

Intermediate notes

Intermediate notes are part of the mechanism of shifting, and are used in measuring distances and exact intonation.

How clearly you can hear intermediate notes depends on the type of piece and the context. They can range from inaudible, through to 'ghosting', through to being an expressive element of the shift. 'Ghosting' means to play the intermediate note with as little bow as possible (no more than one centimetre), and with as little bow pressure as possible (barely touch the string with the bow), and harmonic-like finger pressure.

¹ See also *Ghosting*, page 182

The ideal is that in the end there is no 'shift' at all, i.e. in the following example, play 'note-note-note', rather than note-note-*shift*-note-note':



However, practising intermediate notes brings great security to each shift by clarifying the positions before and after the shift; the fingers that will actually do the shifting; the exact interval that the shifting finger must travel.

134

Classical shifts

Classical shifts are also known as 'beginning shifts' because you move on the finger that begins the shift.

Ascending Shift up on the lower finger until you are in the right position to place the upper finger directly on its note. The note that you shift to with the lower finger is the intermediate note.

Descending Shift down with the upper finger until you are in the right position to place the lower finger directly on its note. The note the upper finger shifts to is the intermediate note.



(1) The note you are shifting to, fourth-finger B \flat , is in 5th position. Shift with the first finger to 1st position. This note, F, is the intermediate note. Having arrived there simply drop the fourth finger on B \flat .

Although the sound of the shift is an octave, the actual distance of the shift is a perfect fifth, B \flat to F, played first finger to first finger.

(2) Shift with the fourth finger to 1st position. E \flat is the intermediate note, and having arrived there simply drop the first finger on B \flat and then lift the fourth finger. The actual distance of the octave shift is again a perfect fifth (fourth finger to fourth finger).

Example 1

Mozart: Concerto no. 5 in A, K219, *mov. 3*



- (1) Play the two notes of the shift (A, F \sharp), and the intermediate note (C \sharp), with equal length and equal bow pressure.
- (2) Play the intermediate note shorter.
- (3) Ghost the intermediate note.
- (4) Still thinking of the intermediate note, play A followed by F \sharp as if there were no shift – simply play the two notes one after another.

