

Rhythm Syllable Systems

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Origins

- * French Time-Names, early 19th Century
- * Pierre Galin, French Mathematician
 - * "We should not recommend teaching a child to speak by means of reading, or place a book before him to show how to pronounce words. Yet this is what is done in music teaching: the child is required to perform from written notes; he is made to read before he knows how to sol-fa, that is, before he can speak. ..."(1818)
 - * Used words' syllables to match notes.

Sound Before Sight

- * Rhythm syllable systems
 - * Provide a way to experience rhythms
 - * Facilitate the comprehension and retention of patterns in audiation (hearing/comprehending in one's mind the sound of music that isn't or may have never been physically present) – Gordon
- * Characteristics
 - * Based on how rhythm is audiated, not notated
 - * *Some exceptions exist – we'll talk about it.*
 - * Each sound associated with unique rhythm element
 - * Comprehensive for as many meters and rhythms as possible
 - * *Not all systems are equally flexible*
 - * Conducive to performing many rhythm patterns

Some Misconceptions

- ⊗ Rhythm Syllable Systems are just for young kids, secondary teachers don't need to know or use them.
- ⊗ If kids are going to end up counting in secondary ensembles, why not start with counting?
- ⊗ All systems work the same way.

Syllable System Menu

System Name	Words	Original Syllables	Functional/Beat	Other
[French Time Names] - early 19 th C.	x			French words assigned to notes
[Luther Whiting Mason] - 1880s		x	*	*Vowels change for strong/weak beat
Dalcroze (Eurhythmics) - 1900s	*			*Movement and words (run-ning)
Counting (Ie&a) - 1940s			x	Syllables assigned to subdivisions (doesn't adjust perfectly with meter)
Kodály (Curwen) - 1960s		x		Syllables assigned to notes
Orff - 1960s	x			Use in conjunction with other systems.
Froeseh/Gordon - 1980s		x	x	Adjusts with meter
Takadimi - 1990s		x	x	Adjusts with meter

Consider this

- ⊗ Syllables are not the entire solution to the problem of teaching rhythm
 - ⊗ Sequence & scope provide context
 - ⊗ Heavily emphasized by Kodály approach, also Conversational Solfege
- ⊗ Mathematical skills required may be beyond young students
 - ⊗ Fractions and time signatures are confusing.
 - ⊗ Beat vs. rhythm (beats must be understood FIRST)
- ⊗ Functional Systems vs. Notation Specific Syllables
 - ⊗ Functional: Distinguish beats and subdivisions, provide context
 - ⊗ Notation specific: Identify notation
 - ⊗ Complex meters and rhythms, as well as tempo

You Say, I Say

Mason	Ta	Ta	Te-fe	Te
Counting	1	2	3+	4
Kodály	Ta	Ta	Ti-Ti	Ta
Orff	Will	You	Be my	Friend?
Dalcroze	Walk	Walk	Run-ning	Walk
Froseth/ Gordon	Du	Du	Du-de	Du
Takadimi	Ta	Ta	Ta-di	Ta

One System To Rule Them All?

- ✧ Palmer, 1976
- ✧ Compared Kodály vs. Gordon syllables
- ✧ Concluded that students could have fun in music class even while learning music notation
 - ✧ (gains made for both treatment groups, slightly better with Gordon, but not statistically significantly better)

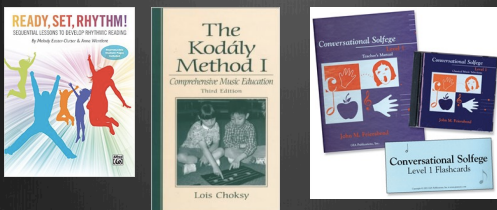
Takadimi Proponents:

- ✧ Rhythm Syllable systems should
 - ✧ Lead to accuracy and musicality in performance
 - ✧ Provide understanding of rhythmic structure
 - ✧ Facilitate aural identification of rhythmic patterns
 - ✧ Use precise and consistent language
 - ✧ Address non-traditional issues (multi-meter, modulation of meter/tempo, complex syncopation, complex tuplet beat groupings)
- ✧ Takadimi (and Gordon, for that matter) transitions well to counting: substitute beat numbers for initial attack (Ta or Du)
- ✧ Developed as a Music Theory Pedagogical tool, not an elementary music tool (suitable for older students)

Consistency is One Key

- ⊗ Literature suggests the use of a system consistently is the key
 - ⊗ Young students' brains are fairly agile, however
- ⊗ Consistency in K-12 setting
 - ⊗ "Starting From Scratch"
 - ⊗ Being conscious of the transfer of prior knowledge
 - ⊗ Elementary music transition to counting
 - ⊗ Middle school (and high school) aid transition by looking backward
 - ⊗ Tools for solving sight-reading problems
- ⊗ Audiation and dictation exercises for all ages

Sequence Resources



Echo Me...

1. Kodály
2. Gordon
3. Takadimi

The image shows three lines of musical notation. The first line is in 4/4 time and consists of a quarter note followed by a beamed eighth-note pair, then another quarter note, and finally a half note. The second line is also in 4/4 time and consists of a quarter note, a beamed eighth-note pair, and a quarter note. The third line is in 6/8 time and consists of a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, and a quarter note, followed by a double bar line.

Western Rhythm Syllable Systems

Historical and Background Information

Luther Whiting Mason

- ✧ 1880s
 - ✧ Student of Lowell Mason, Pestalozzian ideas
 - ✧ Adapted French Time-Names system for US and Japan
 - ✧ Unit is the measure, rather than the pulse
 - ✧ Features
 - ✧ Original syllables (not words)
 - ✧ Vowel changes in second half of measure (downbeat)
 - ✧ Ta ta te te
 - ✧ Ta-fa-ta-fa te-fe-te-fe
- ✧ Lowell Mason
 - ✧ Adaptation features syllable assigned to beat: "ta"

Counting

- ✧ 1e&a System (McHose/Tibbs system; Eastman System)
 - ✧ Modified by Eastman Professors Allen McHose and Ruth Tibbs
 - ✧ 1940s
 - ✧ Feel the strong beats within the context of counting
 - ✧ Simple vs. compound meter
 - ✧ 1-te, 2-te...
 - ✧ 1-ta-te-ta, 2-ta-te-ta
 - ✧ 1-la-lee, 2-la-lee
 - ✧ Gordon's first method was similar (Tometics)
 - ✧ 1-ne, 2-ne
 - ✧ 1-na-ni, 2-na-ni

Kodály

- ✧ 1960s, from Hungarian Music Education model in Hungary (named for creator, Zoltán Kodály)
- ✧ Kodály viewed rhythm as an outgrowth of movement and dance and flow of spoken language.
 - ✧ “one of the most important tasks of rhythmic education is the systematic preparation of children for comprehensive music reading.”
- ✧ Syllables assigned to rhythmic symbols
 - ✧ Ta, ti-ti, tiri-tiri (or tika tika), etc.

Dalcroze

- ✧ Emile Jacques Dalcroze
 - ✧ Method began as early as early 1900s
- ✧ Eurhythmics, Solfège, Improvisation
 - ✧ No prescribed syllables
 - ✧ Improvised rhythm syllables
 - ✧ Greek Rhythm Modes
- ✧ May be used in conjunction with syllables, reinforce and enhance.
 - ✧ Emphasis on movement and timing, lots of games and improv.
 - ✧ rhythm not merely the next note that follows

Orff-Schulwerk

- ✧ Carl Orff
 - ✧ Began teaching ideas in 1932
 - ✧ Method gained recognition in the 1960s
- ✧ Sound before sight continues
 - ✧ Speech patterns take precedence
 - ✧ Associate words and syllabic divisions in speech patterns
- ✧ Use with familiar poems, rhymes, texts or created by teacher/student
- ✧ Often combined with Kodály (or other) syllable systems, but not prescribed by the method.

Froseth/Gordon

- ✧ James Froseth and Albert Blaser, 1970s
 - ✧ Beat-based system
 - ✧ Beat: "du" regardless of subdivision of the beat
 - ✧ Different syllables for different subdivisions

- ✧ Edwin Gordon adopted duple meter "du-de" and triple meter "du-da-di" in the 1980s

- ✧ Conversational Solfege (Feierabend) also makes use of these syllables.
 - ✧ Singing sounds more appealing
 - ✧ 12-step program for music literacy

Takadimi

- ✧ 1990s, Richard Hoffman, William Pelto, John White (Ithaca College)
- ✧ Named for an Indian Rhythm system, but designed for Western Tonal Rhythm (European/US music)
- ✧ Created by Music Theorists
 - ✧ Based on research, learning theories and best practice

- ✧ Beat-oriented (functional) syllable system
 - ✧ Syllables assigned to beats and beat subdivisions
 - ✧ Transfers regardless of meter

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