

Building Firm Foundations for Music Literacy

PHILOSOPHY

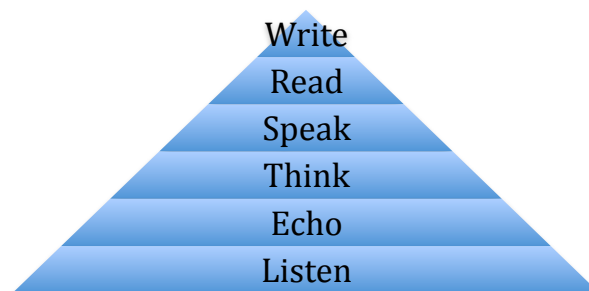
A blueprint for laying firm foundations

1. Redefining success—process oriented teaching
2. Student motivation and musical independence (music literacy)
3. Aptitude (check out gnil.org for more info)
 - a. Not always visible
 - b. Everyone has music aptitude—84% of the population is average or above average
 - c. Highest at birth therefore preschool years are vital for learning music

AUDIATION

1. Forms the foundation for music literacy
2. Process of thinking music
3. Benefits include:
 - a. Understanding not just imitating; not only inner hearing
 - b. Listening with understanding: hearing differences and changes
 - c. Reading and writing notation while hearing it in your head
 - d. Active participation in music (Music becomes your property)
4. Audiation can be taught and learned at any stage of life

LANGUAGE AND MUSIC



Language and Music Compared:

Language—the result of need to communicate *Music*—the subject of communication

Speech—the way we communicate

Performance—the vehicle for communication

Ideas/Thoughts—what we communicate

Audeas/Audiation—what we communicate

CONTEXT AND CONTENT

1. Context forms the foundation for audiation and is comprised of meter and tonality
 - a. Rhythm: feel the macrobeat and microbeat
 - b. Tonality: sing the “resting tone” or tonal center

2. Content:
 - a. Tonal and rhythm patterns form the smallest unit of meaning in music
 - b. Learning is most efficient when these are separated initially and later combined
 - c. Rhythm patterns:
 - i. Classified according to meter (duple, triple) and function (macrobeat, microbeat, division etc)
 - ii. All three layers should be audiated at the same time (macrobeats, microbeats and melodic rhythm)
 - d. Tonal patterns:
 - i. Teaching in arpeggiated form fosters audiation
 - ii. Classified according to tonality (major, dorian etc) and harmonic function (ie dominant, tonic etc.)

3. Context and Content together lead to musical comprehension

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

1. Audiation foundation:
 - a. Listen: for same and different (rhythm, tonality, patterns, phrases etc.)
 - b. Move to macrobeats and microbeats;
 - i. Use weight: pulse is internalized with movements involving weight (Watch Please Game)
 - ii. Use flow (read about Rudolph von Laban for more info)
 - c. Sing: songs, resting tone, chord roots, tonal patterns etc.
 - d. Chant : rhythm patterns
2. Give the gift of context
3. Separate rhythm and pitch
4. Teach a rich and diverse vocabulary of patterns (ideally sequenced and categorized: see giml.org for more information)
5. Improvise with rhythm and tonal patterns
6. Incorporate folk songs
 - a. Provide opportunities for creativity and improvisation
 - b. Develop harmonic sense through singing and playing bass lines
 - c. Students can play what they sing

ALLEGRETTO by CORNELIUS GURLITT

PREPARATION ACTIVITIES

The following are suggestions for activities that can be used for applying audiation skill and approaching new repertoire aurally. These activities could take place over a few weeks depending on the student.

MOVE

1. Move your arm in a “sideways figure 8” or “infinity sign”. Try to flow through the music rather than keep the pulse or beat.
2. Find the macrobeats first, then the microbeats and chant either macro or micro on “BAH”
3. Identify meter (duple)
4. Play the last half and sing the resting tone (tonic) (DO)
5. Identify tonality (major)
6. Freeze Game: Play the first half and stop frequently for students to freeze their movement and sing the resting tone on DO.

CHANT

- Chant rhythm patterns for the student—chant first on a neutral syllable “BAH” (there are two different melodic rhythm patterns in this piece)
- Identify if the rhythm patterns are same or different
- Student echoes Rhythm patterns on BAH and syllables (rhythm solfege: see giml.org)
- If teaching in a group, divide and move for rhythm patterns: three layers (macrobeats, microbeats and melodic rhythm)

IMPROVISE

- Play a rhythm pattern on one key (either rhythm pattern #1 or 2)
- Improvise: play using any fingers on any keys or give specific instructions (only black keys, lower register, like a mouse etc)
- Ensemble improvisation: Teacher or another student could lead or answer with the contrasting rhythm pattern (switch parts)

SING

- Sing resting tone and identify starting and ending pitches for each phrase
- Sing tonal patterns from the piece (arpeggiate, indicate to student when to come in after a slight audiation pause) Sing on BUM and then solfege.
- Identify patterns as tonic or dominant
- Sing the melody in phrases
- Sing the chord roots

IMPROVISE

- Use tonal patterns to sing, play and improvise

TRANSCOPE

- To new tonalities and new meters (ie minor and triple)

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Online resources:

Ron Malanga's blog:

mindmusclemusicmyth.blogspot.ca

Marilyn Lowe's material

musicmovesforpiano.com

The Gordon Institute for Music Learning

giml.org