



music studio

LESSON PLAN

BEHIND THE MUSIC

Behind the Music: Takin' It to the Streets

VH1 Music Studio
Cable in the Classroom

Lessons for Instrumental or Choral Classes, Middle School and High School

Shifting with Grace

Lesson 3 of 4

Objective

Students will shift with ease and accuracy throughout the range of their instruments, resulting in the ability to perform orchestral and solo literature at a more advanced level (3 on a scale of 1 to 6).

National Standards

2: Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.

Materials

Videotape of Takin' It to the Streets
Television
VCR

Rosamunde Overture by Franz Schubert, arr. Vernon Leidig (Van Nuys, CA: Highland-Etling/Alfred Publishing Company, 1991) Level 3, or other appropriate music

Prior Knowledge and Experiences

Students have established correct left-hand position and have played Schubert's Rosamunde Overture, (or another comparable piece, chosen by the teacher) in first position (wherever possible).

Procedures

Part I

1. Tell students they are going to view a videotape about musicians who make their living performing on the streets. Tell them to pay special attention to the violinists and their techniques in the tape, Jim Graseck in the first segment, and Ying Wei and his granddaughter Yee in the third segment.
2. View videotape *Takin' It to the Streets*.
3. Discuss with students any observations they have about the violinists. Accept reasonable comments including bowing technique, posture both standing and sitting, interaction with passersby. Direct students to discuss the left hand position and the ease of shifting as Jim Graseck played in the subway [6:37--6:52].

Part II

Please note: The following portion of the lesson provides ideas for teaching shifting. Teachers can add to the below ideas and/or use shifting exercises of their choice.

4. Tell students they are going to work on bettering their shifting techniques.
5. To prepare for shifting, demonstrate and ask students to imitate a silent exercise. Slide each finger along one string, maintaining contact with the string without depressing it to the fingerboard (minimizing friction). Ask students to notice the space between the string and fingerboard.
6. Establish a rhythm patten (a dotted half note slurred to a quarter note at a slow tempo) for the exercises that follow.

In steps 7-10 demonstrate the exercise first; then have students imitate.

7. Begin with shifts on a single finger from first to third position. Play first-position note (B with the first finger on the A string) for two beats. On beat three, begin slow, pianissimo shift with the first finger by reducing finger and bow pressure, slowing bow speed, and leading with the wrist to avoid tension. On beat four, arrive at the target pitch in the third position (D with the first finger), listening for the approach to the pitch to avoid overshooting it.

8. Repeat third-position note (D), holding it for two beats; on beat three, prepare for descending shift by moving thumb and wrist back toward first position; release finger and bow pressure to achieve a pianissimo shift of the first finger down to the note B. Prepare and shift during beat three, arriving on beat four. Note to students that they should look at fingertip to see that there is space between the string and fingerboard during shift.
9. Using the above exercise, shift from first to third position on each finger and repeat the exercise on each string.
10. For violins and violas: Using the same exercise, still at a slow tempo, shift from first-position note (which will serve as tonic of its key) to each step of its major scale. It is advisable at first to shift only from first finger to second finger and back, first finger to third finger and back, first finger to fourth finger and back, and so on.
11. Lead the orchestra in playing Rosamunde Overture, asking students to shift at specific places in each part.

Indicators of Success

Students shift accurately and confidently from first position to higher positions when performing the Rosamunde Overture (Or alternate selection.)

Follow-up

Identify and have students practice passages from solo literature that can involve shifting on one finger to the same finger and then from one finger to a different finger (e.g., on violin, Handel sonatas).

Have students apply refined shifting technique to increasingly more advanced orchestral literature.

VH1, in partnership with Cable in the Classroom, collaborated with MENC: The National Association for Music Education to develop this series of lessons.

This lesson is adapted from Strategies for Teaching High School Band, compiled and edited by Edward J. Kvet and John E. Williamson (copyright 1998, MENC).



National Standards for Music Education

- 1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.**
- 2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.**
- 3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.**
- 4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.**
- 5. Reading and notating music.**
- 6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.**
- 7. Evaluating music and music performances.**
- 8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.**
- 9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.**