

Intonation Matters: Developing Students' Listening Skills in the Orchestra Class

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Alfred Music
LEARN • TEACH • PLAY

“If you put your hand on the piano, you play a note. It's in tune. But if you put it on the violin, maybe it is, maybe it isn't. You have to figure it out.”
-Itzhak Perlman

INITIAL EXERCISES

- Humming with pitch bend
 - Unison
 - With human drones
 - With alternating parts
 - Moving together

TECHNOLOGY

- *InTune* app
- *Staff Wars Live* app
- *ClearTune* app
- *Tunable* app
- *Tonal Energy* app
- *Smart Music's Sight-Reading Builder*

TUNING EXPECTATIONS

- Absorb the tuning note
- Upper 3rd of the bow
- *p* dynamic
- No cascading
- Basses ARE the most important
- Basses tune one player at a time

- Tune to your stand partner
- Tune to your section
- Tune across the room
- Check yourself
- Check your stand partner

TUNING STEPS

**This sequence depends on your own teaching situation.*

- End of 1st Year & 2nd Year Players
 - Fine tuner direction
 - Tune only “A” string with help
 - Tune only “A” string w/o help
 - Tune only “D” string with help
 - Tune only “D” string w/o help
 - Tune “A” & “D” strings w/o help
 - Tune only “G” string with help
 - Tune only “G” string w/o help
 - Tune only “C” or “E” string with help
 - Tune only “C” or “E” string w/o help
- 2nd & 3rd Year Players
 - Tune “A”, “D”, & “E” strings to “A” drone
 - Tune “G” & “C” strings to “G” drone
- 4th Year & Advanced Players
 - Tune to your own perfect 5^{ths} after hearing a single “A”

INTERVAL & CHORD EXERCISES

- Demonstrate finger patterns in multiple positions and octaves
 - Finger pattern of the week
- Create a tonality unit for each key signature
- Fingerboard mapping
 - Intervals from closed notes and open strings
 - In single key with drone
 - Add chromatic notes with drone
 - Add technique variables to increase difficulty
 - Rhythm
 - Different bow strokes
 - Shifts
- Bend pitches
- Jump to a pitch
- Outline chords
 - Assign and trade scale degrees
 - Teach all chord types (tonalities & inversions)
- Unison and divide to a chord
- Bend chords
 - Increase difficulty by adding progressions
- Smart Music's Sight-Reading Builder for specific note ranges

SCALES & ARPEGGIO EXERCISES

- Sing in unison
- Audiate with drone
- Sing with drone
- Sing alternating scale degrees
- Play
- Sing and play
- Scales in 3rds
- Partner chase scales

APPLICATION TO REPERTOIRE

- Play exercises, scales, and arpeggios in the same key
- Play chorales in the same key
- Map the passage
 - Play slowly without rhythm
 - Finalize all fingerings
 - Plan all shifts
 - Add harmonic chords
 - Alternate measures
 - Play slowly with rhythm
 - Layer in parts one at a time

RESOURCES

- Phillips, B. & Moss, K. (2013). *Sound innovations sound development: Warm-up exercises for tone and technique for advanced orchestra*. Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Music Publishing Company.
- Phillips, B. & Moss, K. (2012). *Sound innovations sound development: Warm-up exercises for tone and technique for intermediate orchestra*. Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Music Publishing Company.
- Phillips, B., Moss, K., Turner, M., & Benham, S. (2017). *Sound innovations creative warm-ups: Exercises for intonation, rhythm, bowing, and creativity*. Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Music Publishing Company.