

Sidewindin' Towards the Staff: A Movement, Lead Map, and Notation Study Featuring "The Sidewinder" by Lee Morgan

Purpose

I developed this sequence of lessons to give my students exposure to traditional notation before we started learning more about the treble staff. By starting with movement then moving to a lead map and adding traditional notation, students were able to make better connections between sound and symbol.

Lesson Procedure

- "Listen and do what I do." Students move to the music to put the piece into their bodies. Student chosen movements are added.
- Pattern recognition based on the movements. Work together to write out the pattern using student notation ideas, then check with the music for accuracy.
- Look at the lead map with students. Ask for predictions. Teacher leads the first music map. Practice map reading until students can read the map fluently.
- Introduce Map 2, which replaces the arrows with traditional notation.
- Students write the arrows from Map 1 over the corresponding measures.
- Practice reading the map by touching the noteheads instead of the arrows.
- Identify the note names that correspond with each arrow and note.
- Perform the piece with Boomwhackers or other instruments.

Questions to Guide Map Analysis

- Why do you think the arrows are pointing in different directions?
- Are there places on the map that look the same? What might that mean about the music?
- What patterns do you see?
- What is the same about the music notes and what is different? Why do you think that is?

Background Information

Jazz trumpeter and band leader Lee Morgan wrote "The Sidewinder" to fill out time on his 1963 album of the same name. The track then took off in popularity and helped the album rise to #25 on the Billboard Pop chart in January of 1965.

Lee Morgan was born in Philadelphia in 1938 and began playing the trumpet at age 13. Morgan played with other jazz greats such as Dizzy Gillespie, Art Blakey, and John Coltrane. He struggled throughout his adult life with addiction, causing him to take breaks from playing and recording. He died at age 33.

The Sidewinder

By Lee Morgan

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