist. This section will also include valuable information for preparing and performing solo double bass-voice repertoire. In “Exercises and Etudes,” a series of studies in increasing difficulty and also divided into three categories (speaking, singing, and sound effects) is introduced to help build and prepare necessary technique one might find in solo double bass-voice pieces. Finally, “Notation Examples” (also divided into the three aforementioned subsections) serves as a valuable tool not only for performers but also for composers. Short excerpts from several pieces from the repertoire are examined to showcase many ways in which the voice is notated in solo instrumental works.

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# I. Using the Voice as a Practice Aid

“This process is more important than you may think for focusing the nervous system. The brain loves labels. The synthesis of the kinesthetic, verbal, and aural input helps to solidify a neurological event.” – Diana Gannett<sup>1</sup>

## a. Speaking

### i. Rhythm

One of the best uses of the speaking voice as a practice tool is to assist with rhythm. In its most fundamental stage, simply using your voice as a metronome will help internalize the pulse of the music.

Fig. 1.1.a

Fig. 1.1.a shows a musical exercise in 4/4 time. The top staff is labeled 'Voice' and contains four measures of quarter notes, each marked with an 'x' and numbered 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively. The bottom staff is labeled 'Double Bass' and contains four measures of quarter notes, each marked with an 'x' and numbered 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively.

Once the mind is capable of coordinating the playing with the voice as a stable metronome, begin subdividing the pulse with the voice and gradually move up the chain of rhythmic hierarchy eventually only speaking every second, third, or even fourth bar.

Fig. 1.1.b

Fig. 1.1.b shows a musical exercise in 4/4 time with three staves. The top staff is labeled 'Voice' and contains four measures of eighth notes, each marked with an 'x' and numbered 1-4. Below the notes are syllables: '1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a' and '1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &'. The middle staff is labeled 'Double Bass' and contains four measures of quarter notes, each marked with an 'x' and numbered 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively. The bottom staff is labeled 'Cb.' and contains four measures of quarter notes, each marked with an 'x' and numbered 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively.

<sup>1</sup> Gannett, Diana. “General Warm-Ups: Phase Warm-Up Exercises” Pedagogy: Book 2

Traditional counting syllables may also be substituted with other systems such as the Takadimi Method (Figure 1.1.c) or the Kodály Method (Figure 1.1.d). These syllables may also be used in conjunction with a metronome for deciphering and internalizing rhythmically difficult passages.

Fig. 1.1.c - Takadimi Method

Time sig.	Beat	Division	Subdivision
e.g. $\frac{2}{2}$ $\frac{3}{2}$ $\frac{4}{2}$ $\frac{2}{2}$ $\frac{2}{2}$ $\frac{2}{2}$	 ta	 ta di	 ta ka di mi
e.g. $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$	 ta	 ta di	 ta ka di mi
e.g. $\frac{2}{8}$ $\frac{3}{8}$ $\frac{4}{8}$ $\frac{8}{8}$ $\frac{8}{8}$ $\frac{8}{8}$	 ta	 ta di	 ta ka di mi

Common Patterns (beat-length)

beat = ta								
beat = ta								
beat = ta								

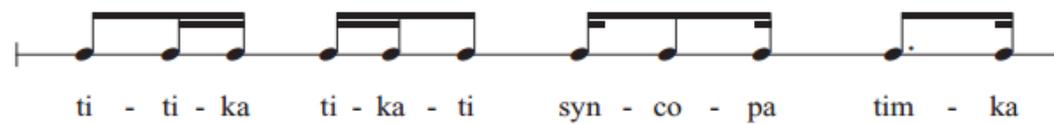
Time sig.	Beat	Division	Subdivision
e.g. $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{9}{4}$ $\frac{12}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$	 ta	 ta ki da	 ta va ki di da ma
e.g. $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{9}{8}$ $\frac{12}{8}$ $\frac{8}{8}$ $\frac{8}{8}$ $\frac{8}{8}$	 ta	 ta ki da	 ta va ki di da ma
e.g. $\frac{6}{16}$ $\frac{9}{16}$ $\frac{12}{16}$ $\frac{16}{16}$ $\frac{16}{16}$ $\frac{16}{16}$	 ta	 ta ki da	 ta va ki di da ma

Common Patterns (beat-length)

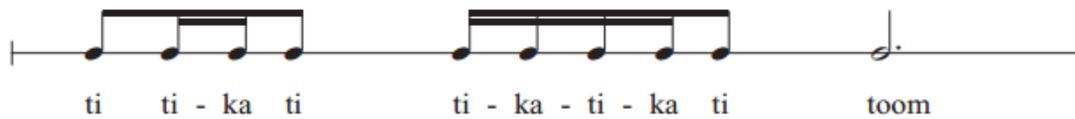
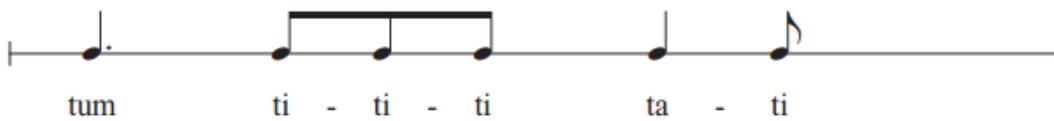
beat = ta								
beat = ta								
beat = ta								

Fig. 1.1.d - Kodály Method

**Simple time**



**Compound time**



After the mind is capable of maintaining a pulse on the beat on various levels of rhythmic hierarchy, speak only off beats (again on subdivisions through hypermeasures). Eventually, this can lead to only speaking any single off beat per measure or hypermeasure.

Finally with regard to vocalizing rhythm, practice speaking and playing polyrhythmic patterns during basic exercises (scales, various bowing patterns, etc.). By being able to speak polyrhythmic patterns against playing and vice versa, the musician will be able to better coordinate independent speaking and playing lines into one unified segment or piece of music.

**ii. Note Names**

When practicing scales, arpeggios, or other slow technical work, speak the name of each note. The note name should be vocalized simultaneously with the attack of the note. Begin with using alphabetic names (A, B, C). Then move on to scale degrees (1, 2, 3) and solfege (do, re, mi).

Fig. 1.1.e

Voice: C D E F G A B C B A G F E D C  
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 7 6 5 4 3 2 1  
 Do Re Mi Fa Sol La Si Do Si La Sol Fa Mi Re Do

Double Bass: (Bass line with notes corresponding to the voice line)

Once it is possible to speak the name of the note currently being played, try to speak the name of the following note. This will also help build the ability to think ahead in the music.

Fig. 1.1.f

Voice: D E F G A B C B A G F E D C  
 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 7 6 5 4 3 2 1  
 Re Mi Fa Sol La Si Do Si La Sol Fa Mi Re Do

Double Bass: (Bass line with notes corresponding to the voice line)

This approach could also be applied to creative variations of technical exercises.

### iii. Chord Names and Functions

When practicing arpeggios or arpeggiated passages (especially in sequences), speak the name of each chord (A major, D Major, G-Sharp Diminished, etc.). Also, be able to speak the function (Roman Numerals are OK).

1.1.g

1.1.g

Chord names and functions for exercise 1.1.g:

Part	Measure 1	Measure 2	Measure 3	Measure 4
Voice	C Major	F Major	B Diminished	E Minor
Double Bass	1	4	7	3
	Tonic	Subdominant	Leading Tone	Mediant
Vo.	A Major	A Minor	G Dominant 7	C Major
Cb.	6	2	5	1
	Submediant	Supertonic	Dominant	Tonic

In Fig. 1.1.h this practice method has been adapted to the Prelude from Johann Sebastian Bach's first cello suite.

Fig. 1.1.h

Fig. 1.1.h

Chord names and functions for exercise 1.1.h:

Part	Measure 1	Measure 2	Measure 3	Measure 4
Voice	G Major		C Major	
Double Bass	1		4	
	Tonic		Subdominant	
Vo.	D Dominant 7 (over G)	G Major	E Minor	
Cb.	5-7	1	6	
	Dominant	Tonic	Submediant	

v. Formal Sections

Announcing formal sections as you play through a piece will help internalize the varying levels of structure of a piece. This is especially beneficial for pieces where larger sections are very similar with slightly different changes. By associating verbal labels to each section of a piece, the mind will eventually associate the entire musical passage to just one or two words and the music as a whole will feel more comfortable. This can also help reduce the risk of memory slips in a performance. Take for example the first movement of Jean-Baptist Vanhal's Double Bass Concerto in E-Flat Major in Fig. 1.1.i. Simply announce "exposition" or "first theme," "second theme," "development," and "recapitulation" when you arrive at each section.

Fig. 1.1.i

"Exposition" /  
"First Theme"

The image displays a musical score for the first movement of Jean-Baptist Vanhal's Double Bass Concerto in E-Flat Major. The score is written in bass clef with a common time signature. It is divided into several sections. The first section, labeled "Exposition" / "First Theme", begins at measure 19 and ends at measure 30. The second section, labeled "Second Theme", begins at measure 31 and ends at measure 40. The third section, labeled "Development", begins at measure 41 and ends at measure 70. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamics like *f*. Measure numbers 19, 20, 30, and 70 are circled in the original image.

19 1 *f* 20 30

"Second Theme"

...

"Development"

70

## vi. Dynamics

For the sake of internalizing dynamic extremes of a passage of music, employ one of the previous practice tools mentioned before, but this time, speak in the dynamic provided in the music; counting out loud or speaking note names work best. In order to exaggerate the extremes of the dynamic spectrum, whisper during piano and pianissimo passages, speak at a normal conversational volume during mezzo piano and mezzo forte, and shout during forte and fortissimo markings. For example in Fig. 1.1.j, the volume levels have been added in parentheses to the double bass solo from Act IV of Giuseppe Verdi's Otello. Play the double bass solo while counting out loud with the dynamics provided.

Fig. 1.1.j

**Poco Piu Mosso**  
I Soli Contrabassi a 4 Corde - Con Sordina

*legato*  
*pp* (whisper very softly)

*in poco marcato* *pulsato* *dim.* *morendo* *ppp*

(whisper louder)

(normal voice) *p*

*Un poco piu marcato e cres.* *staccato* *f* (shout) *ff* (shout as loud as possible!)

## vii. Character, Emotion, and Mood

Using the same approach as with practicing dynamics, the voice can be used to help realize characters, emotions, and moods in the music. Using the same passage from *Otello*, play the solo while counting out loud this time, speak in a way that represents the characters provided in Fig. 1.1.k. Of course, this may be applied to all other pieces of music. Be creative when choosing characters and emotions, and try several different ones for the same passage. You will be surprised how many different ways you can play the same phrase just by counting with a different quality of speaking.

Fig. 1.1.k

**Poco Piu Mosso**  
I Soli Contrabassi a 4 Corde - *Con Sordina*  
"stealthy"

pp

un poco marcato piu marcato dim. morendo ppp

"hesitant"

p

Un poco piu marcato e cres.  
"with murderous intent"

f ff

## viii. Props

Read a book, newspaper, or magazine out loud while practicing exercises or a piece of music. With regards to playing, the use of props will exercise the level of internalization of the music and will better prepare the performer against distractions. With regards to speaking, this will train the brain to coordinate speaking in a free and flowing manner, while appropriately maintaining the musical material.

Use a mirror, make eye contact, and make faces while practicing. Although this is not a vocal practice method, making eye contact will help keep the head up allowing for better posture once the voice is incorporated into playing. Making faces will help train the face, mouth, and jaw to relax which will allow for more effective and relaxed use of the voice.

**b. Singing**

**\*\*Note:** People have different voice ranges. In the following singing exercises, chose an octave most comfortable for you. It is permissible for the voice to be sing in any octave below, above, or in unison with the playing.

**i. Pitches (Scalar)**

Just like speaking note names when practicing scales, arpeggios, or other slow technical work, sing the name of each note. The note name should be vocalized simultaneously with the attack of the note. Begin with using alphabetic names, then scale degrees, and solfège.

Fig. 1.2.a

Voice: C D E F G A B C B A G F E D C  
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 7 6 5 4 3 2 1  
 Do Re Mi Fa Sol La Si Do Si La Sol Fa Mi Re Do

Double Bass

One major difference between speaking and singing note names, is that it is possible to sing in intervals or other similar patterns with a given scale or passage. Figure 1.2.b shows singing in thirds, fourths, fifths, and sixths respectively.

Fig. 1.2.b

Voice: E F G A F G A B G A B C A B C D  
 3 4 5 6 4 5 6 7 5 6 7 1 6 7 1 2  
 Mi Fa Sol La Fa Sol La Si Sol La Si Do La Si Do Re

Double Bass

The singing voice can also be used to fill in triads when practicing double-stops or intervallic string crossing exercises. In Fig. 1.2.c, the voice fills in the diatonic triad in root position in example measures one and three and in second inversion in example measures two and four.

Fig. 1.2.c

Diatonic triads may also be sung with scales by breaking up the harmony in the voice. In the first two example measures of Figure 1.2.d, the voice sings up one third and back down a second. The second example shows resolving from scale degree 4 to 3 on each pitch of the scale.

Fig. 1.2.d

Try being creative with other variations when harmonizing scales; possibilities include but are certainly not limited to seventh chords, intervals of a second, tri-tone, or seventh, rhythmic alterations, etc.

## ii. Pitches (Intervallic)

The singing voice as a practice aid may also be implemented while practicing repertoire (i.e. not technical exercises). For example, the voice may be used to help properly intonate intervals. This is especially useful in unfamiliar intervals and shifts. In figure 1.2.e, the voice is used to fill in the space between two pitches of a given interval. This may be done diatonically or chromatically. This allows the musician to aurally internalize the precise distance between the two pitches of the interval. The following musical example how to apply this method to the first interval found in Henri Eccles's Sonata in G Minor.

Fig. 1.2.e

The musical score for Fig. 1.2.e is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The Voice part (treble clef) begins with a quarter rest, followed by quarter notes G4, A4, B4, C5, and D5, ending with a half note E5. The Double Bass part (bass clef) begins with a quarter note G2, followed by a half rest, and then a melodic line consisting of quarter notes G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, and D5. A double bar line is placed after the first measure of both parts.

Another practice method for intonating intervals is to play the first note of the interval, stop and hear the interval in the head, then sing the interval, stop and hear the second pitch, and finally play the sung note. This allows the musician to build the connection between what is realized aurally and what is realized physically on the instrument. Again the same interval from Eccles is shown below in Fig. 1.2.f, this time singing only the interval.

Fig. 1.2.f

The musical score for Fig. 1.2.f is identical to Fig. 1.2.e in terms of the Double Bass part. The Voice part (treble clef) begins with a quarter rest, followed by a half rest, then a quarter note G4, another half rest, and a quarter note E5. A double bar line is placed after the first measure of both parts.

#### iv. Melody

Similar to the approach for practicing intervals, the singing voice may also aid the transmission of partial or entire musical passages that the performer hears and feels internally to what the performer produces from their instrument. Instead of only singing an interval and replicating pitch, the performer sings a motive, phrase, or entire passage and should replicate all aspects of the music (e.g. pitch, rhythm, intensity, flow, shape, etc.). In other words, this is simply singing the musical idea without the instrument.

#### v. Sing Along

Sing along with a phrase or other musical fragment (singing in octaves are acceptable here). It is encouraged to use note names (alphabetic, numeric, or solfège). The example in figure 1.2.g shows sing along options to the famous double bass solo from the third movement of Gustav Mahler's first symphony (transposed to E Minor).

Fig. 1.2.g

Voice: D E F E D D E F E D F G A F G A  
 1 2 3 2 1 1 2 3 2 1 3 4 5 3 4 5  
 Re Mi Fa Mi Re Re Mi Fa Mi Re Fa Sol La Fa Sol La

Double Bass: *p* mit Dampfer

Vo. 5: A B A G F E D A B A G F E D A A D A A D  
 5 6 5 4 3 2 1 5 6 5 4 3 2 1 5 5 1 5 5 1  
 La Te La Sol Fa Mi Re La Te La Sol Fa Mi Re La La Re La La Re

Cb.

**vi. Drones**

When rehearsing solo and ensemble repertoire, the use of drones in both the voice and double bass can help solidify pitches in relation to the harmony. With regards to this practice exercise, the first eight measures of the Prelude from Johann Sebastian Bach's first cello suite will be used as examples. The first example in Fig. 1.2.g, shows the melody being sung in the vocal line over sustained G drones in the double bass.

Fig. 1.2.h

Voice: [Musical notation for voice part]

Double Bass: [Musical notation for double bass part]

Since several voices occur simultaneously during the cello suites, this drone technique can also be applied to the inner voices. Fig. 1.2.i shows the same melody in the vocal line as before but this time with sustained pitches from the inner voice of the opening eight measures being played in the double bass.

Fig. 1.2.i

Voice: [Musical notation for voice part]

Double Bass: [Musical notation for double bass part]

The role of the voice and double bass can be reversed so that the voice sustains the drones, while the double bass plays the complete passage. Fig. 1.2.j shows the voice sustaining the root G while the double bass plays the first eight measures of the prelude.

Fig. 1.2.j

The musical score for Fig. 1.2.j consists of two systems. The first system has two staves: 'Voice' and 'Double Bass'. The 'Voice' staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. It contains four measures of a sustained G note, indicated by a long horizontal line with a fermata. The 'Double Bass' staff is in treble clef with the same key signature and time signature. It contains eight measures of a rhythmic pattern: a quarter note G, followed by eighth notes A, B, C, D, E, F#, G, with a fermata over the final G. The second system has two staves: 'Vo.' and 'Cb.'. The 'Vo.' staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp and a 4/4 time signature, containing four measures of a sustained G note. The 'Cb.' staff is in treble clef with the same key signature and time signature, containing eight measures of the same rhythmic pattern as the Double Bass in the first system.

Finally in Fig. 1.2.k, the voice will sustain pitches from the moving inner voice while the double bass once again plays the first eight measures as written.

Fig. 1.2.k

The musical score for Fig. 1.2.k consists of two systems. The first system has two staves: 'Voice' and 'Double Bass'. The 'Voice' staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. It contains four measures of a sustained G note, indicated by a long horizontal line with a fermata. The 'Double Bass' staff is in treble clef with the same key signature and time signature. It contains eight measures of a rhythmic pattern: a quarter note G, followed by eighth notes A, B, C, D, E, F#, G, with a fermata over the final G. The second system has two staves: 'Vo.' and 'Cb.'. The 'Vo.' staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp and a 4/4 time signature, containing four measures of a sustained G note. The 'Cb.' staff is in treble clef with the same key signature and time signature, containing eight measures of the same rhythmic pattern as the Double Bass in the first system.

**vii. Sing at the Piano**

This applies to double bassists who are also capable of playing the accompaniment on piano. If possible, play the accompaniment to a passage, phrase, or piece on the piano (even if it needs to be watered down), and sing the melody above it. This is an excellent way to personally experience how the chamber music aspects of the music when the accompanist(s) is / are not present. This is also beneficial in helping the performer realize acceptable moments of rubato.

**viii. Conduct and Sing**

This is another excellent method of learning the music away from the double bass, especially when your level of piano playing is not very high. Conducting and singing is a highly beneficial way to feel the flow of the music in the body, discover effective moments of rubato, and to internalize the music into the mind.

## II. Vocal Tools and Techniques

### a. Chronology of Preparation

#### i. Speaking

1. Memorize the text – In order to facilitate the process of preparing the piece, whether it be the text alone or with the music, memorizing the text will allow for more attention to be placed on other aspects of the piece.
2. Breaths – Plan where to take your breaths and mark them in the music to ensure consistency in preparation. Place breaths where they would occur organically as if you are speaking the text in a conversation or public speech. Also, be sure that breaths are placed frequently enough to avoid tensing the voice when running out of air, especially in the case of long lines of quick text
3. Diction – Be sure that proper pronunciation, inflection, and clarity of the text is prepared. If the performer chooses to perform as a different character as an actor would, especially with a different accent, it is essential that the way the text will be spoken in performance be decided upon at this step.
4. Internalize the vocal rhythm – If the rhythm of the text is specifically notated, the vocal rhythm should be solidified while keeping in mind the diction decided upon in step two. It is especially important that the inflection of words and phrases be maintained for the sake of consistency.
5. Theatrical aspects – Many, if not at all times, double bass-voice repertoire requires additional theatric elements (e.g. body movements, facial expressions, props, etc.) elements to ensure a convincing performance.
6. Learn instrumental part as you would a traditional piece
7. Build tempo of simultaneous parts

**\*\*Practice Tip:** Always practice as you would perform. Speak at the appropriate volume and with the same diction as decided upon early to avoid extraneous work in the practice room and sound check. Always exaggerate the theatrics. What feels like too much on stage is usually almost enough in the hall.

## **ii. Singing**

The preparation process for pieces requiring the performer to play and sing is similar to the process for playing and speaking but with a few more steps.

1. Memorize the text
2. Breaths – The difference between deciding on breaths for spoken text and sung text is that the amount of air necessary for different registers of the voice.
3. Diction
4. Internalize the vocal line – This is the main difference between learning a piece with spoken text and learning a piece with sung text in that the performer must also internalize pitches in addition to diction, dynamics, theatrics, and rhythm. As an untrained singer, it may be easiest to play the vocal line on the double bass or piano and sing along until the entire vocal part may be sung on its own.
5. Theatrical aspects
6. Learn instrumental part as you would a traditional piece
7. Build tempo of simultaneous part.

## **b. Diction**

### **i. International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) Chart**

Bellow in Fig. 2.2.a, is a comprehensive chart of the International Phonetic Alphabet found on the International Phonetic Association's website. This chart shows the precise sounds necessary to effectively produce text in music. This chart is especially useful for discovering the proper execution of vowels and consonants. It shows the location within and the relative openness of the mouth in order to produce specific vowels. The explanation of consonants is a bit more confusing. Generally speaking, the IPA chart shows the locations within the mouth where the consonants are produced starting with bilabial consonants produce at the lips (e.g. **B** as in **Boy** and **P** as in **Pencil**) and ending with glottal consonants (e.g. sounds produce beyond the pharynx in the very back of the throat). The chart also organizes consonants by method of execution including plosive (i.e. attacking the consonant from a closed position followed by an immediate opening of the mouth), nasal, and friction based consonants.

Knowledge of this chart is beneficial for discovering exactly how and where to produce specific vowel, consonant, and other vocal sounds. Once the desired specific articulation is comprehended, then focus can be shifted to exaggerating the pronunciation in order to project clarity in diction on stage.

In performance, vocalists will slightly elongate vowels and attack consonants so harshly that depending on the consonant sound, spit may even fly out of their mouths. From the performer's perspective, this will seem over-the-top at first, but when viewed from the audience, this approach will be just enough so that clarity is projected to the furthest seats in the hall. As with solo instrumental playing, the detail in clarity should be easily perceived by the audience members seated furthest away from the stage.

Rewriting the text of a piece using the IPA will help remind the performer of the exact pronunciation and exaggeration necessary for effective practice and performance.

Fig. 2.2a

THE INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ALPHABET (revised to 2015)

CONSONANTS (PULMONIC)

© 2015 IPA

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	p b			t d		ʈ ɖ	c ɟ	k ɡ	q ɢ		ʔ
Nasal	m	ɱ		n		ɳ	ɲ	ŋ	ɴ		
Trill	ʙ			ʀ					ʀ		
Tap or Flap		ⱱ		ɾ		ɽ					
Fricative	ɸ β	f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ	ʂ ʐ	ç ʝ	x ɣ	χ ʁ	ħ ʕ	h ɦ
Lateral fricative				ɬ ɮ							
Approximant		ʋ		ɹ		ɻ	j	ɰ			
Lateral approximant				l		ɭ	ʎ	ʟ			

Symbols to the right in a cell are voiced, to the left are voiceless. Shaded areas denote articulations judged impossible.

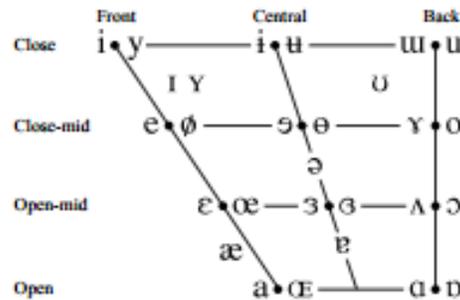
CONSONANTS (NON-PULMONIC)

Clicks	Voiced implosives	Ejectives
◌ ʘ Bilabial	ɓ Bilabial	ʼ Examples:
◌ ǀ Dental	ɗ Dental/alveolar	ɓʼ Bilabial
◌ ǃ (Post)alveolar	ɟ Palatal	ɗʼ Dental/alveolar
◌ ǁ Palatoalveolar	ɠ Velar	ɟʼ Palatal
◌ ǂ Alveolar lateral	ɣ Uvular	ɠʼ Velar
		ʂʼ Alveolar fricative

OTHER SYMBOLS

- ʌ Voiceless labial-velar fricative
- ʷ Voiced labial-velar approximant
- ɥ Voiced labial-palatal approximant
- ʜ Voiceless epiglottal fricative
- ʕ Voiced epiglottal fricative
- ʡ Epiglottal plosive
- ʑ Alveolo-palatal fricatives
- ɻ Voiced alveolar lateral flap
- ɥ Simultaneous ʃ and x
- Affricates and double articulations can be represented by two symbols joined by a tie bar if necessary.

VOWELS



Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a rounded vowel.

SUPRASEGMENTALS

- ˈ Primary stress
- ˌ Secondary stress
- ː Long
- ˑ Half-long
- ◌̥ Extra-short
- ◌̥̥̥ Minor (foot) group
- ◌̥̥̥̥ Major (intonation) group
- ◌̥̥̥̥̥ Syllable break
- ◌̥̥̥̥̥̥ Linking (absence of a break)

TONES AND WORD ACCENTS

LEVEL	CONTOUR
ē or ˥ Extra high	ē or ˨ Rising
é ˥ High	ē ˨ Falling
ē ˨ Mid	é ˥ High rising
è ˨ Low	ē ˨ Low rising
ē̃ ˨ Extra low	ē̃ ˨ Rising-falling
˩ Downstep	˨ Global rise
˨˩ Upstep	˨ Global fall

DIACRITICS Some diacritics may be placed above a symbol with a descender, e.g. ɪ̯

◌̥ Voiceless	◌̥ ɲ̥ ɖ̥	◌̥ Breathy voiced	◌̥ ɸ̥ ɓ̥	◌̥ Dental	◌̥ ʈ̥ ɖ̥
◌̥ Voiced	◌̥ ɸ̥ ɓ̥	◌̥ Creaky voiced	◌̥ ɸ̥̰ ɓ̥̰	◌̥ Apical	◌̥ ʈ̥̰ ɖ̥̰
◌̥ Aspirated	◌̥ ʈ̥ʰ ɖ̥ʰ	◌̥ Lingualized	◌̥ ʈ̥̰ ɖ̥̰	◌̥ Laminal	◌̥ ʈ̥̰ ɖ̥̰
◌̥ More rounded	◌̥ ɔ̞	◌̥ Labialized	◌̥ ʈ̥ʷ ɖ̥ʷ	◌̥ Nasalized	◌̥ ē̃
◌̥ Less rounded	◌̥ ɔ̞	◌̥ Palatalized	◌̥ ʈ̥ʲ ɖ̥ʲ	◌̥ Nasal release	◌̥ ɖ̥ⁿ
◌̥ Advanced	◌̥ ɸ̥	◌̥ Velarized	◌̥ ʈ̥ˠ ɖ̥ˠ	◌̥ Lateral release	◌̥ ɖ̥ˡ
◌̥ Retracted	◌̥ ɸ̥	◌̥ Pharyngealized	◌̥ ʈ̥ˤ ɖ̥ˤ	◌̥ No audible release	◌̥ ɖ̥̚
◌̥ Centralized	◌̥ ē̃	◌̥ Velarized or pharyngealized	◌̥ ʈ̥̠ ɖ̥̠		
◌̥ Mid-centralized	◌̥ ē̃	◌̥ Raised	◌̥ ɸ̥ (ɹ̥ = voiced alveolar fricative)		
◌̥ Syllabic	◌̥ ɲ̥	◌̥ Lowered	◌̥ ɸ̥ (β̥ = voiced bilabial approximant)		
◌̥ Non-syllabic	◌̥ ɸ̥	◌̥ Advanced Tongue Root	◌̥ ɸ̥		
◌̥ Rhoticity	◌̥ ɸ̥ ɸ̥̰	◌̥ Retracted Tongue Root	◌̥ ɸ̥		

### **c. Posture**

Just like with efficient double bass playing, proper posture serves as the foundation to the most effective and efficient use of the voice on stage. Although everyone's body is different, there are some fundamental principles that can lead to good posture. Beginning with the feet and working your way up, consider the following:

**Feet** – The feet should be shoulder width apart pointing at approximately a 40 degree angle. One foot should be slightly in front of the other, and your weight should be evenly distributed between both feet between your heels and toes. If you sit while playing, try positioning the right foot so that it is flat on the floor and the left foot so that it is flat on a guitar foot rest or yoga block.

**Knees** – The knees should be slightly bent, relaxed, and not locked tight in order to avoid unnecessary tension.

**Hips / Pelvis** – The hips should lean slightly forward and be aligned over the knees and feet. The pelvic muscles will receive the weight from your upper body and distribute it through your legs and feet and into the floor. This will help the body maintain a low center of gravity. If you sit, try to be seated as close to the edge of the stool to align the hips with your knees and feet as close as possible.

**Spine** – Imagine that the spine is attached to a thread with one end of the thread pulling the top of the spine up towards the sky and the other end with a heavy weight tied to it pulling the bottom of the spine towards the floor. This will encourage a straight and lengthened spine as well as a low center of gravity.

**Ribs** – The rib cage should be raised and open as if being pushed out of the pelvis.

**Shoulders** – The shoulders should be down and back in a relaxed position, not forward and slouched as many people have grown accustomed to. The shoulders should be aligned over the hips, knees, and feet. The arms should be relaxed as if they were hanging loosely at the sides. This relaxed weight will be transferred through the instrument. If you sit, be sure to align your shoulders above your hips instead of your knees and feet to keep the spine straight.

Head – The head should be held high with the eyes looking forward as if staring of into the distance. The chin should neither protrude from the rest of the head nor be tucked in near the neck. Vocal sounds will be directed towards the audience rather than inward and toward the instrument or floor.

Posture should be practiced not only in the practice room, but outside of musical environments as well. Other methods for developing excellent posture include:

- Alexander Technique
- Dance - ballet, ballroom, contemporary/modern
- Martial Arts - Aikido, Karate, Ninjitsu
- Meditation
- Pilates
- Thai Chi
- Visualizing good posture
- Yoga

Developing one's posture is not something that can be learned only from a teacher or a book. It requires high levels of patience, focus, and awareness from one's own perspective. When focusing on posture, try to be aware of 1-3 of the following qualities at a time. Ask yourself, "Is my body:

- Aligned
- Balanced
- Comfortable
- Elastic
- Flexible
- Looking good (yes, this is important as a performer)
- Maintainable for a long period of time
- Natural
- Not rigid / military-like / stiff
- Not too relaxed
- Permitting free movement
- Resilient
- Without tension

\*\*Practice Tip: Position the music stand at eye level to keep the head up, eyes looking forward, and spine straight. This will encourage proper posture and help prevent leaning the head over the bass.

#### **d. Projection, Resonance, and Tone**

Projection, resonance, and tone have been grouped together since one cannot be discussed and developed without the others. For the sake of further understanding, each concept is briefly defined below with regards to both instrumental playing and the voice:

**Projection** – the production of sound in order to be heard by an audience

**Resonance** – the amplification and enhancement of tone set forth by a primary source of vibration

“Resonance is the amplification and modification of a sound that occurs when a sound passes through a resonator. The sound from the larynx is amplified and modified as it passes through the vocal resonator, which is composed of the throat, the mouth, and the nose.”<sup>2</sup>

**Tone** – the quality of sound

Speaking on a fundamental level, each voice type is comprised of three main registers (plus falsetto in male voices). It should be noted that these registers do overlap in pitch range, and are distinct mostly in how they resonate in the body. They are chest voice, middle voice, and head voice and are briefly explained below.

**Chest voice** – This is the lower register of a vocalist’s range and is generally regarded as the same as one’s normal speaking voice. Singing in this register produces warm, rich, and deep tones, and much of the vibrations can be felt in the chest cavity.

**Middle voice** – This is the middle register of a vocalist’s range found in between the chest and head voices.

**Head voice** – This is the higher register of a vocalist’s range. Singing in this register produces brighter tones and much of the vibrations can be felt in the head.

**Falsetto** – A register mostly associated with male vocalists (although female vocalists have a falsetto register as well) and shares many characteristics with the head voice though the tone is usually lighter and softer. The main difference

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<sup>2</sup> Blades-Zeller, Elizabeth. A Spectrum of Voices: Prominent American Voice Teachers Discuss the Teaching of Singing

between falsetto and head voice is the ability to blend with the other registers. In order to reach the falsetto register, one must pass the vocal breaking point.

Realizing good tone and resonance is usually not discussed and developed with vocal students until further on in their studies. Since this book is intended to only prepare double bassists for sufficient performances in the double bass-voice repertoire, only the fundamentals of discovering good tone and resonance will be discussed. If you wish to develop your tone and resonance further than what is discussed below, I recommend seeking a vocal instructor.

Realizing good tone and resonance is a highly personal and sensual developmental process. To begin realizing your optimum tone and resonance, begin singing in an octave using only open vowels which produces the truest sound you can produce. While doing so, try not to listen but rather feel where in your head most of the vibrations are occurring. This will vary from person to person. Some may sense most of the resonance occurring in the top of the head, back of the head, or even coming out of their ears, but the most common place is in the mask region of the face around the eyes. Resonating should feel easy, natural, and free.

Once this feeling is realized, extend the pitch range very gradually, and try to realize the same sensation of vibrations in higher and lower registers. Having a solidified awareness of this feeling will provide consistency in tone quality and projection throughout your range.

A great method for discovering and enhance the awareness of good resonance is to hum the following nasal sounds: “ng,” “mmm,” and “nnn.” Try changing pitches when humming but only within a short range (e.g. a perfect fifth).

## **e. Warm-Ups**

### **i. Siren**

Choose one of the nasal sounds as discussed in the previous discussion of realizing resonance (“ng,” “mmm,” or “nnn”). The sound produced should only exit through the nose. Begin a sweep (i.e. a large glissando) from a low pitch in your register and ascend all the way to a high pitch without hitting your breaking point. Repeat the exercise 2-3 more times each time stretching the pitch spectrum ever so slightly.

This exercise is beneficial for feeling the transition between registers (chest, middle, and head) and sensing the vibrations throughout the whole body.

## ii. Lip Trill

This exercise may be executed on any pitch. Begin by puckering the lips, not too tight but not too relaxed. Then after a deep breath, blow air out of the as if you are blowing rapid bubbles underwater. After you are able to sustain a lip trill over a single tone, try the warm-up over an arpeggio. This exercise is beneficial for developing control of breathing out as well as stimulating the mouth and lips.

## iii. Humming

Using the same nasal sounds as in the “siren” exercise and hum diatonically:

1 2 3 4 5 4 3 2 1

Try to fill your face with as much vibration as possible. This exercise is beneficial for realizing the different locations in the face and head where the vibrations occur for each nasal sound. It also simply, warms up the voice.

## iv. Tongue Twisters

Repeating tongue twisters is an excellent way to loosen facial muscles and to warm-up your articulation. Some examples of popular tongue twisters are listed below. Try saying them as fast as possible but as slow as necessary to produce clear articulation.

*Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.  
A peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked.  
If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers,  
Where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?*

*Betty Botter bought some butter  
But she said the butter's bitter  
If I put it in my batter, it will make my batter bitter  
But a bit of better butter will make my batter better  
So 'twas better Betty Botter bought a bit of better butter*

*She sells seashells by the seashore*

### III. Exercises and Etudes

The exercises and etudes in this section are intended to serve as an introduction to building coordination between the voice and playing the instrument within musical context. The musical material on its own is rather simple, so this may not be as beneficial to more advanced players as it would to younger double bassists.

#### a. Speaking

The first two speaking exercises are common simple tongue twisters used by actors to warm-up and loosen their mouths. Repeat the following short phrases:

*Red leather, yellow leather*  
*Unique New York*

This should be done as fast as possible but as slow as necessary. Also, try to over-emphasize each word to ensure clear articulation. For the sake of building rhythmic coordination with the double bass in a musical context, repeat these tongue twisters with the short musical motives in Fig. 3.a.1 and Fig. 3.a.2

Fig. 3.a.1- **Red Leather, Yellow Leather**

The musical notation for 'Red Leather, Yellow Leather' consists of two staves. The top staff is labeled 'Voice' and is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 2/4. It contains four measures of music with lyrics: 'Red', 'lea - ther,', 'yel - low', and 'lea - ther.'. The notes are quarter notes with stems pointing up, and there are 'x' marks above the notes in the second and fourth measures. The bottom staff is labeled 'Double Bass' and is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 2/4. It contains four measures of music with lyrics: 'Red', 'lea - ther,', 'yel - low', and 'lea - ther.'. The notes are quarter notes with stems pointing down, and there are 'x' marks above the notes in the second and fourth measures.

Fig. 3.a.2 - **Unique New York**

The musical notation for 'Unique New York' consists of two staves. The top staff is labeled 'Voice' and is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 6/8. It contains four measures of music with lyrics: 'U - nique', 'New York,', and 'U'. The notes are quarter notes with stems pointing up. The bottom staff is labeled 'Double Bass' and is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 6/8. It contains four measures of music with lyrics: 'U - nique', 'New York,', and 'U'. The notes are quarter notes with stems pointing down, and there are 'x' marks above the notes in the second and fourth measures.

For **Unique New York**, be sure that the “nique” and “York” are emphasized.

**Mother Pheasant Plucker** is a more engaging and challenging tongue-twister warm-up commonly used by actors. In order to avoid derogatory accidents, it is recommended that you internalize the text and start slow when reciting the following:

*I'm a mother pheasant plucker,  
I pluck mother pheasants.  
I'm the most pleasant mother pheasant plucker,  
to ever pluck a mother pheasant. Actually, ...  
I'm not the pheasant plucker,  
I'm the pheasant plucker's son.  
But I'll stay and pluck the pheasants  
Till the pheasant plucking 's done!*

For the adventurous double bassists eager to try this in a very simple musical context, Fig. 3.a.3 on the next page provides a quasi-etude using this text with plucking counterparts in the double bass part.

**Grip Top Sock** is another challenging tongue twister taken from William S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan's "Mikado." As with **Mother Pheasant Plucker**, internalize the text and start slow when learning the text. Fig. 3.a.4 on page (...) provides another quasi-etude setting the text of **Grip Top Sock** to a simple double bass accompaniment.

*Give me the gift of a grip top sock,  
A clip drape shipshape tip top sock.  
Not your spinslick slapstick slipshod stock,  
But a plastic, elastic grip-top sock.  
None of your fantastic slack swap slop  
From a slap dash flash cash haberdash shop.  
Not a knick knack knitlock knockneed knickerboxers sock  
With a mock-shot blob-mottled trick-ticker top clock.  
Not a supersheet seersucker rucksack sock,  
Not a spot-speckled frog-freckled cheap sheik's sock  
Off a hodge-podge moss-blotched scotch-botched block.  
Nothing slipshod drip drop flip flop or glip glop  
Tip me to a tip top grip top sock.*

Fig. 3.a.3 - Mother Pheasant Plucker

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of five systems, each with a vocal line and a double bass line. The lyrics are: "I'm a mother pheasant plucker. I pluck mother pheasants. I'm the most pleasant mother pheasant plucker, to ever pluck a mother pheasant. Actually! I'm not the pheasant plucker. I'm the pheasant plucker's son, but I'll stay and pluck the pheasants 'till the pheasant plucking's done."

**System 1:** The vocal line begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The lyrics are "I'm a mother pheasant plucker. I pluck mother pheasants. I'm the". The double bass line starts with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp. It features a half note G2, followed by a quarter rest, and then a half note G2 with a plucking instruction "+ (pizz. Lh.)".

**System 2:** The vocal line continues with "most pleasant mother pheasant plucker, to ever pluck a". The double bass line has a half note G2, followed by a quarter rest, and then a half note G2 with a plucking instruction "+".

**System 3:** The vocal line continues with "mother pheasant. Actually! I'm not the pheasant plucker. I'm the". The double bass line has a half note G2, followed by a quarter rest, and then a half note G2 with a plucking instruction "+".

**System 4:** The vocal line continues with "pheasant plucker's son, but I'll stay and pluck the pheasants 'till the". The double bass line has a half note G2, followed by a quarter rest, and then a half note G2 with a plucking instruction "+".

**System 5:** The vocal line concludes with "pheasant plucking's done.". The double bass line has a half note G2, followed by a quarter rest, and then a half note G2 with a plucking instruction "+".

### Fig. 3.a.4 - Grip Top Sock

The musical score consists of ten systems, each with a vocal line (Vo.) and a double bass line (Cb.). The lyrics are as follows:

Give me the gift of a grip top sock. A drip drape, ship shape, tip top sock. Not your  
 spin - slick, slap stick, slip slop stock, but a pla - stic e - la - stic grip top sock. None of  
 your fan - tas - tic slack swap slop from a slap - dash, flash - cash, ha - ber-dash shop. Not a  
 knick knack, knit - lock, knock - need kni - cker - bo - xers sock with a  
 a mock - shot, blob-mot-tled trick tick - er-tock clock. Not a rucked-up, pu-ckered-up, flip - top sock. Not a  
 su - per-sheer, seer - su-cker, ruck - sack sock. Not a spot - spe-ckled, frog - fre-ckled, cheap sheik's sock off a  
 hodge - podge moss potched botched scotch block. No - thing  
 slip shop, drip drop, flip flop, or glip glop. Tip me to a tip top grip top sock.

## b. Singing

The first singing exercise in Fig. 3.b.1 combines the simple melody “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” in the vocal line with a double bass accompaniment consisting of half note root pitches from the harmonic progression. The text to both “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” and “The ABC’s” are included.

Fig. 3.b.1 - Twinkle Twinkle ABC’s

The musical score for "Twinkle Twinkle ABC's" is presented in three systems. Each system includes a vocal line (Vo.) and a double bass line (Cb.). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The first system (measures 1-5) features the vocal melody for "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" and the ABCs. The second system (measures 6-10) continues the melody with lyrics about diamonds and stars. The third system (measures 11-15) concludes with lyrics about wondering what you are.

System 1 (Measures 1-5):  
Voice: Twin-kle, twin-kle lit-tle star. How I won-der what you are. Up a-bove the  
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S  
Double Bass: Accompaniment consisting of half note root pitches.

System 2 (Measures 6-10):  
Vo.: world so high, like a dia-mond in the sky. Twin-kle, twin-kle lit-tle star.  
T U V (dou-ble U) X Y and Z. Now I know my A B C's.  
Cb.: Accompaniment consisting of half note root pitches.

System 3 (Measures 11-15):  
Vo.: How I won-der what you are.  
Next time won't you sing with me.  
Cb.: Accompaniment consisting of half note root pitches.

Once it is comfortable to sing a simple melody over sustained root pitches, try adding a more rhythmically engaging accompaniment with the double bass. Take for example, Fig. 3.b.2. Here, **Happy Birthday** is set to a waltz-like accompanying figure. This has a more driving rhythm, and the pitches chosen fill out the harmonic progression.

Fig. 3.b.2 - **Happy Birthday**

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Happy Birthday'. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system includes a Voice staff (treble clef, G-clef) and a Double Bass staff (bass clef, F-clef). The second system includes a Voice staff (treble clef, G-clef) and a Cb. staff (bass clef, C-clef). The music is in the key of D major (two sharps) and 3/4 time. The lyrics are: 'Hap - py Birth-day to you! Hap-py Birth-day to you! Hap-py Birth - day dear (per - son). Hap - py Birth - day to you!'.

The musical approach in the **Twinkle Twinkle ABC's** and **Happy Birthday** etudes may also be applied to other pop and folk songs since many lyrics and chord changes to several thousands of songs may be found online. Look up some of your favorite pop songs and practice a sort of karaoke with yourself. Be adventurous!

### c. Phonetics

The following etude in Fig. 3.c.1 is based off explanations for bowed articulations in Henri Portnoi's Creative Bass Technique. Even though this etude requires speaking and singing words, it is included under phonetics because of the focus on relating vocal consonances with double bass articulations. The correlations between the words and articulations are as follows:

wayward	–	slur
minimum	–	legato
dado	–	detaché
ha ha	–	portato
Peter piper	–	spicatto
tartar	–	marcato
cocao	–	martelé
K	–	sforzando

As an addition to Mr. Portnoi's list, I have added a tongue click correlating to a Bartok pizzicato.

Fig. 3.c.1

Vo. *way - ward way - ward*

Double Bass

Vo. *way - ward way - ward way - ward mi - ni - mum way - ward mi - ni - mum mi - ni - mum mi - ni - mum*

Cb.

Vo. *da do da do da do da da do da do da do da Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha*

Cb.

Vo. *Pe - ter pi - per Pe - ter pi - per tar - tar tar - tar*

Cb.

Vo. *Pe - ter pi - per Pe - ter pi - per tar - tar tar - tar co - coa co - coa co - coa co - coa*

Cb.

Vo. *tar tar tar tar co - coa co - coa co - coa co - coa tar - tar tar - tar K! (tongue click)*

Cb. *sfz*

# IV. Notation Examples

## a. Speaking

Jacob Druckman's Valentine incorporates the use of the voice in all three vocal technique types. Shown in Figure 4.1.a are the instructions for the vocal sounds found in the piece.

Fig. 4.1.a

Vocal sounds:

Phonetics are written in the International Phonetic Alphabet:

i	beet	bit	u	do	du
ɪ	bit	bit	ə	among	əmʌŋ
ɛ	bet	bɛt	ʒ	measure	mɪʒə
a	bat	bat	ʔ	glottal stop	
ɑ	dot	dɑt	-	nasal sound	
u	foot	fut			



voiced (definite pitch)



unvoiced (whispered)



inhaling (semi-voiced)



voiced, indeterminate pitch (half spoken)



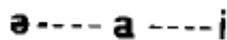
mouth closed (hum)



voiced, falsetto



repeat last written syllable



gradual change (diphthong) from one vowel to another

Throughout Valentine, the performer is required to read aloud sets of spoken, or rather whispered instructions as shown in Figure 4.1.b. In this instance, the text is notated above the music staff at a non rhythmic pace, but still within the notated analog time frame beginning and ending with percussive motives on the double bass.

Fig. 4.1.b

whisper this instruction aloud, barely audibly, as fast as possible; try to keep the same even pulse of the preceding music while leaning forward and peering in-

tensely at the score; begin again on the word "now"

pp ← mf

p

Jon Deak's B.B. Wolf: An Apologia may be one of the most frequently performed double bass-voice pieces in the repertoire. As shown in Figure 4.1.c, the performer is instructed to speak in a rhythmically precise, yet still naturally spoken manner hocketted amongst various ordinary and extended techniques.

Fig. 4.1.c

When I see a pig I have to chase it. It's in my nature. It has to be.

Behind Bridge

Ribs Knuckles

Tail Piece

Rib Fingers

R.H. \*

(both hands)

L.H.

pizz. ord.

gliss.

arco

pizz.

Originally intended for solo cello, Possessed by John Steinmetz is also adaptable for solo double bass. In the instructions, Steinmetz clarifies, “Words to speak are in quotations: ‘This is the composer speaking.’” This example in context can be seen in Figure 4.1.d.

Fig. 4.1.d

The image shows a musical score for a cello part. The score is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a 3/8 time signature. The text instructions are: "This is the composer speaking." followed by a fermata, then "sul pont." with a fermata, and finally "For the next few minutes I shall be occupying the mind and body of this cellist, in order to get a few things across." with a fermata. Below the staff, there are two notes: a sharp sign followed by a note with a fermata, and another note with a fermata. The dynamics are marked as *ppp* (sneak in) and *p*. A long slur covers the two notes and extends to the right.

Steinmetz also includes instructions for the acting aspects of the performance (Figure 4.1.e). From the instructions, it is clear that he leaves significant artistic freedom up to the performer, especially with regard to the text.

Fig. 4.1.e

**ACTING**

The various voices that "speak through" the cellist are differentiated by musical motives. You don't need to change your voice to create different personages. (If you *want* to use different voices, give it a try and see how it works.)

You don't have to be an actor. Apply your musical skills and intuition to figure out how to perform the words. Use timing, tempo, loudness, and the other elements of musical expression to give your voice character. I think that the piece could be hurt more by overacting or too much emoting than by underacting.

Digital Assistant by Benjamin Taylor not only requires the performer to memorize a lengthy script of text but also to converse with a prerecorded tape. Figure 4.1.f shows a page of the script and how the composer notates interjections of playing into the conversation.

Fig. 4.1.f

DA: Would you like a tuning pitch?

P: [pleased and a bit surprised] Oh, sure, thanks!

[quickly finishes tuning]

P: All right . . . [looking at the score] So, movement one . . . let's see . . .

DA: Would you like to begin with or without the electronic accompaniment?

P: Oh, [now turning gaze to laptop screen] well, I'd like to try it with the electronics. [now turning back to the score and speaking more to himself] On second thought, I'd better play it under tempo first . . .

DA: I can play the electronics under tempo for you.

P: Oh, you can do that? Great!

DA: Two beat count-off provided. One. Two.

[PLAY MVT 1, measures 1-6]

$\text{♩} = 66$

The musical score consists of two staves. The first staff is in 4/4 time and the second staff is in 3/4 time. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 66. The first staff contains measures 1-4, and the second staff contains measures 5-6. The score includes various dynamic markings such as *pp*, *ff*, *p*, *pp*, *mf*, and *f*, as well as articulation markings like *pizz.*, *arco*, and accents. There are also slurs and phrasing slurs throughout the piece.

[WHILE PLAYING]

DA: A bit softer, this is marked piano.

P: Oh yeah. [performer plays softer]

DA: Much better.

DA: That note should have been pizzicato.

P: Oh right. [re-articulates it pizzicato]

DA: (Chime) [electronics and performer stop] I'm sorry. Error quota has been reached.

P: Huh? What? [confused]

Although Paul Ramsier's Road to Hamelin is intended for separate narrator and double bass, Gary Karr has successfully performed and recorded the work for solo narrator-double bassist with orchestral accompaniment. The work is mostly notated with alternating blocks of text and music, à la Serge Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf. In Figure 4.1.g, we can see one sentence of text spoken before the music begins, three instances of free flowing text spoken during measures of rest, and one instance of text spoken in tempo.

Fig. 4.1.g

NARR. Hamelin is a pretty little town.  
 ERZ. Hameln ist eine hübsche kleine Stadt.

*Allegretto, poco mosso* (♩ = 108)

Just like any pretty little town.  
 Genau wie jede andere hübsche kleine Stadt.

The morning sun lights its rooftops.  
 Die Morgensonne scheint auf die Dächer der Häuser.

Under those rooftops are people just like any other people.  
 Unter diesen Dächern wohnen Leute, genau wie alle anderen Leute.

Moth-ers, Chil-dren,  
 Müt-ter! Kin-der!

NARR. (Spoken in tempo)  
 ERZ. Fa-thers, Vä-ter!

*mf*, *mp*, *mf*, *mp*, *mp subito*, *delicato*, *p*, *mp espress, legato*, *mp*

In Failing: A Very Difficult Piece for Solo Double Bass, the performer is “required to read a long text while playing music written above the text.” In the case of this piece composed by Tom Johnson, the spoken text also serves as the performance instructions leading the audience into a very meta performance about success and failure. Near the end of the piece, the composer asks the performer to improvise text over the rest of the music (see Fig. 4.1.h)

Fig. 4.1.h

balance between the speaking and the playing. As an additional challenge, I am supposed to

link the written part of the text with the improvised part so smoothly that no one will be

able to tell exactly where the improvised speaking began.

## b. Singing

In Fig. 4.2.a, two different methods of singing can be seen in Jacob Druckman’s Valentine, both within the span of approximately five seconds. The first instance shows pianissimo humming beginning on A over three different flageolet attacks (col legno, pizzicato, and arco). This is immediately followed by a quick overtone sweep in the voice. This overtone sweep is executed by singing a B-flat and altering the shape of the mouth indicated by the specific vowels notated in the score. This vocal overtone sweep is paired with an overtone sweep in the double bass executed by moving the bow from ordinario to ponticello and back to ordinario.

Fig. 4.2.a

mp

pp

sfz

f

mp

ff

Jacob Richman's Pretty Polly is composed in a quasi-bluesy, folk style which is further explained in his notes to the performer in Fig. 4.2.b. Even though the piece is written for female bassist-vocalist, the composer provides just enough flexibility allowing for male performances declaring that the vocal line "could be transposed an octave down," but further octavisation is not recommended. The only other performance note regards the specific approach to the grace notes.

Fig. 4.2.b

### Notes to performer for playing *Pretty Polly*

Vocal Range: Written for untrained female voice, though could be transposed an octave down for male voice.

Folk-style, Broken Grace Notes in the Vocal Line

Example, mm. 204-205

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff is for the voice, and the bottom staff is for the bass. The vocal line starts with a grace note 'I' followed by the lyrics 'stabbed her!'. The bass line has a forte 'f' dynamic marking.

Grace notes, which appear often throughout the piece, are to be sung *on* the beat of the primary note that follows. For instance, the A grace note in the second bar of the example is sung on the downbeat of the bar, not before. Grace notes should all be quickly articulated, with a slight accent, and slurred unto the following primary note. They are meant to mimic the broken grace note common in English, Irish and Bluegrass folk singing.

An excerpt from Pretty Polly is shown in Fig. 4.2.c below where the performer sings a blues-like line of text over an obbligato bass. The notation is quite clear and practical, and Jacob Richman maintains this style of notation throughout the piece.

Fig. 4.2.c

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff is for the voice, and the bottom staff is for the double bass (Db.). The vocal line has the lyrics 'Po - lly and tried to get - a - way'. The Db. line has a forte 'f' dynamic marking.

Although the piece is not intended for solo performer, Madam and the Minister for soprano and double bass by Betty Roe, is notated clearly enough to feasibly adapt the work for solo performer. This piece is notated almost the same as Jacob Richman's

Pretty Polly with the vocal line on top and the double bass part written underneath. She even includes text in German for more international accessibility. The first few bars of this jazz song is shown in Fig. 4.2.d

Fig. 4.2.d

The musical score for 'Pretty Polly' consists of two systems. The first system features a Soprano line and a Double Bass line. The Soprano line begins with a rest followed by a melodic phrase starting on a middle C. The Double Bass line starts with a pizzicato (pizz.) instruction and a piano (p) dynamic, playing a rhythmic accompaniment. The lyrics are written below the notes: 'Rev - erend But - ler came by My house last week. He said "Have you got a lit - tle time, a lit - tle - it - tle time to bei und sprach: „Hast du nicht ein biss - chen Zeit, ein klei - nes bisschen Zeit für'.

In the coda section of Peter Vask's Bass Trip, the performer is instructed to whistle a simple melody over a waltz-like accompaniment in the instrumental line. Fortunately for those unable to whistle, the composer allows the performer the option of humming the melody instead. This passage is shown in Fig. 4.2.e.

4.2.e

The musical score for the coda section of 'Bass Trip' shows a vocal line and a double bass line. The vocal line is marked 'a tempo' and 'mp' (mezzo-piano). It features a simple melody with a long note value, likely intended for whistling or humming. The double bass line provides a waltz-like accompaniment with a steady bass line and chords.

\*) pfeifen oder singen, die Oktavlage bestimmt der Interpret  
whistle or sing in an octave suitable for the musician

### c. Phonetics

Looking once again at Jacob Druckman's Valentine, we can see the composer's inclusion of several diverse sound effects produced with the voice, most times blending with the sounds of the double bass producing one unique soundscape. Figure 4.3.a shows Druckman's blending of the vocal effect "bi-gi-di-gi-di" and an audible inhale with col legno ricochet on the bass.



Fig. 4.3.c

*f* *espressivo*  
*e. mesto*  
*mf* "YA-YA-YA - etc." (tunelessly) M. 200  
 "W - W - WHO - O - S - S - H - H" (unvoiced)  
 finger taps on top M. 200  
 rub palm down top  
*mfz*

Kenneth Gaburo's Inside (quartet for one double bass player) from his Poems and Other Theaters, excellently depicts the use of several different phonemes and sound effects in a graphic score setting. Fig. 4.3.e shows a short example from Kenneth Gaburo's score, excellently exemplifying the use of these phonemes and sound effects in an experimentally notated graphic score. As seen in the selections of Gaburo's performance notes in Fig. 4.3.d, the phonemes are derived from each individual letter of the word "inside." In note number 19 and 23, he instructs the double bassist to perform mouth clicks (followed by a whistle in number 23). In note number 33 he instructs the double bassist to perform a kissing sound.

Fig. 4.3.d

*P* *BR* *N* *I* *S* *D* *TR* *P* *BR* *N* *D* *TR* *N* *M* *X*

Fig. 4.3.e

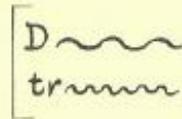
The phonemes articulated by the voice are those of the word: INSIDE:

1. I N S I D E  
 ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓  
 [I] [N] [s] [aɪ] [ɒ]

2. [ɒ] always implies [ɒ → I]

3. All voice phonemes are sotto voce except as noted below [nos. 32,34]

4. In those various instances where some voiced vocal utterance is accompanied by some doublebass sound, special attention should be given to timbral mix [ in general consider that the voice utterance takes on some of the attributes of the accompanying bass sound, and vice versa ].  
 E.g.:



...

19.  $\begin{matrix} M \\ X \end{matrix}$  = LH finger snap + mouth click

...

23.  $\begin{matrix} M \\ X \end{matrix} \circ$  = finger snap + mouth click (together) followed by whistle

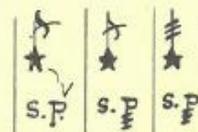
...

29.  $\begin{matrix} \text{grace note} \\ S \end{matrix}$  = voiced grace note. All grace notes are as short as possible and lean (lilt) into some element

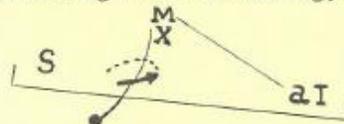
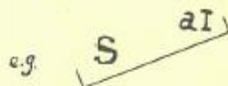
...

32.  $\begin{matrix} I \\ \text{triangle} \end{matrix}$  = voice--sotto voce to open mouth (phoneme distortion)

33.  $\begin{matrix} \text{Bass sul ponticello} \\ \text{tremolo or up-bow} \\ \text{+ kissing voice} \\ \text{sound (single or repeated)} \end{matrix}$



34. = whispered words are enclosed in brackets. The phonemes in question should be as connected as possible in order to make the word intelligible. Sometimes such words are momentarily interrupted during their unfolding, e.g.:



Throughout the work, the following words are whispered. They are derived from Inside: [sie], [ice], [die], [in], [din], [deny], [inside]

35.  $\begin{matrix} \text{grace note} \\ I \\ \text{D.S.} \end{matrix}$  = voiced grace note + bass double stop (normal)

ZAB ou la Passion Salon St. Nectaire by Philippe Boivin requires the performer to execute various methods of breathing to create a unique sound world when blended properly with the double bass. In his notation instructions for the voice (Fig. 4.3.f), he explains his notation for coughs, audible inhalations, and panting among other vocal effects.

Fig. 4.3.f

NOTATION / VOICE	
	Soft or violent contraction of the diaphragm according to the nuance indicated : Muted "sound" resembling restrained cough .
	tongue cluck
	Audible intake of air (non voiced) Phonetic transcription : "ɔ" as in dog .  Audible release of air : Simile
	Diaphragm staccato (doglike panting) The release of air always takes place while the right hand strokes and the intakes with left-hand strokes . Percussion fingerings will therefore induce intake/release patterns . ( non-voiced )  Ex :
	Onomatopoeic / dōgē , dōgélē , dōgélégē , domatōk ... must be considered as a complement to percussion (in terms of energy) . "Muted sound" slightly voiced with breathing . All of the energy is obtained by violent diaphragm contraction : "mfz" on the first syllable of onomatopoe such as "dōgē" ; accents are indicated for other types .

The following musical example in Fig. 4.3.g demonstrates the composer's integration of these breaths and how they are blended into the double bass playing.

Fig. 4.3.g

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# DataBASS of Works for Solo Double Bass-Voice

Composer	Title (Year)	Voice type	Other notes
Boivin, Philippe Childs, Barney Childs, Barney Deak, Jon	ZAB ou la passion selon St. Nectaire (1981) Jack's New Bag (1966) Mr. T., His Fancy (1967) Audition (1972)	phonetics, speaking singing singing speaking	
Deak, Jon	The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes: The Hound of the Baskervilles (1984)	speaking	
Deak, Jon	The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes: The Speckled Band (2011)	speaking	commissioned by Todd Leavitt
Deak, Jon	B.B. Wolf: An Apologia (1982)	speaking, percussion	
Deak, Jon	Color Studies (1969)	phonetics	
Deak, Jon	A Flatlander in Colorado (1976)	speaking	performer doubling on harmonica, melodica, and foot percussion
Deak, Jon	Readings from Steppenwolf or The Private Life of Harry Haller (1982)	speaking	
Deak, Jon	Surrealist Studies (1970)	phonetics	
Deak, Jon	The Wonderful World of Language (1980)	phonetics, speaking	premiered by Alvin Brehm
Deak, Jon	Valentine (1969)	phonetics, speaking	
Erickson, Robert Gaburo, Kenneth Gibson, Sarah	Ricerar á 3 (1967) Inside (1969) Family Recipe for Biscuits (2010)	phonetics phonetics singing	for Bertram Turetzky Text: Aaron Fullerton For Maggie Hasspacher
Hansen, Peter Hartshorne, Richard Jaggard, David	Bass Player Rap (1996) Interview with the Dwarf (199?) I Had a Dog (1999)	rapping speaking speaking	written for Jon Deak

Johnson, Tom	Failing: A Very Difficult Piece for Solo String Bass (1975)	speaking	adapted for solo performer by Gary Karr
Kurtz, Eugene	The Last Contrabass in Las Vegas (1974)	phonetics, speaking	
Leandre, Joëlle	Taxi (1981)	speaking	
Murray, David	My First Audition (2009)	speaking	premiered at ISB
Peck, Russell	Automobile (1965)	humming	
Peck, Russell	One db (1968)	humming	
Pillinger, Franz	Sonate (1986)	overtone singing	
Pillinger, Franz	Little Bear's Concerto (?)		
Ramsier, Paul	The Low-Note Blue (?)		
Ramsier, Paul	Road to Hamlin (1978)	speaking	commissioned by Gary Karr for piano or orchestra
Richman, Jacob	Pretty Polly (2008)	untrained singing	accompaniment for untrained voice and live video
Schwartz, Elliot	Dialogue for Solo Contrabass (1966)	phonetics	
Smith, Stuart Saunders	Past Regrets (2014)	speaking (jibberish)	
Smith, Stuart Saunders	Tunnels (1982)	speaking	for Richard Hartshorne
Steimetz, John	The Creation of the World (?)	speaking	originally for cello
Steimetz, John	Possessed (1990)	speaking	commissioned by Cody Takacs
Taylor, Ben	Digital Assistant (2012)	speaking	Also uses electronics
Turetzky, Bert	Collage 1 (1982)	whistling/humming	from Poems, Portraits, Ballads, and Blues
Turetzky, Bert	Lament (1987)	speaking	from Poems, Portraits, Ballads, and Blues
Turetzky, Bert	Numerology: A Song (1987)	speaking	commissioned for the 2003 ARD competition
Vasks, Peteris	Bass Trip (2003)	whistling/humming	premiered by Andris
Vasks, Peteris	Sonata for Contrabasso Solo (1986)	whistling/humming	

Waddle, P. Kellach	December Missouri Morning (2009)	speaking	Grunte composed for and premiered by Jessica Gilliam-Valls
Waddle, P. Kellach	Dark Whispers of Tobacco and Alleluia (2011)	speaking	composed for and premiered by Jessica Gilliam-Valls
Waddle, P. Kellach	Dreams of Montevideo (2012)	speaking and singing	composed for and premiered by Jessica Gilliam-Valls
Whittenberg, Charles	Conversations (1968)	sound effects	

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