

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR LEARNING A SONG

Fall Music School 2017
Round Table Handout - Paula Allen

- more than one way of learning ACCURATELY. Learn with intent. Your brain does best when given ONE thing at a time, with lots of repetition to cement the learning.
- Discover how YOU learn best. Most of us are VISUAL learners with a secondary help as AUDITORY (buy or make audio recordings) or KINESTHETIC (dance when learning a rhythm, or use your hand to direct a whole phrase).
- Challenge yourself to learn more about reading the notes, one step at a time. Find basic lessons on YouTube, ask a section leader to get you started, download a free keyboard app on your device and learn to identify notes, set a goal with a riser buddy to find every DOH on the sheet music. Recognize and develop the MUSICIAN in you.

SPECIFICS:

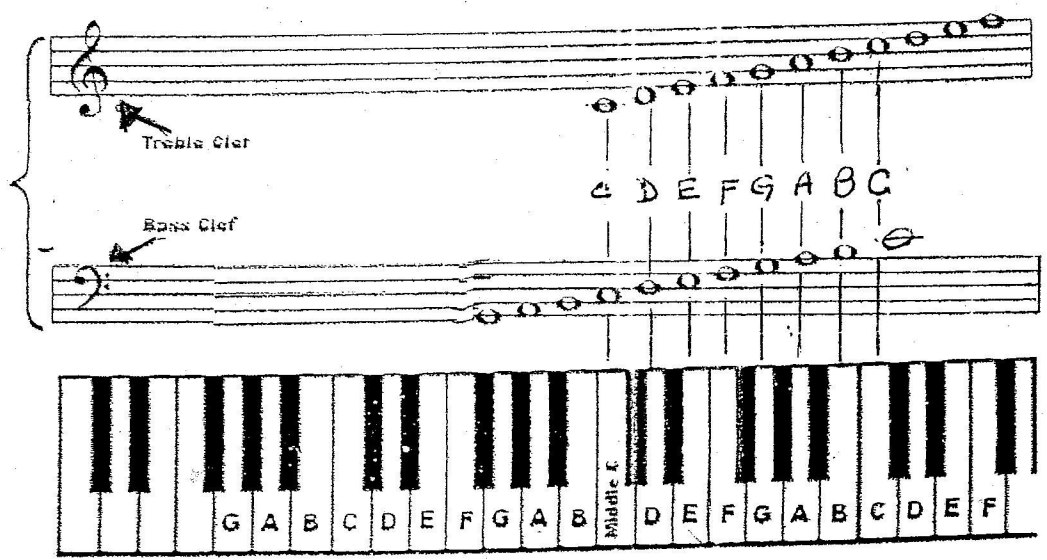
1. Set aside time (even a half hour) when you can actively, totally focus on what you are learning.
2. Use a pencil to make personal reminders on the sheet music in a manner that makes sense to you. (e.g. mark chorus breath spots and any interp plan that might differ from the paper, like milking a word in a ballad for effect or shortening “and” to ‘n in a fast passage.) Note repeated patterns or phrases that are different the second time it is sung.
3. LISTEN to the whole song, full mix; melody and your part predominant many times without singing, with eyes closed, then looking at the words only, then following the notes up and down. You will be learning the flavour of the song, the message, the high points, etc. Move around as you listen... dance, wave your arms, march or sway, use an imaginary paintbrush across phrases, allow your face to express what you feel from the music.
4. FOCUS on YOUR NOTES in one section of the song, e.g. the chorus. Sing “doo” instead of song lyrics, so your brain imprints only accurate pitches without word sounds compounding the input. When you are comfortable singing DOO to a section of the song with your part predominant, try singing DOO with the full mix or another part predominant. Note where you falter and go over those bits in isolation til you cannot sing it wrong.
5. LYRICS in SILENCE. As you listen to your part, follow along on the sheet music as you mouth the words – all the word sounds, held for the proper duration and rhythm that is in the interpretive plan, including breath spots (see BREATHING note below). This AUDIATION allows your brain to establish the pattern for all the lyrics with accuracy, finesse and consistency. Focus on one section of the song at a time. When you think you’ve got that bit, speak the words in the interpretive plan watching the music but without the track. Go over the tricky bits again. Then turn over the music, speak all the word sounds without the track. Go over the tricky bits again. Repetition is what will be memorized, so make sure it is correct at every step. KINESTHETIC learners often write out the lyrics. VISUAL learners find it helpful to see a typed word sheet with chorus breath spots at the end of every line.
6. INTEGRATION of notes and word sounds... one section of the song at a time. If steps 4 and 5 have been done well and enough, it will be natural. Go over the tricky bits. Record yourself often. The confidence you gain from having learned accurately the first time will allow you to soar with the music off the paper.
7. BREATHING – It is your responsibility to use air and get more individually! Leave out a word or two, avoiding a “NO-BREATH ZONE”. It takes planning and repetition, like all the other parts of the song!

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for questions how to use this page.



Names of spaces:

E
C
A
F

Grass
Eat
Cows
All

TUNING NOTES

Key Signature	Key (Doh)	re	mi	la	ti	fi
no flats or sharps	C	D	E	A	B	F#
1b	F	G	A	D	E	B natural ♯
2b	Bb	C	D	G	A	E natural ♯
3b	Eb	F	G	C	D	A natural ♯
4b	Ab	Bb	C	F	G	D natural ♯

b

1#	G	A	B	E	F#	C#
2#	D	E	F#	B	C#	G#
3#	A	B	C#	F#	G#	D#
4#	E	F#	G#	C#	D#	A#

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