

Solfege Singing for Sight-Reading with Strings

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CASMEC – February 15, 2019

Why (pitch-accurate) singing with strings?

- String Instruments = Voice is available concurrently
- **Producing sound internally ensures accuracy externally**
- Solfege symbols & hand signs are another language tool
- Encourages musical autonomy & audiation skills for sight reading

My students don't / won't / can't sing!

- Safe Space: no making fun of singing voices, no mocking the activity
- Guidelines:
 - Teacher won't make you sing alone unless you want to
 - Everyone must try their best
 - Not assigning grades to vocal production, instead encouraging pitch matching (instead of monotone rhythmic "singing" usually found in instrumental class)
- Proper singing form: using enough air, singing posture

Which students does this curriculum work for?

- Intermediate / Advanced Middle & High School students
- Must have strong basis in reading & fingering already
- (Singing with younger beginners is encouraged, but do so separately from instrument technique - avoid cognitive overload)

Curricular Concept Plan (on pg. 3)

- Approximately 3-5 minutes per day, as part of warm-up. No set time frame per step (formative assessment is your guide)

Assessment

- Constant formative assessment, many opportunities for summative evaluations (intervals, solfege challenge)

| Additional Benefits | Challenges |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for expressivity • Mentally “living” in tonal world before you play = less missed accidentals • Team confidence builder | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chromaticism • Takes time • Students must have basic instrument fluency • Teacher comfort |

Materials

- Progressive Sight-Singing by Carol Krueger - Oxford Companion Website (solfege charts, hand signs)
- Additional string sight reading: The Sight-reading Book for String Orchestra (Jerry West)
- Additional sight singing materials: Steps to Harmony (Masterworks Press) \$45 / Volume - reproducible PDF

References

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- Masterworks Press (2006). *Steps to harmony: A systematic approach to sight-singing*. Lacey, WA: Masterworks Press.
- Musictheory.net (n.d.). *Interval Construction*. Retrieved December 3, 2017, from <https://www.musictheory.net/exercises/interval-construction>
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Curricular Concept Plan

Solfege Singing for Sight-Reading with Strings

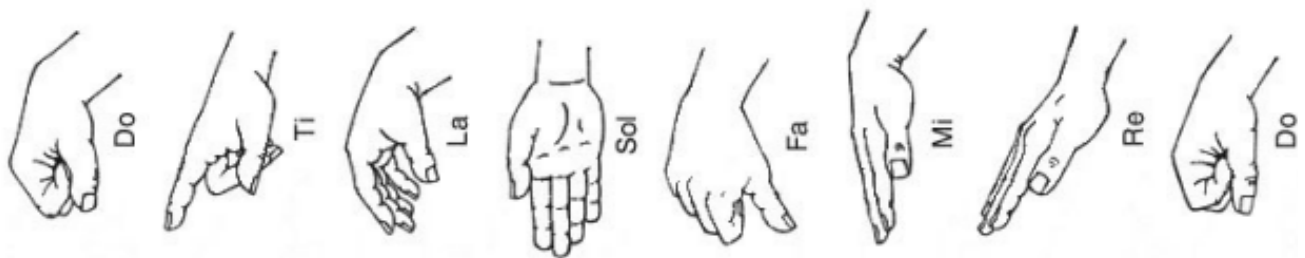
Timeline to teach each concept is flexible. 3-5 minutes of singing per rehearsal.

| | |
|---|---|
| Concept 1: Creating a Safe Environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comfort (activities that normalize singing, setting expectations) • Form (singing posture, using air = using bow) • Matching pitch (octaves OK) • Audiating resting tone |
| Concept 2: Finding Do | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visually (concurrently with teaching Key Signatures) • Audiating • Singing resting tone after playing • Find Do in each piece of music |
| Concept 3: Learning syllables | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn concurrently with handsigns (instruments in a “safe spot”) • Teach in order: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sol, Mi, Do first ○ Re, La next (explore Pentatonic scale) ○ Fa, Ti last ○ Focus on relationships between syllables (whole & half step) • Be able to sing, sign, do both, audiate, sing back • Work toward 2-4 autonomous singing parts to practice • Opportunities for formative & summative assessment; student leadership • Daily singing for muscle memory |
| Concept 4: Explore full major solfege scale & Intervals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solfege Challenge (<i>Carol Krueger – charts</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All together, then in canon ○ With audiation (replace a syllable with a clap or stomp for audiation practice) ○ Make it fun! (Video challenge, etc) • Interval practice (<i>musictheory.net – Interval Construction</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ear Training ○ Be able to identify intervals by sound on their own instruments (stand partner pair assignment) ○ Be able to audiate & sing intervals by name • Sight-singing Practice (<i>Masterworks Press Steps to Harmony</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work toward reading one line / week, ~1 min in one rehearsal per week |
| Concept 5: Singing & Playing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circle of 5ths – Patterns (Do Re → Do Re Mi → Do Re Mi Fa Sol) • Identify whole/half steps when shifting to new positions (2nd Pos. Example) • Instrumental Sight Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Director cannot sing or play for students, but students can produce pitch-accurate content on their own. ○ Identify melody passages in each section; have them sing concurrently to hear the melody before they play ○ This is a tool to add to your sight-reading tool kit; works well in addition to rhythmic “sizzling”, silent fingering, shadow bowing, etc. |
| Advanced Concepts: La-based Minor; Chromaticism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • La-based minor is a natural next step (distance between syllables remains the same, just begin and end on La) • Chromatic syllables (Do, Di, Re, Ri...) may be too specific for use in a string classroom; however, advanced students could benefit from learning them |

Additive Major Scale Chart (Krueger)

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | d | d | d | d | d | d | d | d |
| | | | | | | | t | t | t | t | t | t | t | t |
| | | | | | | l | l | l | | l | l | l | l | l |
| | | | | s | s | s | s | | | s | s | s | s | s |
| | | | f | f | f | f | f | f | | f | f | f | f | f |
| | | m | m | m | m | m | m | | | m | m | m | m | m |
| | r | r | r | r | r | r | r | | | | | r | r | |
| d | d | d | d | d | d | d | d | | | | | | | d |

Curwen Hand Signs



Steps to Harmony Example (Masterworks Press)

