



Teaching Intonation Creatively in the String Orchestra

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“The problem isn’t being out of tune, it’s not knowing you are out of tune.”

Body Platform

- Lengthened
- Balanced
- Functional instrument placement

Left-hand Format

- Instrument position and angles
- Thumb placement that is functional
- Fingers curved and flexible
- Elbow (arm) placement
- Finger patterns (conceptual framework) (finger tapes)
- Finger independence
- Chromatic movement
- Pizzicato – firm fingers, arco
- Extended hand positions
- Shifting

Characteristic Tone

- Bow placement
- Bow/arm/hand weight
- Bow speed

Tuning the Open Strings

- Instrument control
- Peg manipulation
- Singing
- Quiet
- Reference pitches
- Long tones
- Self, peer, and teacher evaluation

Aural Skills Development (learning to audiate) (talk to your general music teacher)

- Echo/sing pitches - neutral syllable, solfège, note names, numbers and other systems.
- Echo/play pitches - pizzicato then arco
- Echo/sing/play tonal patterns - in major and minor
- Echo/sing/play simple folk songs in chunks
- Sing/play simple folk songs – switch them from major to minor or minor to major
- Learn songs aurally and play from memory
- Do all of the above with harmonic backgrounds (Band-in-a-box, Garage Band, SmartMusic)
- Learn new string techniques aurally

Bridging the Notation Gap Using Known Pitches, Tonal Patterns, and Simple Songs

- The intonation problems notation creates
- Echo/respond to pitches, tonal patterns, and simple songs from rote flashcards
- Read pitches, tonal patterns, and simple songs from rote flashcards
- Echo/respond to pitches, tonal patterns, and simple songs from notation flashcards
- Read pitches, tonal patterns, and simple songs from notation flashcards

Pitch References and Tuners

- Open string drones
- Double stops
- The Tuning CD - by Richard Schwartz (Amazon)
- Cello Drones - <http://navorrivermusic.com>
- D'Adaddrio clip on tuner
- Snark Super Tight - clip on tuner
- TE Tuner - total energy tuner app
- Tunable App
- Cleartune App
- nTune Violin, etc.

The Concept of Beats (physics videos on youtube)

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pRpN9uLiouI>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4M72kQuIGKk>

Warm-up Intonation Exercises for Middle School and High School Students

- Intervals
- Moving chord tones
- Layered tuning and balance
- Diatonic harmony
- Shifting chord qualities
- Drone scales
- Chromatic scales
- Chorales

Aural Pitch Activities/Games

- Resonance – watch for sympathetic vibrations with open string octaves
- Harmonics – match fingered notes with harmonics
- Match/find my pitch
- Hide in my sound (match pitch, color, dynamics)
- Intervals – echo intervals from syllables or P5 above my pitch.
- Hear the pitch – sing or play part of a phrase leaving one pitch out. Students sing or play.
- Fill In the pitches - sing or play part of a phrase, students fill in the rest
- Silent melody – audiate a section of a melody and come in singing/playing on a beat
- Pitch detective – students match pitch with some purposely playing out of tune
- Hot/cold - students get closer or further from the pitch using hot/cold language
- Play in/out of tune - use hand signals (thumbs down, up, palms apart etc.)
- Playing chord progressions (hand signals/fingers)
- Two-part singing/playing – play in two-part harmony or rounds
- Chorales - sing/play chorales in four parts
- Transpose tune to new keys
- Recording/evaluation



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