

Unit Template

Desired Results

Title of Unit

Key Signatures in instrumental music Grades 5-12

Enduring Understandings

Key signatures provide a foundation for understanding tonality, guiding the performer's interpretation and expression by defining the scales and notes that shape a piece of music.

Essential Questions

1. What is a key signature, and how does it affect the music we play?
2. How can you determine the key of a piece of music just by looking at the key signature?
3. What are sharps, flats, and naturals, and how do they appear in a key signature?
4. How do major and minor key signatures differ, and what are their relationships?
5. How do key signatures influence the structure and emotional tone of a piece of music?
6. What patterns exist among the key signatures (e.g., order of sharps or flats)?
7. How can understanding key signatures help you play more accurately and confidently?
8. What happens when you encounter an accidental (sharp, flat, or natural) outside of the key signature, and how does it affect your reading and playing?
9. How do transposing instruments interact with key signatures, and how do you adjust when reading music for these instruments?
10. How can you identify and play in a key signature when reading music for the first time?

Guiding Questions

1. What is a key signature?
2. How do sharps and flats appear in key signatures?
3. What is the relationship between the number of sharps or flats and the key?
4. How do you determine the key of a piece by looking at the key signature?
5. How does the key signature change with major and minor keys?
6. How do key signatures affect the performance of a piece?
7. How do accidental notes (sharps, flats, naturals) work in relation to the key signature?
8. Why do composers change key signatures within a piece?

Knowledge

Students will know:

1. The basic concept of key signatures and help them understand the role they play in written music.
2. The practical application of reading key signatures and identifying the key of a piece.
3. The specific symbols used in key signatures and how they are applied.
4. The connection between major and minor scales and how key signatures reflect these differences.
5. How to connect theory to performance, allowing students to reflect on how key choice affects musical expression and mood.
6. How to identify and memorize patterns, which can aid in quickly identifying and learning key signatures.
7. How to tie theory to practice and reinforce the value of key signature knowledge in performing music effectively.
8. The difference between key signatures and accidentals, and how to manage them in

Skills

Students will be able to:

1. Identify key signatures
2. Understand and apply basic theory
3. Understand the order of sharps and flats
4. Recognize patterns in key signatures
5. Read and interpret key signatures
6. Adjust for accidentals
7. Adapt to modulations

Vocabulary

Flats
Naturals
Sharps
Chromatic
Accidental
Enharmonic
Major
Minor (natural, harmonic and melodic)
Modulation/Key Change

performance.

9. (For advanced students, particularly those in grades 7-12) the complexities of transposing instruments and how key signatures change for them.

10. How to read music in various keys, helping students practice sight-reading in different key signatures.

11. Specific Grade Level knowledge consists of the following:

- Grade 5 - Bb and Eb
- Grade 6 - add C, F, Ab, G, D and a minor and g minor
- Grade 7 - add Db, A f and d minor
- Grade 8 - solidify all 5-7 key signatures
- Grade 9-12 - add Gb/F#, Cb/B, C# and E

Standards

Grade 5-6 (Novice)

MU:Pr5.1.E.5 - a. Use teacher provided feedback and strategies to refine individual and ensemble performances. b. Respond appropriately to specific or aural and visual cues.

MU:Pr6.1.E.5 - a. Demonstrate attention to technical accuracy in prepared and/or improvised performances.

Grade 7-8 (Intermediate)

MU:Pr5.1.E.8 - a. Use teacher and student feedback to develop strategies that address technical challenges to refine performances. b. Respond appropriately to specific or aural and visual cues.

MU:Pr6.1.E.8 - a. Demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared and/or improvised performances.

High School Proficient

MU:Pr5.1.E.HSI - a. Use teacher and student feedback to develop strategies that address expressive challenges to refine performances. b. Identify the need for aural and visual cues.

MU:Pr6.1.E.HSI - a. Demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared and/or improvised performances of varied repertoire.

High School Accomplished

MU:Pr5.1.E.HSII - a. Develop, apply and evaluate appropriate rehearsal strategies to address

individual and ensemble challenges in a varied repertoire of music. b. Initiate the aural and visual cues.

MU:Pr6.1.E.HSII – a. Demonstrate mastery of the technical demands and an understanding of the expressive qualities of the music in prepared and/or improvised performances of varied repertoire representing diverse cultures, styles, genres and historical periods.

High School Advanced

MU.Pr5.1.E.HSIII – a. Develop, apply, evaluate and refine appropriate rehearsal strategies to address individual and ensemble challenges in a varied repertoire of music. b. Conduct or lead by providing aural and visual cues.

MU:Pr6.1.E.HSIII – a. Demonstrate an understanding and mastery of the technical demands and the expressive qualities of the music in prepared and/or improvised performances of varied repertoire representing diverse cultures, styles, genres and historical periods in multiple types of ensembles.

Assessment Evidence

Self/Ensemble-reflection, Perform, Notate, Explain

Learning Plan

Learning Activities

Using Standard of Excellence books, students will work through exercises as they gradually become more complex.

Students will be given band literature at varying levels of difficulty where they will need to work through challenges with key signatures including accidentals and modulations at the higher levels.

Solo literature is also provided as enrichment for students wanting an additional challenge.

Resources

Standard of Excellence Books 1–3

Circle of Fourths

Scale sheets

Ensemble Literature

Solo literature

Make Music