Intermediate Music Theory

Content Area: **Vocal Music**
Course(s): **Vocal Music**
Time Period: **Week 20**
Length: **20 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Unit Overview

In this unit, students will hone their skills in regards to performance. The focus is on extending our knowledge of music notation, but also, realizing the connection between theoretically reading music (clapping rhythms on the board/sight-singing) and applying that knowledge to rehearsing our concert repertoire. Students should now have a basic understanding of pitch, rhythm, and dynamics, so the goal in this unit is to explore how these components fit into choral pieces. Continual practice of these elements (music notation) will not only enhance student understanding of how to read music, but also improve their performance.

Standards

VPA.1.1.5.B.1	Identify the elements of music in response to aural prompts and printed music notational systems.
VPA.1.1.5.B.2	Demonstrate the basic concepts of meter, rhythm, tonality, intervals, chords, and melodic and harmonic progressions, and differentiate basic structures.
VPA.1.1.8.B.1	Analyze the application of the elements of music in diverse Western and non-Western musical works from different historical eras using active listening and by reading and interpreting written scores.
VPA.1.1.8.B.2	Compare and contrast the use of structural forms and the manipulation of the elements of music in diverse styles and genres of musical compositions.
VPA.1.3.5.B.1	Sing or play music from complex notation, using notation systems in treble and bass clef, mixed meter, and compound meter.
VPA.1.3.5.B.2	Sing melodic and harmonizing parts, independently and in groups, adjusting to the range and timbre of the developing voice.
VPA.1.3.5.B.4	Decode how the elements of music are used to achieve unity and variety, tension and release, and balance in musical compositions.
VPA.1.3.8.B.1	Perform instrumental or vocal compositions using complex standard and non-standard Western, non-Western, and avant-garde notation.
VPA.1.3.8.B.3	Apply theoretical understanding of expressive and dynamic music terminology to the performance of written scores in the grand staff.

Essential Questions

- Why is live performance so much better than listening to a recording?
- What makes for a good performance and how do we enhance our own musical performances?

- How does knowledge of notation enhance a performance?
- How would the world be different without a universal system of reading and writing music?

Application of Knowledge: Students will know that…

- Each voice part has an important job in each phrase, whether it be melodic or harmonic in nature.
- Most music has a framework based on scales and chordal progressions.
- Rehearsal techniques are directly related to mastery of the repertoire and the effectiveness of the performance.
- There are many ways to interpret a piece of music through the use of dynamics, diction, and phrasing.

Application of Skills: Students will be able to…

- Clap and sing complex rhythms
- Comprehend and apply the values of dotted notes and tied rhythms
- Create complex 4-measure rhythmic compositions
- Create major and minor scales
- Differentiate between harmony and melody
- Discuss the importance of performance
- Express multiple dynamic markings
- Identify patterns in rhythm
- Read and understand compound time signatures
- Sing, play and identify intervals within the major scale
- Understand and demonstrate musical phrases
- Understand the difference between Major and Minor

Assessments

Formative:

- Whiteboard responses
- “Koosh” ball game
- Listening Activities
- 4-measure compositions
- Sight-reading
- Marking scores

Summative:

- A written quiz focusing on basic dynamic/articulation markings
- A performance assessment in which students sing a short vocal piece using correct diction, breathing, intonation, and musicianship
- A unit test that is a culmination of these assessments and will have a composition portion in which students will demonstrate their understanding of all concepts by creating an 8 measure piece of music. This melody must have the appropriate rhythmic values, notes, and solfege syllables (under the notes).

Suggested Activities

Activity Examples:

- Complex note values.
- Whole/half steps and sharps/flats.
- Tempo classification and identification.
- Major and minor scales (construction and implementation).
- Intervalic relationships.
- Key signature identification.
- Triplets and compound meters.

Activities to Differentiate Instruction

- Use of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles
- Peer scaffolding to support learning
- Adjusting questions
- Peer and teacher modeling for demonstration
- Acceleration/deceleration
- Hands-on tools (tongue depressors, mirrors, books on abdomen) for reinforcement
- Adjustment to scoring rubrics when necessary.

Integrated/Cross-Disciplinary Instruction

ELA: Visual literacy, discipline specific vocabulary

Math: attend to precision, make sense of problems and persevere in solving them, model with mathematics, look for and make use of structure

Technology: Exposure to/use of multimedia approaches to learning

Resources

- *Essentials of Music Theory Complete* by Surnami, Surnami, and Manus. Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 1998.
- *One Minute Theory* by Ronald Slabbinck and Holly Shaw-Slabbinck. Neil Kjos Music Company.
- *Thirty Days to Melody* by Betsy Henderson. Hal Leonard Corporation, 2003.
- *Thirty Days to Rhythm* by Betsey Henderson. Hal Leonard Corporation, 2002.
- Music Theory.net http://www.musictheory.net/