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Sound Connections

Chapter 3: Tonal and Rhythm Syllable Systems

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Summary

- I. Criteria for Selecting Effective Syllable Systems
 - A. All music educators have their own ideas as to what system is the best for tonal and rhythm instruction
 - B. *Sound Connections* requires:
 - i. Syllables connect efficiently with aural syntax of music so learners can link syllables to patterns before encountering notation
 - ii. Syllables must link to symbols
 - iii. Syllables should be appropriate for all ages: for both very young beginners and advanced learners
 - iv. Tonal syllables should:
 - a. Promote quality singing
 - b. Facilitate the general idea of identical patterns from one pitch level to another
 - c. Assist in the aural identification, labeling, and accurate performance of each mode
 - v. Rhythm syllables should:
 - a. Promote extremely well-articulated rhythmic accuracy
 - b. Facilitate the general idea of identical patterns from one meter to another
 - c. Assist in the aural identification, labeling, and accurate performance of different meters
- II. Tonal Systems
 - A. Symbol-Based (Fixed) Tonal Syllable Systems
 - i. Letter Names and Fixed-Do- students sing the letter name of each note as they read from notation for Letter names; For Fixed-Do students apply solfege syllables to notes, whereas “c” is always “do”.
 - ii. Intervals- students learn the names of all the intervals and apply this information when reading
 - B. Sound-Based (Relative) Tonal Syllable Systems
 - i. Numbers- students put numbers to each of the seven scale degrees
 - ii. Movable-Do- “do” is now assigned to any pitch, and relates to the changes in tonality and tonic pitch level
 - a. Do-Minor- “do” serves as the tonic for minor and for all modes

- b. La-Minor- “la” serves as tonic in minor, using only diatonic syllables for the natural minor scale; each mode has a designated syllable that it starts on
 - C. Moveable-Do is the most effective system because it meets all the criteria that music educators should look for when choosing a system.
- III. Rhythm Systems
 - A. Time-Value Names and the French Time-Name System
 - i. The Time-Value Names System requires each musical note has a proper name associated with it
 - ii. French Time-Name System requires each beat to have a specific syllable (For example: ta, fa, te, fe, ti, fi)
 - B. Kodaly Syllables
 - i. Pattern-based rhythm-syllable system(For example: ta, ti, too, toom, toe, tam)
 - ii. Sound-based syllable system
 - C. Counting and the McHose & Tibbs System
 - i. The counting system uses “1 e & a” and counting numbers to identify the division and subdivision of the beat
 - ii. The McHose & Tibbs System combines counting and a syllable system like the French Time-Name System to identify the division and subdivision of the beat (For example: 1 ta la ta li ta 2)
 - D. Gordon Syllables
 - i. A modified version of the McHose & Tibbs system, replacing the consonants of divisions in simple and compound meters to “n” (For example: 1 ta ne ta) and then changed the beat number to “du” for difficult meters like 5/8 and 7/8
 - E. Takadimi Syllables
 - i. Beat-oriented, with any attack on the beat chanted as “ta”
 - ii. Features unique syllables for simple and compound meter, assigning specific syllables to each subdivision
 - iii. No subdivision syllables are the same
 - iv. Encourages the performance of more difficult patterns such as quintuplets and septuplets
 - v. Makes performing rhythms easier without having to understand notation, because it is experienced aurally
 - F. Takadimi syllables system is the most effective system because it meets all the criteria that music educators should look for when choosing a system.

Discussion

This chapter was filled with an enormous amount of information about the main types of syllable systems for learning tonal and rhythm syllables used in music classrooms by music educators. It gave detailed descriptions of each of the types of tonal and rhythm systems, specifically the positive and negative aspects of each of them. When talking about all of these systems, it also gave the requirements that *Sound Connections* has for the syllable systems that work best for this approach. This was an incredibly informative chapter for me, because I had teachers who used the Counting systems in my choral and band classrooms. This system seemed to work when I was in school, but I still found it complicated when trying to distinguish between simple and compound meters. From reading this chapter, I understand that for tonal systems, Movable-Do is the best system to use and for rhythm systems, Takadimi is the best system. Learning these most effective systems in my music education college-level courses is benefiting me by being able to experience them myself, and understand how well they actually do work. In my music classrooms in the future, I will implement the Movable-Do and Takadimi systems, because I

know that these systems will benefit my students the most out of all the systems that are used. Since I desire to work with young children, starting them at an early age with these systems will set them up for success in future music classrooms to develop their music literacy skills.