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Sound Connections
Chapter 6: Developing Tonal Literacy
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Summary

- I. Working with the Staff
 - A. Lines and spaces of the staff alone do not directly reveal specific tonal patterns
 - B. Moveable-do syllable system integrates the important information provided by the clef sign and key signature
 - C. “do” clef
 1. Incorporates the essential concepts inherent in staff notation while providing a flexibility that facilitates later introduction of any and all clef signs
 2. It allows student to see and read tonal patterns at different pitch levels without the unnecessary complication of key signatures, preventing them from associating specific syllables with specific locations on the staff
 3. The singers will see and read the exact same notation as before; they will simply learn how to use the new symbols to locate “do”
 4. Clef signs, letter names, key signatures, and finding “do” are all introduced at the appropriate time (before the introduction of the first chromatic tone, “si”)
 5. Choose tonal centers that are most comfortable and appropriate for the ensemble
- II. Using Visual Media
 - A. Visual skill is critical in music reading
 - B. Students must make correct connection between sound and symbol from their first encounters with notation
 - C. Introducing notation on the *do*-clef staff allows students to efficiently visualize and read tonal patterns at different pitch levels, thereby preventing them from associating specific syllables with specific locations
 - D. Tonal Wand
 1. Serves as a note head
 2. A music-reader’s eyes must follow music notes as they move higher and lower to represent pitch and left to right to represent duration
 3. Poses a challenge for new readers: keeping their eyes focused on the proper symbol while they are performing the correlated sound
 - E. The Overhead Projector and Overlay Transparencies
 1. Facilitates the layering of notational symbols
 2. Makes it easy to train the eye by highlighting the location of anchor syllables, move patterns on the staff to effectively reinforce the visual

aspect of movable-do, and move patterns on the staff to introduce the concept of melodic sequence

3. Four layers:
 - a. The Blank Staff
 - b. The Tonic-Triad Guide Overlays
 - c. The Tonal-Pattern Overlays
 - d. The Do-Clef Overlay

III. Reading Tonal Patterns

- A. Students are prepared for their first encounter with tonal notation once their sound vocabulary includes major and minor scales
- B. New Tonal-Pattern Presentation Sequence
 1. Integrate the focus patterns into the opening technique exercises, echoing, and/or hand-sign activities
 2. With the appropriate Tonic-Triad Guide Overlay in place, introduce the new patterns on the staff via the Tonal Wand
 3. Add the focus Tonal-Pattern Overlay and have the students read the patterns. Reinforce sound-symbol connection by echoing the patterns while pointing to each note if necessary. Have them read the patterns at two or more different pitch levels to reinforce the movable-do concept
 4. Replace the Tonic-Triad Guide Overlay with the Do-clef Overlay and have the students read the patterns again at two or more pitch levels
- C. The focus at earliest stages is not on assessing individual student ability, but rather on introducing the basic teaching-learning process while maximizing motivation
- D. Avoid singing with the students or playing the patterns/exercises on the piano while they sing, because they do not learn to read under these circumstances and instead learn to follow
- E. Progressing Through the Tonal Content Sequence
 1. Students must be successful reading one level of pattern before moving to the next level
 2. The ultimate goal is for students to internalize the tonal syllables, audiating them while they read the patterns on a neutral syllable
 3. Buffering is important
 4. Introducing Ledger Lines
 - a. Slide a tonal-pattern overlay to a position where the highest or lowest note of the pattern is beyond the staff
 - b. Guide students to discover that a ledger line can be added to extend the staff
 - c. Best introduced after the major pentachord, when students are comfortable with the staff
 5. Introducing The Scale
 - a. Introduce concept of a scale when students are reading the major scale from the staff
 - b. Define it as the “sequential arrangement of the eight tonal syllables”

- c. Compare to the alphabet for young children
 - d. Sing on a variety of beginning pitches
 - e. Octave can be introduced
6. Introducing Clef Signs, Letter Names, and Accidentals
 - a. Clef Signs
 - i. Treble clef and bass clef
 - ii. Introduce when students are comfortable with scales
 - b. Letter Names
 - i. Once clefs are established, introduce the correlated letter names for all of the lines and spaces
 - ii. Connect letter names with the piano and introduce the grand staff
 - c. Accidentals
 - i. Introduce once students understand clef signs and letter names
 - ii. Introduce need for accidentals with the chromatic syllable "si" the leading tone in harmonic minor
 - iii. Whole step and half step
 - iv. Introduce sharp first, then flat and natural
 7. Introducing Key Signatures
 - a. The addition of clef signs to tonal notation leads directly to a need for key signatures
 - b. Approach from a scale construction
 - i. Connect to keys on the piano
 - c. Begin in key of C; students sign with the piano
 - d. Then move to key of F; students will sing a major scale, then compare to key of C and what is different about the notation
 - e. Come to the conclusion of needing a Bb in the key of F and why
 - f. Key signatures and clef signs combine to replace the do-clef
 - g. Represents both major and minor keys (relative)
 8. Introducing Interval Names
 - a. Students should be familiar with the concept of interval and terms octave, whole step, and half step, before naming intervals
 - b. Vocal exercises are most effective way to introduce intervals
 - c. Exercises may be added once the students have mastered the major scale in their sound and reading vocabulary
 9. Introducing Chromatic Alterations
 - a. Entire chromatic scale could be introduced at this point
 - b. Students must have prerequisite knowledge of scale structure and accidentals
 - c. Sound comes first; sing scale before notating it
 - d. Students must experience the notation connected with each chromatic syllable from a neighbor-tone and passing-tone perspective
 10. Introducing the Modulation
 - a. La-minor approach has advantage

- b. Present this with brief and simple examples
- 11. Introducing Additional Modes
 - a. Once students have mastered the five primary levels, modes can be introduced
 - b. La-minor has advantage
 - c. Introduce Dorian and Mixolydian first
- 12. Introducing Multi-Part Reading
 - a. Reading in parts is a worthy goal of music literacy training
 - b. No unique strategies are required because students are developing independent reading skills
 - c. Begin with two parts
- 13. Applying Tonal Reading Skills to Performance Literature
 - a. Students will be able to apply their skills to literature, therefore boosting motivation
 - b. Guiding toward music literacy when students can translate the notation from score on their own or with little guidance
- IV. Notating Tonal Patterns
 - A. Can complete their first notating activity when they are successfully reading Level 1 tonal patterns
 - B. Engage students in notating exercises on a regular basis so their skills may develop
 - C. Direct Presentation Stage- Teacher presents the patterns via tonal syllables, allowing the students to immediately write what they hear without the need to echo-translate
 - D. Audible Echo-Translation- neutral syllables
 - E. Audiated Echo-Translation- Curwen hand signs
- V. Composing Tonal Patterns
 - A. Requires the application of music notation skills
 - B. Essence of composition is writing down what we audiate for the purpose of saving it
 - C. Pairs with improvisation
 - D. Melodic and harmonic composition is the end goal

Discussion

This chapter was full of ways to develop tonal literacy in students through the *Sound Connections* approach. This chapter gave information about the processes to take when instructing students to develop tonal literacy. Using the visual media of a tonal wand and overhead transparencies aid in this instruction. These tools allow for the students to be completely focused on the concept they are learning at that moment. For example, using the tonal wand to establish the major triad allows the students' attention to be directed only to what they are seeing at that specific time. This gives the teacher the opportunity to have the class' full attention and not have to worry about them confusing any musical concepts with others. The tonal content sequence given in this chapter provides the entire process of teaching students and developing their tonal literacy. This chapter was very informative to me, especially noticing the continuation from developing a sound vocabulary to developing tonal literacy. The process of the tonal content sequence will be helpful

in the future for me, guiding me along the way to develop my students' tonal literacy. The sample lesson plans would also be helpful to know what direction I should take to teach my students. Developing tonal literacy in my students is the next essential step in developing their overall music literacy, with the ultimate goal for them to be independent musicians. This chapter was incredibly informative and will be helpful in the future to me when instructing my students.