

SOUND[®]

ORCHESTRA

ENSEMBLE DEVELOPMENT STRING or FULL ORCHESTRA

Warm-Up Exercises and Chorales to Improve Blend, Balance, Intonation, Phrasing, and Articulation

FOR INTERMEDIATE through ADVANCED ENSEMBLES

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Thank you for making *Sound Orchestra* a part of your curriculum. It is our hope you will find this book to be a valuable resource in helping your students grow in their understanding and abilities as ensemble musicians. This version of the score is for the string orchestra alone. Also available is a full orchestra score for use with a string orchestra, a full orchestra, or any combination of strings, winds, percussion, or keyboard.

Every effort has been taken to ensure that this book is as flexible as possible. To that end, we have included an optional piano/keyboard part that may be used to supplement instrumentation, as well as an optional violin III part that replicates the viola book. This book especially focuses on the challenges of unifying the quality of intonation, playing in keys that are less familiar or comfortable, cohesive bowings, as well as section and ensemble balance within the orchestra.

The book is organized by key, and an assortment of exercises and chorales are presented in a variety of difficulty levels. Where possible, several exercises in the same category are provided to create variety while accomplishing the goals of that specific type of exercise. You will notice that many exercises and chorales are clearly marked with dynamics, articulations, and style markings for students to practice those aspects of performance. Other exercises are intentionally left unmarked for you to determine how best to use them in facilitating the goals and addressing the needs of your ensemble. For example, directors may ask their string players to use fourth fingers or shift for certain exercises. Playing exercises in alternate positions will allow string players to develop their listening abilities when they are outside of first position.

Whether your students are progressing through exercises to better their technical facility, challenging their musicianship with beautiful chorales, or playing arrangements of excerpts from orchestral repertoire, we are confident your performers will be excited, motivated, and inspired by using *Sound Orchestra*.



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Contents

Tuning

This often-used technique for tuning strings en masse, is here in written-out form.

Passing the Tonic

These exercises help students concentrate on improving their individual characteristic tone and tuning skills as they work to achieve ensemble balance, blend, and intonation. Each line is designed to help students become accustomed to the tonality of the key and work toward stabilizing the pitch as they move the tonic note through the ensemble. As string players' technical abilities develop, they should explore performing these exercises without open strings or in alternate positions.

Scale and Arpeggio

Students can work toward mastering a specific major or minor scale, as well as an arpeggio in that key (whether a familiar one or not), while developing a cohesive ensemble sound. You may find it beneficial to add a tonic drone—whether performed by players or a synthesizer—while performing these exercises. The drone, played at a moderate (not overpowering) volume may help to improve vertical as well as horizontal intonation in the ensemble.

Chromatic Scales

These exercises provide an opportunity to stabilize intonation throughout the ensemble while also practicing the kinesthetic memory needed for technical passages.

Scale Pattern

These exercises are designed to develop dexterity, facility, confidence, and familiarity with the scale of each key by using a variety of different patterns, each containing a variety of rhythms, meters, and articulations. Scale patterns are important for string players because they help them become familiar with common finger patterns and positions used in that key.

Balance and Intonation: Perfect Intervals

In these exercises, the ensemble begins by playing in unison before some of the players move to create a perfect fifth, and then return to the starting unison pitch. Following this pattern, students can focus on tuning the perfect intervals of a unison, fourth, fifth, and octave. Once students are comfortable with these exercises in first position, they should explore performing them with alternate fingerings or positions.

Balance and Intonation: Diatonic Harmony

By having students move between unison and diatonic triads, these exercises will foster the skills of vertical and horizontal tuning, balance, blend, and internalizing pitch, as well as a better understanding of common cadences and harmonic progressions.

Balance and Intonation: Family Balance

These exercises are designed to focus on various aspects of ensemble, family, and section balance, as well as intonation, listening, and blending. In addition, many of these exercises address the essential concept of understanding how different musical lines appear in the foreground and background within the texture of various compositions. By using dynamics and orchestration in these exercises, various sections of the ensemble move between prominent and supportive roles.

Balance and Intonation: Layered Tuning

In these exercises, intervals and triads are built by gradually adding one member of an interval or triad at a time, allowing students to focus on tuning vertical sonorities in a variety of contexts. With a similar focus, students will also gradually subtract members of vertical sonorities, one member at a time.

Balance and Intonation: Shifting Chord Qualities

These exercises begin with the ensemble playing a major triad, then moving to a minor triad and a diminished triad. Cycling through these chord qualities will help foster the slight horizontal and vertical intonation adjustments needed when changing between them, as well as developing the skills of balance, blend, pitch tendencies, and pitch internalization.

Dynamics

Students will have the opportunity to further develop their abilities to perform and control dynamic levels, preserving beautiful characteristic tone while practicing sudden changes, gradual changes, extremes, and nuances of volume—as well as reinforcing the concept of foreground and background in musical textures.

Articulations

These exercises allow students to practice performing, controlling, changing, and contrasting a variety of articulations in many contexts. Students will work toward unifying the ensemble as diverse and various bowing techniques are used to achieve a cohesive sound.

Rhythmic Subdivision

These exercises are designed to help students understand and internalize rhythmic subdivision. While one part of the ensemble performs music containing common rhythmic patterns, the other part of the ensemble performs the supporting subdivision.

Phrasing

These exercises provide students an opportunity to develop their sense of individual, section, and ensemble phrasing, with emphasis on unifying the various families of instruments. A comma or apostrophe (’) after a note, called a *luftpause*, indicates a small space after a note, usually at the end of a phrase. That symbol has come to also be known as a “bow lift” indicating a pause as well as to reset the bow. That phrase space can also be created by simply stopping the bow after the note before continuing on with the bow to cause the next note. That phrase space is indicated by the marking *no lift*. Both ways of achieving the space are correct. Your interpretation of the music, and the context of that marking will help you determine the best way to achieve that space. Students will practice phrasing as an ensemble, observing “bow lift” or “luftpause” markings as an ensemble, and in situations where some ensemble members phrase while others do not. Each exercise can be used to focus on the subtleties of musical releases, phrase lengths, contour of line, and shaping of phrases in various contexts.

Scale Chorales

These chorales are harmonized scales in specified keys. Each student’s part has two lines: the top line (A), the scale, and the bottom line (B), their part in the chorale. Directors can choose a single student, a section, or any other combination of instrumentalists to play the scale, while the rest of the ensemble performs the chorale.

Bach Chorales

These stunning chorales allow students to practice each of the concepts addressed in this book as they work to refine and unify every aspect of ensemble performance.

Chorales

These chorales provide opportunities for students to develop the essential skills of tone production, blend, balance, intonation, phrasing, dynamics, articulation, style, and musical expression.

Orchestral Repertoire

These excerpts are included in this book to allow students to combine all aspects of ensemble playing, as well as become familiar with these renowned works. These arrangements are as true to the original versions as possible; however, some liberties have been taken to make them musically satisfying for ensembles of diverse instrumentation using these books.

Modulation

These exercises will help students practice common forms of modulations. Most of these exercises appear twice with the first example in a common string key and the second in a common wind key.

Open Strings Versus Fourth Fingers in the String Parts

Due to the varied difficulty of the exercises in these books, we chose to indicate a number of fourth finger options for violin and viola. This will allow teachers to customize the exercises to their ensemble’s ability level. While advanced ensembles may incorporate fourth fingers immediately, intermediate ensembles may elect to repeat the exercises with fourth fingers once students can properly demonstrate the goal of a specific exercise. Fourth fingers were included in all chorales, but students will need to develop their ability to transfer their usage from situation to situation.

String Shifting and Fingerings

In an effort to make this book accessible to a wide range of students, only a limited number of exercises and chorales require shifting. This allows developing ensembles to perform the exercises and chorales in first position (except for the string bass), and more experienced ensembles to perform the exercises and chorales in alternate positions. A “–” indicates a shift to a new position. String players should stay in that position until they see the next “–”.

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Concert G Major

1 TUNING

Full Orchestra: Play 3 times—1st time strings alone, 2nd time winds and percussion alone, and 3rd time tutti. For more detailed information, please see the exercise descriptions at the beginning of the book.

String Orchestra: When using this tuning sequence with string orchestra alone, perform it as written.

* An optional Violin III book that replicates the Viola part is also available. When necessary, alternate notes have been used to accommodate notes that go out of the violin range.

2 PASSING THE TONIC—These exercises help unify ensemble tone, balance, blend, and intonation. For more detailed information, please see the exercise descriptions at the beginning of the book.

Concert B \flat Major

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PASSING THE TONIC—This exercise helps unify ensemble tone, balance, blend, and intonation. For more detailed information, please see the exercise descriptions at the beginning of the book.

1 2 3 4 5 6

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CONCERT B \flat MAJOR SCALE AND ARPEGGIO—Adding a tonic drone can help with vertical and horizontal tuning. For more detailed information, please see the exercise descriptions at the beginning of the book.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Concert F# Minor

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PASSING THE TONIC—This exercise helps unify ensemble tone, balance, blend, and intonation. For more detailed information, please see the exercise descriptions at the beginning of the book.

Violins I
Violins II
Viola
Cello
Str. Bass
Pno. (Opt.)

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CONCERT F# MINOR SCALE AND ARPEGGIO—Adding a tonic drone can help with vertical and horizontal tuning. For more detailed information, please see the exercise descriptions at the beginning of the book.

Violins I
Violins II
Viola
Cello
Str. Bass
Pno. (Opt.)