

smartmusic lesson plans

Creating Unison Studies



Grade Level: All Levels Class: Band

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**Teacher
Instructions**

Overview

Finale and SmartMusic are powerful tools that allow a director to quickly create exercises that can be used to develop strong musical skills. Many of these exercises can be created in less than 30 minutes and will save valuable rehearsal time when preparing new music.

Objectives

Students will:

1. Identify thematic motifs used throughout a musical composition.
2. Perform melodies from compositions on all instruments.
3. Analyze articulations, notes, musical expressions, and rhythms from musical examples.

National Music Content Standards addressed:

2. Performing on instruments alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
5. Reading and notating music
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
7. Evaluating music and music performances.

Assignment Suggestions

This lesson works well for students at any level. Choose appropriate content for the ability levels of your students.

Teacher Procedures

1. Print out parts for students with Finale and then create a SmartMusic accompaniment for classroom use. Use the Finale and SmartMusic quickstart videos as a resource for directions of how to convert a Finale file to a SmartMusic file. You may want to include a scale pattern or rhythmic pattern created with Finale's exercise wizard to further reinforce musical skills.
2. Convert this exercise into a SmartMusic Performance (.SMP) file using Finale's SmartMusic Wizard.



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3. It is often useful to include a melody, accompaniment, and countermelody parts in the exercise.
4. Percussionists should be provided a mallet part and a snare or non-pitched part. Don't forget to include a counting and sticking guide.
5. When you introduce the exercise, review good practice techniques.
6. For additional resources, have students use SmartMusic for help with fingerings, note names, or musical terms that are found in the example.

Teacher Instructions

Assessment

Use the exercise as a pre-test for learning the composition. Your students' understanding of these unison concepts will help you develop a rehearsal plan. Have students make a recording of the practice exercise and use it as a formal playing sample. Consider using the following 50-point rubric for evaluation of student performances.

A (45-50 points)

An outstanding performance. Few musical and rhythmic errors and demonstrates the application of musical expressions.

B (40-44)

An acceptable performance. Minor note and rhythm errors and/or limited musical expression.

C (35-39)

A fair performance. Some tone quality issues, repeated rhythmic or note errors, and/or is performed with several breaks or stops.

D (30-34)

A poor performance. Many technical errors in both rhythm and note accuracy and/or poor intonation and tone quality.

F (0-29)

A very poor performance. Musical concepts are clearly not understood or communicated to the listener.



Teacher Suggestions

Using Finale, create a unison exercise that includes melodies, countermelodies, important accompaniment patterns, snare drum rhythmic motifs, and new concepts that may be introduced to students for the first time. To save time, use one of Finale's band templates to create your selected ensemble score. You may want to adjust octaves for specific instruments to match the performance level of your ensemble. For example, you may want to edit parts to create a low and high trumpet or clarinet part.

Have students use the following rehearsal techniques:

1. Use a pencil to mark mistakes in notes, rhythms, or articulations.
2. Finger through the melody as you hear the example played on SmartMusic.
3. Hum or sing the melody while listening to example played on SmartMusic.
4. Use a counting system to demonstrate the rhythmic patterns of the musical example.
5. Slow the tempo down for mastery.

Lesson Extensions

1. Create a written test to assess student mastery of terms, note names, or other musical concepts introduced in the composition.
2. Sight-read a piece of music in a similar style, rhythmic patterns, or compositional techniques.
3. Use this lesson in conjunction with one of the SmartMusic lessons such as using the dictionary, practice, or rhythm studies.
4. For assessment extensions, create a recording of a band composition and evaluate the performance using the scale above involving students in the assessment process.