



## Guide to AMEB Viola Technical Book Series 2

For young students, this book may be their first technical book. For teachers and advanced students, it may be one of several resources used for technical development. It is hoped that this book, in combination with other resources, will progressively support the individual musical growth of each student.

### ***For the student:***

The opening section in each grade is the technical work, which is to be performed from memory. Exercises and excerpts follow, and you may use the book to perform these in the exam.

To increase your ability to play in tune, tune your viola every time you play. Listen to your open strings. Sing intervals then play, play with another instrument, play with a drone, record yourself, check with a tuner. Fingerboard tapes or stickers may be helpful as you start, and are allowed to be used in Preliminary exams, but not for exams in higher grades.

To memorise with confidence, study the theory of scales and arpeggios first. Once these are understood, play them on the viola in finger patterns of tones, semitones and intervals. As you advance, use the information on pages 8 and 9 to understand and learn key signatures, the cycle of fifths, major and relative minor keys.

Work in small sections. Practice calmly in groups of notes (chunks) and very slowly at first. Use a metronome – good rhythm, tone and intonation are related. A moderate amount of repetition is vital. Aim at five repetitions, no mistakes, and if too hard, break those groups down further. Then, add speed! Observe instructions about bow distribution and articulation.

In Level Two and beyond, continue to use the metronome regularly, and keep developing a strong internal inner pulse by using a metronome in a variety of ways. Understand bowing terms such as martelé, détaché, spiccato, sautillé and hook stroke. Practice bow patterns first on open strings, with a metronome. In scales, arpeggios and excerpts, you may use fingerings marked in this book or other fingerings of your choice; with exercises, please use the given fingerings, and make sure you read, understand and follow all the instructions. Orchestral excerpts must be prepared by listening first to a recording with a score, to discover the musical context of what you will be preparing. You may like to enrich your musical journey further by reading about the composer, the work and listening to other works as well.

Use a mirror or film yourself to check posture and hold of viola and bow. The ears guide left-hand fingers, the eyes guide the bow. Always consider the weight, speed and positioning of the bow relative to the bridge for the optimum tone production. Technical work should form a natural, creative and recreative part of your daily practice, and will give power and confidence to your music making. Play your technical work with passion and conviction, as if it were your most favourite piece of music, and enjoy your progress!

### ***For the teacher:***

Since the production of the 2007 Series 1 viola syllabus, there have been considerable changes to AMEB violin syllabus with several updates in intervening years. Many more comprehensive viola scale and technical books have come into publication recently. The content and layout of this book reflects these developments, and requirements for each grade are now set out within each chapter for each grade. At the time of writing the Series 1 AMEB Viola Technical Workbook, there was an awareness of the Violin Technical work of the time. This awareness continues today. Series 2 Viola technical work Level one correlates with the AMEB Violin syllabus Level 1 at time of publication. Level 2 is focussed specifically on preparation for the technical and musical demands of viola repertoire. Advanced virtuosic viola solo literature lies more predominantly in the twentieth century and beyond.

There are many different approaches to fingering scales and arpeggios. Context is everything. A finger pattern and approach to intonation used in a slow expressive phrase may be quite different from rapid passagework, for example. Players and instruments vary in many ways. Choose fingerings in scales, arpeggios and excerpts that produce the most musical result for each student. In exercises, markings are compulsory, unless otherwise indicated. In scales, arpeggios and excerpts, markings are advisory, not compulsory. Orchestral repertoire is the most likely ensemble experience available for most students. The orchestral excerpts have been chosen with the aim also to encourage listening to a wide range of composers and musical styles.