

CHAPTER 2

A Sound Awareness of Music



Music is a many-splendored thing. Now as in the historical past, people are making music meaningful and useful in their lives, as singers, players, dancers, creators, and listeners. In many traditions, they may be musically interactive in all of these roles at once, where no demarcations are found to cubbyhole them into one realm only to keep them out of another. Across the earth, the palette of musical possibilities is as varied as technology can provide and as deeply involving as the time that people will allow it into their lives. Music calls individuals to embrace it intimately, and to share in it as social experience and as members of a community of musicians and listening audiences. For people of the world's cultures, music is vital to their very being, whether they know it as "makers or takers," active participants or passive consumers. Music teachers traditionally aim for the active participation of their students in musical experiences and, as such, they match well the manner in which so many of the world's people are musically involved, both in their own neighborhoods as well as in far-flung places across the globe.

Practically speaking, there are three central features to consider in developing a sound awareness of music: instruments (and voices), elements, and contexts. We grow in awareness of the music by knowing about the instruments (and voices) that produce the sound—their timbral quality, how they are constructed, what ideas people have of their instruments and their associations with spirituality, gender, and cultural status, and whether the instrument is viewed as a "thing" of beauty or an item of technology (or both). We come to terms with music's structures through analysis of its elements of time (rhythm, its organization, and speed), pitch (both horizontal, as in melody, and vertical, as in the textures of pitches sounding together). We recognize that our own conceptions of music are personally and culturally evolved, and that we must commit ourselves to the study of music's functions and settings within the culture from which it is derived if we are to truly understand

it. When we make an effort to know the singers, players, dancers, composers (improvisers and arrangers, too), and avid listeners, to talk with them, to observe them in “live” musical action, we can get to the heart of context and what the music truly means to the people within the culture and why it is a valued human expression. Our understanding of music depends upon the information we can gather about these features.

The process of musically educating children and youth requires a continuous commitment to multiple courses of action, from basic musical awareness experiences to the thoughtful creation and re-creation of music. For the sakes of our students, whether they are the very young elementary school children rooted to their homes and families or the more musically sophisticated secondary school adolescents, we are compelled to consider, on the way to providing them with applied performance and creative skills, their *sound awareness of music*. Who are our students, musically speaking? What music do they find familiar, less familiar, or even “exotic”? What musical experiences do they bring from outside the context of instruction into the classroom? How aware are they of music’s features and processes? How can their awareness, both of locally grown music and music from distant cultures, be extended and intensified? By raising these questions and seeking responses, the musical education of our students can be made more relevant.

Teachers do well when they awaken in K–12 students the deeper meanings of the music of their own familial experiences. They do well, too, when they develop their students’ awareness of musical genres and expressions that have been outside their experience but which can be brought within their reach through effective curricular considerations. Through a kind of discovery zone of suggested “sound awareness activities” described next, teachers can guide students in ways for knowing musical sound through the music-makers, and the instruments and voices, that are able to be accessed. Independently conceived although similar in spirit to the development of ideas prescribed a generation ago by Canadian composer R. Murray Schaefer in *The Thinking Ear: Complete Writings on Music Education* (1986), these activities stretch from local to global conceptions of musical sources, elements, and contexts. Some of the three dozen suggestions are student-independent, while others require the teacher’s guidance and facilitation in class to set up and show students the way. The activities are wide-ranging, too, some of which will prove to be quite elementary and intended for young beginners while others will challenge even an experienced first-chair flutist or a ten-year veteran of piano lessons. As for where to begin, which ac-

tivities to use (and even which to discard), the decision is dependent upon teachers, students, and programs. Perceptive teachers will fit the activities to the needs of their students, although levels of difficulty (initial, intermediate, and advanced) are designated in an advisory way. As might be expected, the activities can be used intact as described or adapted by teachers and their students.

DISCOVERING THE SPLENDORS OF SOUND

As babes-in-the-womb, we had our first experiences through what our mothers sang to us, and we could hear through her the music our parents preferred listening to, and that they may have sung and played together. The sense of hearing develops first, and is fine-tuned through infancy and toddlerhood. Creeping and crawling, we listened to the sounds of family members in the home, and then as young children in the yard, we heard our neighbors talking, singing, playing their recordings, and maybe even a playing a musical instrument or two. We discovered our world partly through our sound-sense, and our musicality developed through the music that appeared within our range of hearing. Yet as the world crowded in on us by middle childhood and into our adolescence, it is not surprising that our sound awareness may have dimmed and diminished some, and that the scope of our musical experience became fixed on just that music that was most commonly “in the air” around us and thus easily available to us.

The world is rich with musical sounds which distinguish one culture from the next, and even the most local and familiar sound environments, heard in a moment’s time, are reflective of a culture. It is captivating to listen with fresh ears to the sounds that emanate from local “home” cultures. Open the door into a family home, and there are people talking, walking, humming, whistling, laughing, dogs barking, and appliances whirring or buzzing—from washers and dryers to electric drills and saws, or TVs and radios and recordings playing. From the other direction, open the door to the outside, and an active neighborhood may be heard—from songbirds and the wind in the trees, to the motors of near and distant vehicles, to the dull thumping music that pours out of restaurants, stores, cafes, and passing cars. The doors that open into and out of these cultures lend themselves to widely varied sound-palettes, so that even the languages or inflections of a family’s speech, or the melodies of particular songbirds perched nearby, or the music from a specific TV station or restaurant, will differ and thus dis-

tinguish a given place as having its own very local sonic culture. In knowing the wider world of music, then, we go forward with our ears perked to explore with our students the musical possibilities of our immediate environs and of a sampling of sound that is captured on a single CD.

SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.1 *Discovering Environmental Sounds.* (Initial) *Alone or in groups, take stock of the sounds in an immediate environment. In the classroom, elsewhere in the building, or outdoors, maintain silence for five minutes in order to listen and jot down all ambient sounds. Discover which sounds appear to have definitive musical qualities of pitch (high, low, changing), duration (long, short, fast, slow, steady or not), timbre (from dull to brilliant), and intensity (soft, loud, changing). Note how sounds seem to collide and combine in polyphonic textures, and how others seem to “stand out.” Which sounds are predictable and familiar? Which sounds might be telling symbols of who people are, of ideas and objects that people value, that is, signifiers of cultural value?*

SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.2 *Constructing an Environmental Sound Composition.* (Initial) *Using a variety of sound sources, including voices, body percussion, musical instruments, and other available objects like paper, cups, pens, chairs, keys, and desk tops, try to reproduce with others a 30-second piece comprised of the ambient sounds observed in 2.1. Experiment with not only the timbral qualities but also duration and intensity, and textural variety (one sound source versus many). Note the challenges in re-creating natural and mechanical or motorized sounds, if that is your intent, and in developing the textures that come from the combination of sounds occurring simultaneously. Create a miniature composition based upon this environmental sound-palette. Evaluate its impact as a musical composition or as a mere exercise in sound exploration.*

SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.3 Instrumental Sound-Spectrum. *(Initial) Find at least five musical instruments, or objects with music-making potential, in your home and community. Play them, or ask others to play them, and explore the mechanisms by which sound is produced. Make a list of these instruments and categorize them by their sound-making capacities (by plucking or bowing a string, blowing into a tube or cone, striking the instrument's surface, shaking the instrument). See Thinking Musically, Chapter 2, as you consider various other ways to categorize these instruments, including the material from which they are made.*

SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.4 The Personal Voice. *(Initial) The most personal instrument of all is the voice. Listen to your singing voice as you sing. The shower is a place of good resonance where the sound feeds back to you from the shower wall, or a tape recording is an obvious source of feedback to you as to your sound. Describe your vocal quality: High, medium, low in pitch? Bright, light or darker, heavier? With vibrato or "straight" in tone? With or without rasp, or buzz, or breathiness, or twang? Large or small range? Once you have decided what it will do, try various singing qualities or styles: Western art/operatic, Country (western), Pop-styled, other. What music are you most comfortable singing? Which ones will you learn?*

SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.5 Other Voices. *(Intermediate) Listen to the voices of others on the CD selections. Without reading their official descriptions from the CD list, make notes of the vocal quality and estimate which culture the voices belong to. What led you to these descriptions and speculations? (Suggested ten selections: CD tracks 1, 7, 9, 10, 20, 21, 27, 33, 39, and 46.)*



SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.6 Instrument ID-by-Ear. (Intermediate) Listen to ten selections from the CD, and identify them according to the following process: (a) description of materials from which the instrument is constructed (for example, wood or brass or gourd), (b) description of how it's played, (c) country or region of the world where the instrument is played, (d) "educated guess" as to the English-language name of the instrument. Check your answers with the CD list description, and discuss which ones were most challenging, and why. (Suggested ten selections: CD tracks 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 14, 22, 25, 32, 52).



SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.7 Making Your Own Instrument. (Intermediate) Based upon the sound-making properties of which you are aware through your examination of instruments, look into the possibilities for making your own instrument. Nonpitched percussion instruments, such as drums, wood blocks, and shakers, may immediately come to mind, and numerous materials found at home or at school could be adapted to make musical sounds. Consider what instruments could be made, including strings and winds, from the following materials: hollowed-out bamboo stalks, PVC or other plastic pipes, "Easter eggs" and rice, pots and pans, rubberbands, 2 × 4 boards, sticks, cans, strings (including metal guitar strings), drinking straws, or cheesecloth.

SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.8 Sleuthing for Styles. (Intermediate) Scan radio, TV, and Internet sources to sleuth out as many musical styles as is possible. If descriptive words are applied to them (or occur to you), jot them down. Visit the local record shops for style descriptors, too, as you take note of the dividers and bins in which the recordings are kept. In small groups, list all of the different styles of music you have gathered.

Check off those styles that you know and write the name of a composer, artist, or song/composition that is identified with this style. Compare your findings with those of your peers.

GETTING THE FOCUS ON MUSIC AND CULTURE

People often take music for granted. Sounds from every source, every song and instrumental piece, may converge into an aural collage and become too much “a part of the scenery.” Occasionally, music will stand out and be transformative in the experience we have with it, but for most music to be greatly valued and viewed for its remarkable contribution to human life, it is often necessary to study it. The mission of a musical education in schools and institutions of higher learning is to develop in students a deeper understanding of the structures and meanings of music; thus it is vital for teachers to teach musically and culturally. Developing in students a sound awareness of music necessitates that they focus on music and its cultural significance, a noble goal that can be achieved through their involvement of activities presented here. The volume *Thinking Musically* is a useful guide to further explanation of the concepts behind these “focus” activities, and both its glossary and the CD are vital components in the study of music as a cultural expression.

A musical culture may be as tightly conceived of as what is heard within one family home or as expansive as a neighborhood, a community formed by ethnicity or religious practices, or region defined by geographic, ecological, or political boundaries. One family’s sound surroundings may differ from the next, and so do neighborhoods vary in the music people listen to, make, and value. What music may sound in the center of a city may not be the same as what may be heard on the east side, or the south side. As communities develop around main streets, churches, schools, parks, business districts, and shopping centers, the music of the people who live there is part of what distinguishes them. First-generation Eritreans bring with them the musical heritage of their home country, and it uniquely defines them, as does the heritage-music of first-generation Russians, Koreans, and Venezuelans. Those whose families have lived away from these home countries for two, three, or more generations may yet be musically linked to their old-world heritage, and music, like the food, traditional clothing, and

religious practices, may emerge at weddings, funerals, family reunions, and holiday celebrations. Americans whose roots may be traced to Ireland, Mexico, Japan, Italy, and the Philippines may live as mainstream Americans on most days but enjoy the festive occasions that recall their ancestry and underscore their ethnic identity.

SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.9 Defining Music.

*(Initial) Survey friends and family members, asking them to define what is (and is not) music. How close do they come to the definition of music as “humanly organized sound”? Or to referring to music as “a process” that requires the efforts of performers and listeners? Do any of the collected definitions take in dance as well (as in the case of the Indian word for music, *sangita*)? Do any of the definitions separate vocal and instrumental music by the use of separate words, as in the case of the Macedonian “*pesne*” for song and “*musika*” for instrumental music?*

SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.10 Exploring Musical Heritage.

(Initial) Gather information on the music of your family’s cultural heritage. What musics do your parents prefer? Your grandparents? Siblings, aunts, and uncles? Ask them about favorite songs, artists, and styles. On what occasions do they hear his music? Do they sing or play an instrument (or did they)? To what kind of music do they dance? Review their collections of recordings (CDs, tapes, LPs) and videotapes/DVDs of a musical nature. Compile a list of significant musics that define their heritage. Discuss any surprises (to you) concerning your family’s musical heritage.

SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.11 Determining Musical Identity.

(Initial) Who are you, musically speaking? Beyond the ties to your family’s musical heritage, the music you

listen to, and perform, uniquely defines you. Maintain an accurate record of your daily musical involvement over a week's time. Be specific about the nature of your listening (To what? By whom? For how long?), performing (What instrument? What piece?), dancing (Type of dance? To what music?). Tally the amount of your musical involvement per day, with subtotals on activity types and musical styles (or artists), and determine the average amount over the week. Compare to the musical preferences of other family members, and classmates.



SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.12 **Knowing Musical Beauty.** *(Intermediate) Play a sampling of musical selections from the CD, and discuss what might be considered beautiful about the music. For example, CD track 3 features embellishment and variation in Chinese music, a beautiful approach to “adding flowers” to the otherwise plain melody, and CD track 5 presents a community of musicians (from West Africa) who come together in a socially responsive manner to interlock their short segments of rhythm and pitch to create a satisfying musical sound. To know musical beauty one must not only be familiar with the music, but also come to an understanding of what the music means. Music’s power is inherent in its ability to stir deep emotions in the listener. Further, this power may be personally and culturally constructed. Discuss what music has been particularly beautiful, and powerful, and why. If the selections do not sound beautiful to you on initial or even multiple hearings, pinpoint and probe for reasons why not.*

SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.13 **Discovering Music’s Functions.** *(Intermediate) Music’s meaning is often associated with its function within culture, and many songs and genres are referred to and are categorized by what function they*

fulfill. Play and discuss examples of music's functions as sacred expression and worship (CD tracks 1, 10, 14), social protest (CD tracks 6, 7), tribute and honor to nobility (CD tracks 8, 26), work (CD track 9), storytelling (CD tracks 55, 56), dance, movement, and martial art (CD tracks 2, 4, 37, 38, 59), religious ritual (CD tracks 12, 26), vocal art (CD tracks 20, 21), instrumental art (CD tracks 11, 17, 51, 54), festive celebration (CD tracks 16, 27), expression of national identity (CD tracks 2, 23, 29, 34, 35). Discuss the use of music in daily life.

SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.14 Musician-Speak. (Intermediate) Interview a musician who represents a musical culture you know little of but would like to know better. Go to a performance by the musician, if possible, or a rehearsal, or some way hear him or her perform live. Interview that musician about the use, meaning, and value of music to him or her personally, and its role and place within the cultural community. Ask questions about the musician's musical experience and training: When he/she learned? Where? From whom? How? Ask about favorite pieces in the repertoire, and why they are preferred. Record the interview (and performance, if possible), listen to it and study it, write up a description of the performance and interview, and conclude with your personal reflections and reactions to the experience of knowing a musician of an unfamiliar culture.

SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.15 Going Global on Styles. (Advanced) If there is diversity in the music that is near to us, that diversity multiplies by magnitudes as we consider the global possibilities. There are no limitations anymore to the music that we can know, given the technological possibilities of tapping into music cultures on radio and TV, over the Internet, and through the brisk recording market that seems to be prolifer-

ating in every conceivable corner of the world. In many cultures, there are indigenous and “roots” styles, folk and traditional expressions, high art or classical forms, jazz, and popular music. There are fusion styles, too, where one musical culture may interface with and influence another and a new form emerges, as in the case of European and African-American components merging into jazz, or Afro-pop arising from the combination of traditional West African and Western popular elements. The splendors of music are nearly endless, and access to knowing it is well within reach. On the basis of these assumptions, proceed in one of these three directions: (a) choose a culture and research it for which musical styles are performed by people from within that culture (and collect audio-examples to share); (b) consider the people living in your local community, and research which music of their ancestral homeland they know best and actively preserve in your/their local community (and find out how that preservation is taking place); (c) listen to fusion music, and dissect by listening and through interviews with musicians or astute listeners just what components of various styles are interfacing to create the new blended sound.

OPENING THE EAR I: RHYTHM AND INSTRUMENTS

Musical awareness has its beginnings in experiences with the elemental features that comprise the musical sound itself. When we open our young students’ ears to music, they cannot help but notice the elements that make it what it is: the rhythms, timbres, pitches, small structures and larger forms. As they listen, they consciously and unconsciously find items that draw their attention and aid their understanding and liking of the music. They connect to one feature and then another, listening for instruments that are familiar to them, wondering about those that are unfamiliar, gauging the qualities of singing voices and the languages they express, searching for a groove or lingering amid sounds that wash over them without a perceivable pulse. With our commitment as facilitating teachers, the musical experiences of our elementary

and secondary school students gain depth through an understanding of the musical elements and their treatments by singers and players. Element by element, our students can know an expansion of musical riches as they are led to new discoveries that unfold before them with each further listening opportunity. Beyond an awareness of our sonic environments and following a focus on musical cultures close by and at some distance, the experiences that follow allow occasions for understanding the musical "insides," the features that make the music work its wonders on listeners. By opening our students' ears to the technical matters of time and timbre, they are certain to develop a fuller awareness of musical sound.

SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.16 Beat Detection.

(Initial) Find the beat (also known as the pulse) in musical selections from the CD, and pat it, tap it, clap it, or in some other way, move to it. Note also those which do not appear to have a perceivable beat but which may unfold in free and flexible rhythm.

Take this activity further by beats that are accented, performed with greater stress, and those that are performed with lesser stress.

The following are a sampling of CD selections for beat detection:

CD track 1 (no beat), CD track 2 (beat, accent on 1, no accent on 2-3-4), CD track 3 (free, no-beat introduction, followed by beat section with an accent on 1, no accent on 2), CD track 11 (free, no-beat), CD track 24 (beat, accent on 1, lesser accent on 4, no accent on 2-3 and 5), CD track 33 (beat, accent on 1, no accent on 2-3), CD track 49 (beat, accent on 1, no accent on 2), CD track 52 (no beat). Can you find other examples of a clearly perceivable beat?

SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.17 The Body as a

Sound Source. (Initial) Amid the various categorizations of musical instruments according to the manner in which the sound is produced, including those known as aerophones (vibrating columns of air), chordophones (vibrating strings), membranophones (vi-



brating skin), and idiophones (sounds made by striking, shaking, rubbing), there is a category called corpophone that refers to “body-sounds,” including hand claps, finger snaps, foot stomps, chest slaps, and the like. Listen to these CD selections that incorporate corpophone sounds: CD tracks 6, 27, 39, and 58. Explore the varied sounds that can be produced by the body, including singing. Create a piece that utilizes a repeated rhythmic pattern of corpophone sounds alongside an invented melody and/or harmonies.



SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.18 Metric Challenges. (*Initial to Advanced*) In understanding meter as a pattern of strong and weak counts, the beat selections for 2.16 are workable for this activity. Find strong and weak movements to correspond to strong and weak beats; for example, step or stamp for strong beats and clap or pat for weak beats. In small groups, try a variety of movements to express the strong-and-weak beat patterns, determine one that fits best, and share the movement patterns that the meter of strong and weak beats inspire with other small groups in the class. Notice how the movement seems dance-like in its repeated metric pattern. Some CD selections that present interesting metric challenges for more advanced students are track 22 (♩♩♩ ♩♩♩) alternating to (♩♩ ♩♩♩), track 36 (changing meters from triple to quadruple), and track 38 (♩♩♩ ♩♩♩).

SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.19 The Human Voice. (*Intermediate*) Compare the vocal styles of musical traditions for their range of pitches, their open-throated, raspy, breathy, and nasalized qualities, their plain or ornamental styles—and syllabic (one pitch to a syllable) or melismatic (multiple pitches to a syllable) styles, their solo or group presentations, their special

techniques (yodels, glottal stops, vibrato, tremolo) and their unaccompanied or instrumentally accompanied forms. Listen and describe the female voice of Cantonese opera (CD track 20) with the female voice of European bel canto (CD track 21), the male voice in a Navajo corn-grinding song (CD track 9) with the male voice of a South Indian kriti (CD track 39), and the choral sounds of an African American freedom song (CD track 6), a Cook Island ute (CD track 27), a European medieval rota (CD track 49), and an eastern African rendition of the well-known “Kumbaya” (CD track 58).

Comparisons: The Singing Voice

	Example CD track 9 (Navajo)	Example CD track 39 (South Indian)
Pitch Range	Small (m6)	Medium (octave +)
Vocal quality	Raspy, Nasalized	Nasalized
Plain/Ornamented	Ornamented	Highly ornamented
Syllabic/Melismatic	More syllabic	Melismatic
Solo/Group	Two voices in unison	Solo
Special Techniques	Vibrato, some glottal stops	Tremolo
Accompanied/ Unaccompanied	Unaccompanied	Accompanied

SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.20 Instrumental Comparisons. *(Intermediate) Flutes, fiddles, and xylophones: What remains the same, and yet how also are they distinguished, across cultures? Consider and chart the timbral qualities, materials from which the instrument may be constructed, tuning, playing position, culturally-influenced melodic or rhythmic conventions of the instrument in various traditions. Listen to examples of the*



flute (CD tracks 3, 12, 15, 22), xylophone (CD tracks 8, 19, 23, 31, 50), and fiddle (CD tracks 8, 20, 21, 25, 37) to make these comparisons.

SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.21 Keeping the Tāla. (Advanced) Indian musicians refer to meter as tāla, and recognize its composite of subunits of even and uneven numbers of beats (or counts). One frequently-used tāla in the Karnataka music of South India is called adi tāla, whose eight beats are grouped into three sections consisting of an even number of beats in each, 4 + 2 + 2. As the discernment of the tāla is of vital importance to audience members as it is to performers, it is common to see and hear clapping and waving on the strong (and initial) beat of each subunit, and a finger-ticking movement on the weak beats. (The right hand claps into the left hand, waves out away from the body with the back of the hand leading it; on the finger ticks (“f.t.”), the right hand thumb moves inward to touch the tip of the little finger (for the two-beat subunits) also the ring and middle fingers (for the four-beat subunit). Practice “keeping the tāla” of adi tāla by following the movements below, counting as you go. Once it is comfortable and “second-nature,” play CD track 39 (Unnai Nambinen) and keep the tāla while listening to the claps.



Beat/count:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Subgroup	4				2		2	
Movement	clap	f.t.	f.t.	f.t.	clap	f.t.	wave	f.t.

For further rhythmic intrigue, there are stroke patterns for the tablā and mridangam drums found in North and South India, respectively, each with their own correspondent speech syllables, that are spoken as the tāla is kept. See examples of the Hindustani spoken drum patterns (called thekā) for tablā, and the placement of the gestures for keeping their tālas in *Thinking Musically*, (page 68).

SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.22 Modes of the Middle East. (*Advanced*). In the music of much of the Middle East, the metric feeling of the music centers around a rhythmic mode. Beyond the number of beats in a unit, a rhythmic mode is also distinguished by the way it is performed on a drum or other percussion instrument such as tambourine or finger cymbals. Percussionists learn to play by chanting “dumm” for deep and/or muted sounds and “takk” for high and/or bright sounds. Experiment with a goblet drum, tambourine, and finger cymbals to find the best “dumm” and “takk” sounds. Then chant and play the maqam’s rhythmic mode:

Beat/count:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	♪	♪		♪	♪		♪	
Chant:	dumm	takk	–	takk	dumm	–	takk	–

At 1' 27" on CD track 25, the Egyptian ensemble enters into the maqam’s rhythmic mode. Listen for the improvisatory sound of the dombek (drum) and tambourine (riqq), and try to insert the rhythmic mode by chanting or playing it. At 2' 35", the drum briefly takes on the actual rhythmic mode.

SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.23 Free within the Cycle. (*Advanced*) Choose a tāla, such as the eight-beat adi tāla (See 2.21), or the eight-beat Middle Eastern rhythmic mode (See 2.22). Create a short unison melody (for example, of 16- or 32-beats) for all melody instruments to play together. Allow the percussionists to perform the rhythm cycle through several repetitions, followed by the entrance of melodists together. Intersperse the tutti performance of the melody with individual improvisations, also of the length of 16- or 32-beats. Decide together that tonality may (or may not) be a consideration of improvisatory segments, or whether the players will be completely free within the cycle to create their own melody.

SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.24 Leadership Roles. (*Advanced*). Consider that while some of the world's ensembles have a visible leader, such as the conductor who is positioned on a podium in the center-front of the orchestra to lead the one hundred-plus instrumentalists in tempo, dynamic shadings, and interpretive decisions, other ensembles such as the jazz combo or rock band appear to be more egalitarian and collaborative in their music-making. Still other ensembles, such as a West African drumming ensemble, or a Trinidadian steel band, or a Central Javanese gamelan, look to certain individuals (the African master drummer, the arranger of the steel drum band music, or the Javanese kendang drummer) to steer the group through the subtleties of performance. For these leaders, there may be no designated head-spot location within the ensemble, no special garb, no highly visible gestures, but there is leadership nonetheless. Select a vocal or an instrumental ensemble (choir, marching band, string quartet, Latin dance band, drumming circle), and observe the interactions of musicians in rehearsal to determine what roles they play. Arrange for an interview with an apparent or not-so-apparent leader, to determine what it takes to achieve this position—and to guide musicians toward musical coherence.

OPENING THE EAR II: PITCH AND FORM


The development of musical sensitivity requires a focus on not only elements of rhythm and timbre but also of pitch and form. Many of the instruments, and certainly the singing voices as well, are capable of creating patterns, phrases, and whole pieces that sound a vast array of pitches, in many tunings, performed one-at-a-time or with multiple pitches sounding simultaneously. The pitches and their plain or ornamental qualities vary by culture, and their colorings and shadings are what give life to the melodies and textures that are sung and played. Patterns of pitches and rhythms, and the timbral varieties that perform them, fall into germinal ideas called motifs, brief patterns that are repeated, varied, extended, and contrasted with others. Taken together,

these patterns and phrases are grouped to constitute larger sections and forms that make the music coherent and cohesive. As we open our students' ears to the possibilities of pitch and form, as well as to rhythm and timbre, the fuller sense of music's elemental structures—those that give it logic and beauty—will become clear to them.


SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.25 The High and Low of it. *(Initial)* Explore the pitch possibilities belonging to one or more instruments. Produce the highest and lowest pitches on each instrument, and chart the extent of the range between the pitch extremes. Notice how some instruments span larger pitch ranges than others. Approach the pitch ranges of singing voices in the same manner. Classify instruments and voices as treble or bass, and then strive for greater definition by fitting the voices or instruments into soprano, alto, tenor, and bass categories by pitch range. Across instruments and cultures, notice how the size and materials from which the instrument is constructed affect the pitch possibilities.

SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.26 Openings. *(Initial)* As conceived by composers and musicians in some traditions, the beginning of a piece is often a time to make a significant musical statement. Listen to the opening musical statements in Western European art music (CD track 40 and CD track 54) as examples of this. Gather other examples of this compositional practice (for example, Copland's "Fanfare for the Common Man," Stravinsky's "The Rite of Spring," and symphonies by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven). Note the strategy of other musical traditions to allow a gradual unfolding into important musical statements, including the opening sections of music from North India, Thailand, and Java. Can you find other examples of powerful musical openings?





SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.27 Calling and Responding. *(Initial)* One of the most socially interactive forms music can take is the call-and-response mode, when a soloist singer or instrumentalist offers a musical phrase that calls out to others for a response. That response may be sounded by another soloist, by two or more in a unison (and preset) manner, or by a group in a fully expansive melodic, rhythmic, or harmonic way. Examples of call-and-response are prominent in the music of much of Africa, and in places where Africans have traveled with their traditions. Listen to CD track 59 for an example of the form in an Afro-Brazilian treatment. Look for further examples in popular and rock music, and in jazz.



SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.28 Graphic Melodies. *(Initial to Intermediate)* How do individual pitches connect to form a melody? Listen to the rise and fall, or static stay-on-one-pitch, pathway of the melody to “Sumer Is Icumen In” (CD track 49). Trace in the air the melodic maneuverings, using fingers or a hand to “paint” overall melodic shape. Take a pencil to paper and sketch or graph the direction of melodic phrases. Compare the graph to the recorded sound, or even try singing the sound from the graph.

SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.29 A Note by Any Name. *(Intermediate)* Sing a major scale, using the names designated by various systems: Arabic-inspired letter names, the number system common in China and Indonesia, European solfege (also known as Tonic Sol-Fa in England), and Hindustani syllables found in North India. Sing at a steady tempo. On cue, sing the scale twice as fast while retaining the same beat, and then four times as fast. Discuss which systems are easier or more challenging to sing, and explain reasons why. Once the systems

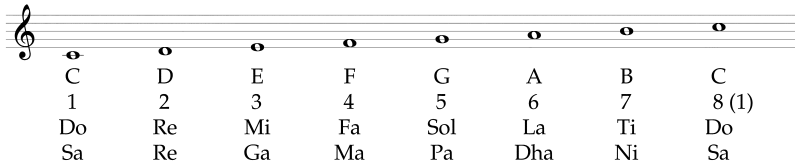


FIGURE 2.1 A note by any name

feel comfortable for scales, try applying the various systems to singing familiar melodies (Frere Jacques, Row Your Boat, Amazing Grace, Auld Lang Syne). (See Figure 2.1)

SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.30 Harmonious Sounds. (Intermediate) Listen to examples of pieces that feature harmony, and respond to the challenge of detecting by ear which chords are sounding. Like an aural transcription, listen, write them down as letters or Roman numerals (C, F, G or I, IV, V) in order of their progression. Sing the root tones of the chords with the recordings, and then attempt to sing them chorally or play them. Songs with clear chordal harmonies include CD tracks 6, 7, 29, 33, 35, 57, and 58.

SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.31 Alone and Together. (Intermediate) (a) Find examples of solo vocal and instrumental pieces on the recording, such as CD tracks 1, 13, 14, 34, and 52. Notice the capacity of some instruments to sound only melody while others can offer a fuller harmonic envelope of sound. Experiment with other instruments that play horizontally one pitch after another and those that can also play simultaneous pitches in a vertical manner. (b) Select examples of groups of voices and instruments, as they sound in unison (CD track 49, at the



beginning), in interlocking parts (CD track 50), in a heterophonic texture (CD track 25), in homophonic style (see Sound Awareness Activity 2.30 for examples), and polyphonically (CD track 49). Listen to and list pieces of other groups across a variety of styles and traditions, and determine what musical textures they perform.

SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.32 Closings. (*Intermediate*) Note the manner in which performers and composers choose to end their music. Do they fit these categories? (a) A cadence of repeated melodic and/or rhythmic phrases, (b) a cadence linked to chord progression ending on the home-tone (I) and possibly preceded by the dominant (V), (c) a fading out of familiar material (technologically possible on recorded pieces), (d) a loss of interest by the audience or artist(s) (possible in live performances). Choose a familiar song and explore some of these ways of closing the music.



SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.33 In Tune and Out of Tune. (*Advanced*) While cultures seem to be in solid agreement on the division of pitches into octaves, the pitches in between the high and low end of an octave vary with the tradition. People select the precise set of pitches that give their music its identity, and it is so thoroughly in tune to them that any other set of pitches may appear out of tune. Listen to pitches and tunings in a variety of examples: CD track 40 and CD track 54 as examples of Western European art music, CD track 25 as an example of Southwest Asian (Middle Eastern) music, CD track 23 as an example of Southeast Asian music, remembering that to people within the culture, the tunings of the instruments are exactly right for giving the tradition its flavor. Musicians take



time to tune instruments, too, as can be heard on CD track 42 (when two Balinese instruments in a pair are tuned intentionally to sound slightly different frequencies) and CD track 43 (when instruments of the orchestra zero in to match the “A-440” pitch of the lead oboe).



SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.34 Drones and Microtones. (*Advanced*) To fully grasp the meaning of tones and tunings, pair with a friend who sings a drone tone while you sing a gradually rising tone that makes its way to from the drone pitch to a quarter-, then half-, then whole-tone higher than the drone. Do the same in the opposite direction, gradually lowering the pitch from the drone tone. Try this as well in a group of singers who are divided into “drones and microtones.” Advanced instrumentalists might rise to the challenge of experimenting with a fretless stringed instrument like a violin or a bass. Play a scale to match as accurately as possible the tuning of a piano keyboard. Then, alter the scale pitches, playing each one audibly flatter and then sharper than those of the piano. Sing along with these microtonal changes to the familiar Western tempered tuning, if you can—a tremendous challenge to the ear and the voice.

SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.35 Home- and Away-from-Home Tones. (*Advanced*) Experiment with the home-tone or tonal center and its critical role in offering a sense of musical solidity, by identifying and then singing familiar songs that end on tonic (“do,” or “1”) and then comparing the sound-sense of ending on the supertonic (“re” or “2,” as in the Japanese children’s song, “Zui Zui Zukkorbashi,” the mediant (“mi” or “3,” as in “De Colores”) or dominant (“sol” or “5,” as in the “The Riddle Song” (I Gave My Love a Cherry) instead.



Listen and sing the home-tone for the following selections: CD track 52, which is also the drone-tone of the Scottish bagpipe, and CD track 53, which can be heard among the drone pitches of the North Indian singer.

SOUND AWARENESS ACTIVITY 2.36 Melodic Moods. (Advanced) Consider the Indian and Middle Eastern selection of particular melodic modes for seasons, days, times of days, and the traditional association of these modes to moods. (The books on North India and South India in this series offer descriptions and illustrations of *rāga* as associated with moods.) Find examples of modes which, while not likely to specify times of performance, nonetheless do create particular moods. Sing or listen to familiar songs in major and harmonic minor scales, and in modes such as Dorian (as in “Wayfaring Stranger,” “Scarborough Fair,” and at least one version of “Greensleeves”) and Mixolydian (as in the Canadian song, “The Banks of the Nile,” and a Northumberland version of “Cuckoo”), and discuss what moods their pitches seem to communicate.

LOCAL AND GLOBAL IDENTITIES

Music is rampant, widespread in our daily lives, and when the antennae are up, it is remarkable what a rich tapestry of sonic surroundings we know. Music makes up the urbanscapes of city neighborhoods, where people are tuned simultaneously to their own local musical identities and also to the expressions of cross-town communities. It is present in the increasingly rare rural settlements of music-makers who play and sing for each other on front porches, in closed circles, and on communal grounds, and is undergoing change by the same rural people who are now becoming wired to the outside world of sound possibilities. Music is sounding, whether we are aware of it or not: snippets of tunes and segments of rhythm, sporadic music scatterings or solid walls of sound. The route to musical understanding begins with a discovery

of our own personal and familial music, and then extends to the expressions of others. Thus the exploratory excursions featured in this chapter leads to a recognition of the very local identities of our students as well as the global musical identities that are there for the listening. As well, the concept of people making music meaningful and useful in their lives becomes real to them through these explorations. For teachers striving for a broad-based musical education for their children and youth, these are vital excursions to take, parts of the bigger musical journey that stretches across their lives.

PROBLEMS TO PROBE

1. Evaluate the effectiveness of the sound awareness activities (*a*) as a student participant in them, and/or (*b*) as a teacher who has facilitated them with K–12 students. What musical aims were accomplished through them? How were they modified or extended? Make your remarks in the margins of this book for your future reference, and note which activities you would use in the future, or discard, or further adapt—and why.
2. Gather with colleagues to brainstorm ways of developing a meaningful exploration of one world of musical sound. Choose a single musical culture (for example, Navajo, Nigeria [Yoruba], or North India), and consider starting with just a single selection (such as found on the CD). List some of the principal musical elements that define the musical culture (selection). Then, choose several Sound Awareness Activities, or invent others, that can introduce and open students' ears to elemental features of the culture (selection).
3. Review your sketch of a sample course schedule, selected in Chapter 1, and insert three Sound Awareness Activities to fit the schedule. Think: Which experiences will be meaningful to developing my students' (in, for example, band, choir, general music, or a world music cultures course) knowledge of Music with a capital "M"?