

# Getting You Results!

The Strategy & Tactic You  
MUST HAVE to Prepare for  
International Violin  
Competitions

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# The Strategy & Tactic You Must Have to Prepare for International Violin Competitions

By Prof. Hrachya Harutyunian

(Short version)

Thinking of preparing for an important international violin competition?

Are you dreaming about winning a prominent international violin competition and kick-start your professional career as a recognized concert violinist?

If yes, you should be asking yourself: How can I best prepare for my violin competition?

What should I do in order to be secure technically, mentally, and physically so that I perform to the very best of my abilities and rank among the prize-winners?

What is the cleverest strategy in order to present myself in peak form and to be able to compete seriously and - why not - to win the first prize?

First of all, congratulations for taking the big decision to compete at an international level with the desire to win because it demonstrates that you are determined to make the enormous effort needed to stand out from the crowd, taking action and taking into your own hands the responsibility of proving to yourself and the rest of the world that you are worthy of this goal.

Everybody who is significant in any way in our society did not achieve this status without effort. In fact, the contrary is true: every one of them made a tremendous effort in order to become significant. And you are about to do the same for your own life.

Now, beginning an important journey such as the preparation for an international competition, one should be aware of and be planning many things in advance. That's why I want you to realize that there are two strategic approaches for planning in general:

No. 1. Planning the steps from the simplest to more complex.

No. 2. Planning the steps from the most important to the simplest.

What does this mean?

## Approach No. 1

Planning the steps from the simplest to more complex.

There are four main topics you need to think about when you start planning your strategy. I'll name them first and then explain in detail.

1. Technical Preparation (meaning the violin playing technique).
2. Physical and Mental Preparation.
3. Repertoire – the program you're going to present.
4. Time-Frame Plan (what to do, in which order and how far in advance before the competition starts).

1. Bringing the violin playing **technique** and it's quality to its pinnacle, so that it works wonderfully and allows you to do all the "work" you need as a violinist/instrumentalist in high-pressure situations, which are, in our case, the stage performance on a competition. One thing is clear: you should be prepared technically to the best of your abilities, period.

2. You should be prepared very well **physically** also. What does this mean for you? Well, you should be able to play your program without getting too tired, or exhausted. It means that you should be not only practicing enough hours before the competition but also do some light sports (like jogging, swimming, stretching or at least some gymnastics exercises at home). I always recommend to all of my students to do some sports in order to develop, besides all the professional muscles, some extra ones. That's why swimming, jogging, dancing, stretching, yoga etc. are good for you and are highly recommended, especially in a process of preparing for a competition.

3. You should prepare yourself **mentally** for the coming violin competition. Every musician knows that any stage performance is a stress situation for the player; for some it's more, for others less but, undoubtedly, it is a stress situation.

However, this doesn't mean that it should be negative. It can also be a very positive and exciting feeling. You should know how to deal with stress and be prepared for that. The good news is, this can be done quite easily. You should just learn how to do it and practice it before and during the

competition. The best way for you as a professional musician is to include some light sports in your daily routine.

#### 4. Choosing the right repertoire

You should think carefully about the repertoire you choose for the competition because this is an important part of your strategy. Which Bach solo sonata or partita are you going to play? Which Paganini caprices, Mozart concerto, Sonatas etc? A very important question is: which virtuoso piece are you going to present and, finally, which big concerto?

The idea behind this is to be comfortable with those pieces and at the same time they should be advantageous to you, putting you in the most favorable light. For example the virtuoso piece should end with a climax, forte, as extraordinary and impressive as possible so that the public in the concert hall cannot help but jump out of their seats and begin to applaud from sheer enthusiasm. Examples are: Ravel -Tzigane, Wieniawski - Variations on an Original Theme, Saint-Saens - Rondo Capriccioso etc.

The Concerto you present should be one that you feel comfortable with yet not too 'modest'. Imagine you have got through to the last round and you have a great competitor who plays the Brahms Concerto and you play something like the Saint-Saens concerto (just an example). Even you play absolutely gorgeously, there is no comparison to the Brahms.

Also, think of the last movements. Let's take as an example the Sibelius Concerto and Paganini No. 1. Again, in my opinion, Paganini's concerto, though an extremely virtuosic piece, is much less interesting and exciting, especially when you consider the last movements of these two concertos which is, remember, very important because it is the *end* of your ENTIRE performance at the competition.

So as you see, this part of the preparation for your competition is not to be under-estimated.

## Approach No. 2

Planning the steps from the most important to the simplest.

Here the first question to ask is: Which competition should I choose? Can I participate (and become a major prizewinner) in a big competition such as

the Queen Elisabeth or Tchaikovsky? The answer is simple: only if you have participated and had a certain success in other competitions (not necessarily first prize but definitely having got through to the second or, maybe, third rounds.) Then, and only then, with some positive experience and a strong background can you realistically plan your preparation strategy for serious and prestigious competitions.

## **Program**

First of all, choose the big concerto: Brahms, Sibelius, Tchaikovsky, Beethoven, Paganini etc. Ask yourself: which is the smartest choice? Again, this is an important question that should be weighed very carefully.

Which Solo Bach Sonata or partita should I choose, which Paganini Caprices?

What is going to be the best virtuoso piece for me to present?

## **Time-Frame for the Preparation**

This is a difficult one. You should have your program at the ready at least three, or even better six months before the start of the competition. Why so early you might ask? Because during this time you should be performing concerts with your program on as many stages and at as many venues as possible. Your program should be polished by performing on stage which will make you supremely confident and allow you to prepare to the best of your ability.

Arrange a few recitals where you can play your full program, use every occasion to play just some of the pieces if it's not possible to play them all, play for friends, and relatives and take all those opportunities extremely seriously. Record yourself (those performances) on video and review them critically.

Try to perform your big concerto with an orchestra if possible. I know this is not easy: "Where can I find an orchestra that will play with me?" You can contact me and, most probably, I can help you with this.

## **Physical Preparation**

As I have mentioned already, you should prepare very well physically too. It means that you need to do some stretching, jogging, swimming, gymnastics and conditioning exercises in order to have built not only the muscles that we have to have as violinists but some extra muscles as well. Get a series of massages if you can. Best of all is a professional massage but if you don't have that possibility, ask your partner, friend, parent. Learn to do it yourself. At least for your hands and arms (which are the most important in this case) and maybe other body parts that you can reach: legs, feet (if doing it yourself, pay attention to the acupuncture points under feet that are supporting all of your inner organs!). Don't forget to include your neck, ears, head etc.

## **Mental Preparation**

This is also one of the most important parts of your preparation for the competition and this is an in-depth subject. It cannot be explored in detail here because of the limited scope of this e-book but if you would like to go into more depth, I would be happy to review it with you in a personal conversation. [Contact me here](#)

## **Nutrition**

You should be knowledgeable about your nutrition and eat the right food while preparing for the competition. You must know at least a few things about which kind of food is providing your body with energy and which kind is robbing your energy, which vitamins are a 'must have' in order to have enough stamina, cool nerves, no anxiety or unnecessary worries. This subject is also something that we can discuss with you in a personal conversation.

As an example, I'd like you to know that meat – contrary to all expectations – is not supplying your body with much needed energy. In fact, it robs you the energy and in a situation where you really need a lot of energy, physical and mental power, endurance and strength, you should know that you better escape your meat this time and get some green salads instead.

I propose we shall discuss this essential matter and another - not less important subject - your must have vitamins in a personal consultation that you can apply for free [here](#).

## The Cultivation of Discipline and the Daily Routine

You should also be disciplined and prepare yourself, besides the points mentioned above, for the stresses that every competition brings. It begins with your daily routine – the time you wake up and the time you go to bed. Decide it for yourself and follow your plan.

You should plan enough time for sleep, at least eight hours. You should decide the time for physical exercise, violin practice, taking meals, as well as time for relaxing and enjoying yourself. You can contact me for more information and apply for [free consulting session here](#).

It is also an important part of every preparation, to train your willpower and visualization. There are a few great techniques and practical exercises I recommend and if you would like me to show you these and how you can get the most out of them then [contact me here](#).

These are all the things to take care of BEFORE the competition. During the competition itself there are a few other things that should be considered but, again, these are subjects that will overextend the size of this e-book.

## During the Competition

Go and listen to the other participants, get the feeling for the atmosphere, for what is going on in general. In this way you can quickly find out what should be avoided or you may notice something that you didn't think of before and it would be good for you to do, on stage for example or whilst warming up, or maybe something else.

Get enough sleep (don't party with new friends, not yet!), eat well and drink enough water. Do gymnastics & stretching every day, pay attention to what you're eating and **never** leave your food and drinks unattended...

If you would like me to guide you personally on how to best prepare for your competition so that you get the most out of this strategy then I'll be happy to help show you how to do it in the get it right. This way you'll be strong, self-confident and will be able to gain the maximum benefit which will last you for the rest of your life without wasting time and money now. **There is no cost to this and there's no obligation of any kind.**

I am offering this free service because I am looking for three talented and promising students who are dreaming of becoming major competition winners and want to make the best foundation for a successful career as concert violinists. There's a good possibility that you are one of them, in which case, you might get the allotted place and together we will be able to get you results that you - and we too! – can be proud of.

Before we go any further, you need to know that I can't help everybody. I can only be of help to people who are willing to put in the necessary work to become major prizewinners of the world's greatest international violin competitions which will kick-start your successful career.

**Here's what to do next. If you want to schedule your free session with me, simply click the link below. When you click, you'll see a form with a few questions about you and what you are looking to accomplish. Once we have that information I'll go over it and contact you as soon as possible.**

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Founder of the OnlineViolinAcademy.com

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