

Where Is First Position?

For violin & Piano
by
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This short exercise with broken thirds serves to illustrate in a practical way the need for teachers to avoid the notion of teaching a rigid, fixed "place" for the left hand. Because intonation is a moving target, players must be prepared to make the minute shifts within any position to meet the demands of the music.

Our goal, of course, is to support the freedom and independence of the fingers of the left hand. It is the inner ear that guides the fingers and sets the locus or playing areas of the whole hand.

Some teachers approach this concept by noting that the playing area of the hand is determined by what the fourth finger is asked to do. In the first part of this musical example (A major) the fourth finger is asked to substitute for open strings. This is a *higher* first position. In the second part (Eb major) the fourth finger will play tones a half-step lower. This is a *lower* first position.



Where Is First Position?

It depends on the musical context!

Herbert S. Gardner

Moderato ♩ = 100

A "higher" first position

Violin

Piano

A "lower" first position

Vln.

Pno.

Vln.

Pno.