

Dr. Edward Cetto - Conservatory of Music, University of the Pacific - ecetto@pacific.edu

Accessing Atonality through Tonality: Kodály on Steroids

Modeled on the second semester (1st year) curriculum of aural studies at the Conservatory of Music, this takes the knowledge of solfeggio, a tonal system, and extrapolates its use into atonality. Through a series of exercises, a technique called "Expanding Intervals", and the discovery of "key cells", students can improve their eartraining acuity and relieve some of the "scariness" often associated with atonal repertoire.

Unit I: Developing a Tonal Palate

These exercises are rudimentary and begin to develop the relationships between notes in the solfège system (both + [based from do] & - [based from la]). In 3a. & 3b. there is special emphasis on thirds: the foundation of Western classical music.

Unit II: Discrimination between Parallel Major and Minor Patterns

After learning + & - patterns, the two are combined from the parallel tonic, and the ability to change from + to -, or - to + becomes the focus.

Unit III: Focusing on the Third

As Western music is built on thirds, these exercises entail minor third and major third patterns and move the student into atonality. Also introduced are whole tone and diminished scales.

Unit IV.

Expanding intervals takes each interval, from -2nd through +7th, and ascribes a common name to each: for example an ascending +3rd is always called do mi and a descending +3rd is always called mi do. This also assists the student in trying to decipher "key cells" in atonal music.

Unit V: Pentatonic Scales from One Pitch

This exercise prepares the student for different modulations (whole step, -3rd, Sub-dominant, parallel minor) using the five tones of the Pentatonic scale.

Rhythmic Modulation using Rhythm Names

ta ta ta (rest) ti-ti ti-ti ta tri-po-let tri-po-let ta tiri-tiri tiri-tiri ta

1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5 ta diddley-diddley diddley-diddley ta

d r m f s l t d r m f s l t ta duhkuhduhkuh-duhkuhduhkuh (repeat) ta
(double tonguing)