

Teacher Introduction

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"He who cannot hear what he sees and cannot see what he hears is not a musician"

Zoltan Kodály.

The Musicianship & Aural Training for the Secondary School Series

The Musicianship & Aural Training for the Secondary School Series has been written so that teachers, students and musicians alike learn the language of music. It cannot be denied that there is a strong link between a musician's aural and theory ability and high quality performance skills. Improving a musician's aural and academic understanding of all aspects of music will have a far reaching effect well beyond the school years.

True music literacy is the ability to see what you hear and hear what you see. Throughout this text this skill is referred to as inner hearing.

The Language of Music

Music should be taught as a language. As children, we first learn a language spoken by our parents aurally, (listening), then orally (spoken) and finally written as the written language introduced slowly and sequentially. This same process should be used when teaching any language, including the language of music, if full understanding and internalisation is to be achieved.

The Tools

Teaching music as a language, and using as many possible tools and techniques to do so, enables all students to gain the knowledge and understanding we hope to pass on as teachers.

This method of teaching allows students who learn **visually**; plenty of stimulation with the obvious (notes on the staff and stick notation or rhythmic shorthand and solfa) as well as the use of hand signs and tone adders. Students who have a predominantly **auditory** style of learning are obviously catered for, in particular these students benefit from the singing and saying of the language of music itself. Students who require **kinaesthetic** or tactile activities to learn are fully active in this method of music learning with all of the above activities as well as the games and movement segments of the lesson.

Tonic or Moveable *do* Solfa

When learning a second language, it is generally accepted that this new language is fully integrated into one's understanding when one begins to think in this new language. In the same way, by using a functional melodic language ("**tonic or moveable *do* solfa**" – where *do* is always the tonic of a Major key as opposed to "fixed *do* solfa" – where C is always *do*), the notes will have a correct "spelling" and the music will become internalised as students begin to translate what they hear into solfa, (i.e. the solfa syllables reveal the function of the notes and, with use over time, patterns emerge which help students internalise and translate the function of notes as well as identify what they hear in solfa).

Handsigns

Handsigns are visual or spatial representations of the solfa notes. They are shown with one hand (or sometimes two) and use the space in front of the student to represent the pitch of a note. For example, the handsign for *do* would be shown at waist height, the handsign for *re* would be shown at chest height and the handsign for *mi* would be shown at chin height.

All handsigns used in this book can be found in Appendix 2 on page 166.

Tone Ladders

A **Tone Ladder** is also used to visually or spatially represent the solfa notes. The notes being practiced are shown on a ladder such as this one (there are many possible versions of tone ladders in common use). This tone ladder shows that *do* is the lowest note being practiced, *re* is one step higher than *do* and *mi* is one step higher than *re*.



Letter Names

The use of **Letter Names** gives students the most common system of naming notes. Singing in letter names will encourage "relative pitch" or the aural recognition of the letter names of notes learned through repetition. (This can be thought of as the learned version of perfect pitch).

Note that when singing letter names students **MUST** sing at a comfortable pitch (so as to encourage this "relative pitch"). If the melody or exercise being sung goes either too high or too low to be comfortably sung, the octave being sung should be changed at that point. For example, sing the notes one octave lower if they are too high.

Rhythm Names

Rhythm Names (also known as time names) are a way of verbalising the notes in a rhythmically correct manner i.e. a crotchet is read as "a" which is one sound on a beat. The use of these rhythm names will give students a further rhythmic language to be used in the same way as solfa (the melodic language).

Inner Hearing

"Thinking in the language of music", using moveable *do* solfa, rhythm names and letter names, will assist students in the acquisition of the skill of "**inner hearing**" or "**audiation**". This ability can be equated with reading silently or in our heads, a skill which as adults we take for granted but which as children requires us to point to the words on the page, mouthing them silently as we read. As musicians, the ability to "inner hear" allows us to sight read music without acoustical stimulation (in our heads).

Memorising

Memorising is a skill that should be encouraged and musical examples should be set regularly for memorisation purposes. Memorisation is beneficial as musical patterns are internalised and therefore can be recognised more quickly. It is also of great benefit to memorise works that are to be used for more advanced solfa training, such as two part exercises that are to have one part sung and one part played by an individual student.