Unit 02: Technique and Intonation, High School Orchestra 9-12

Content Area: **Music**
Course(s):
Time Period:
Length: **ongoing**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit - Revision June 2021

The Technique and Intonation Unit will focus on the use of left-hand string instrument skills and their application toward musical expression. Students will interpret musical passages in order to infer and construct appropriate left-hand technique. Other concepts include ensemble intonation, aural skills, left hand position, harmony, and pitch identification. The development of left-hand skills will enhance the student's ability to analyze musical passages, identify musical patterns and differences, and respond to the ensemble performance with greater awareness of the music's aesthetic qualities.

Transfer

- Analyze the key signature of a musical example to determine the appropriate finger patterns across the range of their instrument
- Aurally identify half steps and whole steps in simple patterns performed by the teacher and echo those patterns on their own instrument
- Develop extended left hand techniques (positions, 4th finger extensions, vibrato, etc.)
- Identify accidentals, hear the correct pitch, and apply the appropriate fingering to improve the ensemble performance
- Identify half steps and whole steps and transfer this information to the fingerboard to improve individual intonation
- Infer finger patterns found in an unfamiliar key
- Use a tuner or other tool to tune their instrument
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Essential Questions

- How do aural skills assist with matching pitch and improving intonation?
- How do I interpret an accidental, identify the pitch, and apply the correct fingering?
- How do individuals choose music to experience? How does understanding the structure and context of music inform a response?
- How do musicians improve the quality of their performance?
- How do performers select repertoire?
- How does changing position change the fingerings?
- How does my note fit into the overall ensemble?
- How does my posture and left hand technique affect my intonation?
- How does this key signature affect the finger patterns that I will use on each string?

- How does vibrato alter a sustained pitch?
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- How is the fingerboard divided up into half steps and whole steps?
- When is a performance judged ready to present? How do context and the manner in which musical work is presented influence audience response?

Essential Understandings

- Accidentals affect finger patterns; lowered notes move towards the scroll, and raised notes move towards the bridge.
- Accidentals are understood in the context of a key signature and tonal center.
- Developing vibrato must begin with slow practice and increase in speed over time.
- Individuals' selection of musical works is influenced by their interests, experiences, understandings, and purposes. Response to music is informed by analyzing context (i.e., social, cultural, historical) and how creator(s) or performer(s) manipulate the elements of music.
- Intonation of the ensemble can be affected by just one individual.
- Keys and key signatures correspond with finger patterns that are composed of half steps and whole steps.
- Listening and aural skills improve the ability to play in tune and improve intonation.
- Major and minor scales are collections made up of a series of whole/half-step patterns. These collections correspond with whole/half step left-hand finger patterns.
- Musicians judge performance based on criteria that vary across time, place, and cultures. The context and how a work is presented influence the audience response.
- Performers' interest in and knowledge of musical works, understanding of their own technical skill, and the context for a performance influence the selection of repertoire.
- Posture, instrument position, and left hand position affect an individual's intonation..
- Shifting to a new position will alter fingerings and patterns, even when remaining in the same key.
- To express their musical ideas, musicians analyze, evaluate, and refine their performance over time through openness to new ideas, persistence, and the application of appropriate criteria.
- Vibrato is a means of rapidly altering a pitch to create a musical effect.

Students Will Know

- • how to identify by ear and in writing intervals of the major scale.
- Finger patterns used in keys including up to 3-4 sharps and 2-3 flats appropriate to skill level
- How a pitch may be flattened or sharpened using the left hand
- How to adjust tuning on their instrument
- How to begin developing vibrato (when appropriate to skill level)
- How to correlate half and whole step patterns in first position and transpose them to other positions. Students will realize the pitch collection in 1st position and infer an appropriate fingering in the new position.
- How to identify and demonstrate proper posture, instrument position, and left hand position on their instrument

- How to identify the accidentals corresponding with key signatures and how these affect the understanding of pitch
- How to interpret accidentals in notation and execute appropriately on their instrument

Students Will Be Skilled At

- Echoing simple pitch patterns performed by the teacher while developing intonation accuracy
- Finding and identifying accidentals in musical examples
- Interpreting a flat or sharp in notation and applying the correct fingering
- Interpreting and assessing a notated pitch in order to apply an appropriate fingering
- Interpreting and assessing when to perform an open string vs. applying a 4th finger to execute a passage accurately and musically (including slurs).
- Locating unfamiliar pitches on a fingerboard map and transferring that information to their instrument
- Performing finger patterns in common key signatures found in daily warm-ups, exercises, and concert music while developing accuracy
- Performing with correct instrument position, left hand shape, and proper posture
- Relating common key signatures to the scale and finger patterns

Evidence/Performance Tasks

- “Road Maps” of new performance repertoire outlining the music's form
- Class discussions initiated by the teacher
- Daily participation in warm-ups, exercises, and performance-based activities
- Echoing patterns given by the teacher
- Ensemble performances
- Individual playing tests
- Locating and notating notes on a “fingerboard map” to visualize new keys and positions
- Rote vibrato exercises (when appropriate for skill level)
- Shifting exercises in method books (when appropriate for skill level)

Learning Plan

- Analyze and perform method book exercises that introduce and reinforce left hand skills
- Apply alternate fingerings for a musical phrase (e.g. using 4th finger, changes of position, etc.)
- Apply left hand fingering patterns to a scale.
- Echo patterns to reinforce left hand skills and intonation
- Ensemble will echo a student’s demonstration of a rhythmic articulation
- Intonation drills performed against a drone note to improve pitch sensitivity and articulation
- Listen and critique recordings focusing on intonation and left hand technique
- Partner pairing of students to discuss approaches to left hand fingering and technique in a musical

excerpt

- Perform and critique the effects of changing fingering placement
- Perform and critique the effects vibrato
- Perform exercises to reinforce proper left hand positioning and technique
- Perform scales in one to two octaves as appropriate covering key signatures up to 4 sharps and up to 3 flats
- Performing scales in harmony to improve intonation
- Playing in extended positions using an open string drone
- Tonality exercise. Altering a pitch pattern from major to minor (and vice versa)
- Tuning exercises with a tuner, with open strings, and with use of a drone
- Utilize kinesthetic exercises to build foundational left hand technique with instrument and away from the instrument (e.g. unfamiliar finger patterns, extended finger patterns, finger independence, shifting, vibrato)
- Visual representations of finger patterns for new scales on a “fingerboard map”

Materials

MATERIALS -

The materials used in this course allow for integration of a variety of instructional, supplemental, and intervention materials that support student learners at all levels in the school and home environments. Associated web content and media sources are infused into the unit as applicable and available

- Method books and concert music repertoire
- Instrument supplies (tuners, metronome, rosin, cello straps, shoulder rests, strings, music stands)
- Technology resources (computer, recording devices)

Suggested Strategies for Modifications

This link includes content specific accommodations and modifications for all populations:

Performing Arts Accommodations & Modifications

- Musical parts can be modified as appropriate.
- Students will be paired with partners for support and interaction.
- Students will be provided notes describing the elements of Technique and Intonation.
- Students will receive preferential seating.
- Tempi can be slowed or accelerated as appropriate.
- Visual aids will be used.