

Label Your Bars

I believe that playing the wonderful repertoire of literature on the instruments is primary to what I do. As a quasi-Gordon teacher, I also recognize the importance of teaching music understanding. Solfege names can give musical syntax to a song. Letter names do not. B, G, does not have as much meaning as Mi, Do, especially because the same letter names could be Ti, So which would be a very different concept than Mi, Do. If the resting tones name is Do, we are in major tonality. If it is Re, we are in dorian etc.

If a song ends in B, A, G, I really don't know if I am in major, mixolydian or lydian tonality. If a melody ends in Mi, Re, Do, I can be sure that it is in major tonality. To that end, I suggest that you label your Orff instruments in the 3 major keys in which the instruments were designed to be played C, F and G. All of my Orff instruments have color-coded bars. White Solfege names are taped to the top edge of the bars for the key of C. Blue Solfege for the key of F taped under the guide hole. And yellow for the key of G taped at the bottom edge of the bars. The letter names are still visible in the middle of the bar. (You may have to change the location of the labels based on the manufacture of your instruments) One other advantage of labeling the bars is that if every bar has a blue label, you know the instrument is set for F major.

My process is students follow a part from notation with the Solfege as a lyric. Although the computer plays all parts, the line that we are learning is predominant in the mix. This gets the tune in their head and it keeps everyone on task because I will stop the computer in the middle of the piece and ask "what measure and note did I stop on?" The class then sings the Solfege with the computer. Anyone who memorizes and sings it for me becomes "a teacher" and practices it on the instrument using the opposite end of the mallet. Eventually, everyone is at an instrument with "a teacher" taking turns playing along with the computer. We follow the same procedure for the other parts but they are easily learned because they have heard it many times already.

You can download a page of the solfege for printing out at this link.

<http://www.havsd.net/~peters/?OpenItemURL=S0125C46A>