The Bow - Our Magic Wand for Gorgeous Tone

Pretty cool how, as violinists (actually all musicians in general) we are magicians in a way. We take silence and from there create sound with instruments. We have the power to manipulate people’s emotions by the way we put pitches into the ethers.

By playing major keys, our listeners and ourselves for that matter may resonate with happy, joyful, perhaps blissful feelings.

By playing minor keys, our listeners and again ourselves, may resonate with sadness or turmoil.

No matter the key, music is cathartic, healing and in many ways necessary for us to move through these emotions - in a sense create a flow to help relieve stuck energy.

Have you ever gone to your violin when angry?

I know I have...I actually have even done it moreso for the people around me than for myself. The purpose was to create a separation with music between me and someone else and you know what happened? The negative energy dissipated within myself, within the living space and within the other person.

We have the power to raise vibrations within ourselves and our public. We also have the power to do this an even euphoric by combining our artistry with others in a chamber or symphonic setting.

How powerful is that. Way more powerful than any drug or psychotherapist.

I have always gone to music to help me work through emotions.

As violinists, our bow is necessary for us to create this magic in essence it is our magic wand.

There are some specific formulas that are needed for our magic wand to create the beautiful tone necessary to raise vibrations otherwise we may anger ourselves, neighbors and listeners with some horrific cat screaming sounds.

Just like driving a car, it is radically important to know what to do.

I would say one of the important formulas is the proper combination of weight and speed.
A more advanced reaction, depending on what is being called for in the music, is to actually combine more speed with the same weight.

An exercise that I have all my students perform after they understand playing with relaxed weight in the bow arm as opposed to pressure, is the “Crunchy” exercise.

I have them pull a down bow with all their newly found relaxed weight and if done properly a horrible crunchy sound manifests itself.

Which is a WONDERFUL beginning of the exercise. It is exactly what we want to move forward. Kind of like a constant in a science experiment. From here we can work out a healthy formulation of weight and speed for gorgeous tone from a relaxed bow arm.