

Introduction to Musical theatre: Musical Theatre Foundations I

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Content Standards

- Utah Theatre Foundations I Standard 2: Objective 2A
 - Demonstrate a clear voice when communicating in performance.
- Utah Theatre Foundations I Standard 2: Objective 5A
 - Demonstrate rehearsal warm-up.
- Utah Music Aesthetics Standard 3: Objective 2C
 - Describe the emotions and thoughts the music communicates and analyze how it does so.

Enduring Understandings

- Students will understand that music and lyrics can enhance a theatrical performance by conveying emotions and thoughts in a unique way.
- Students will understand that musical theatre requires the ability to sing using proper technique and stay in character both while singing and while speaking, even if in the ensemble.

Skills

- Students will be able to properly breathe (as described in the learning plan) while performing in musical theatre.
- Students will be able to sing in musical phrases (as described in the learning plan).
- Students will be able to exhibit the correct singing posture, standing in alignment and free from tension.

Assessments

Performance tasks

- Students will participate in an instructor lead warm-up in which they breathe from the diaphragm in order to demonstrate their ability to properly breathe.
- Students will participate in an instructor lead warm-up in which they stretch their arms, neck, head, back, abdomen and legs in order to demonstrate the correct singing posture free from tension.
- Students will perform in a sing along in small groups in order to demonstrate singing in musical phrases.

Teacher Materials

- 4 different pieces of music.
 - Note: Can use the following links if desired.
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VjPAWbk5jKcTh>
 - Scary/suspenseful
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5Q5FFWRxCE>
 - Happy
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pUZeSYsU0Uk>

- Sad
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NtaS47nbDqI>
- Angry

Student Materials

- Paper
- Pen or pencil to write with
- Sheet music of a song for each student.
 - Tale as Old as Time from *Beauty and the Beast*. See attached.

Hook:

1. Students will listen to 4 different pieces of music that evoke different emotions. (See links in teacher material)
 - a. Emotions can include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Happy.
 - ii. Sad.
 - iii. Scared.
 - iv. Angry.
 - b. Students to move around the room, moving differently with each new song according to the emotions in the music.
 - c. After each song ask:
 - i. How does this song make you feel?
 - ii. What emotions do you feel?
 - iii. Why did the song make you feel that way?
 - iv. How did you use your body and movement to convey the emotion?

Process:

2. The facilitator leads the class in a demonstration of proper musical theatre performance warm-up.
 - a. Explain that a proper warm-up for musical theatre consists of the following four elements:
 - i. Engaging proper breathing.
 - ii. Stretching the body to remove tension,
 - iii. Standing in proper alignment to achieve appropriate posture
 - iv. Vocal exercises to warm-up the voice.
 - b. The facilitator will then lead the students in exercises for each element.
 - i. Engaging in proper breathing.
 1. Students place their hands on their lower abdomen to make sure air is coming from their diaphragm. Making sure their stomachs are moving instead of their shoulders and chest.
 2. Students will do the following breathing exercises:
 - a. Squat and hold hands in front of body.

- b. While in this position say: “r-e-t-e p-i-k-a” twice, hitting each consonant sharply, engaging the diaphragm.
 - c. Next say (sounds like a snake): “s-s-s-s” twice, hitting each of the “S” sounds sharply, engaging the diaphragm.
 - d. Next say: “sh-sh-sh-sh” twice, hitting each “sh” sound sharply, engaging the diaphragm.
 - ii. Stretching the body to remove tension.
 - 1. Students will lift each arm above their head with a bent elbow to stretch the deltoids.
 - 2. Students will cross each arm across their chest, using the other arm to pull it close to stretch the shoulders.
 - 3. Students will hold one foot at a time, with a bent knee, from the back to stretch the thighs.
 - 4. Students will hold their shins, while standing, as close and high to their chest as possible to stretch the hips.
 - 5. Students will take a wide stance, reach one arm at a time over their head, and reach from one side to another to stretch the obliques.
 - iii. Standing in proper alignment to achieve appropriate posture
 - 1. Students will do neck rolls, stretching the neck to both sides, up, down, and looking from left to right.
 - 2. Students will bend at the waist to the floor, allowing the neck to relax and then roll slowly back up, aligning each vertebra until standing straight again.
 - iv. Vocal exercises to warm-up the voice.
 - 1. Students will say various tongue twisters such as:
 - a. “Red leather yellow leather”
 - b. “You know you need unique New York”
 - c. “One black beetle bled only black blood but the other black beetle bled blue”
 - d. “Chester cheetah chews a chunk of cheap cheddar cheese”
 - 2. Students will do lip buzzes to various exercises including:
 - a. Scales
 - b. Slides of range
 - 3. Students will sing a variety of scales.
- c. Discuss with students elements that make up a proper musical theatre warm-up to make sure they remember the following four elements from above.
 - i. Engaging proper breathing.
 - ii. Stretching the body to remove tension,
 - iii. Standing in proper alignment to achieve appropriate posture
 - iv. Vocal exercises to warm-up the voice.

- d. Assign groups of students to lead a proper warm-up each day.
3. Musical phrases
 - a. The facilitator explains that a musical phrase is a unit of musical meter that has a complete musical sense of its own. Often built from figures, motifs, and cells and combining to form melodies. Periods and larger sections, or the length in which a singer or instrumentalist can play in one breath also often indicate the end of a musical phrase.
 - b. Use a short song such as Twinkle Twinkle Little Star to give examples of musical phrases.
 - i. Sing it with the students and make breaks at what they believe are to be the end of musical phrases.
 - c. Give students sheet music to a well-known song.
 - i. Note: we used “Tale as Old as Time” from *Beauty and the Beast*.
 - d. Students will mark the music to indicate the musical phrases.
 - i. The easiest way is most likely with a hash mark.
 - e. Once done, students will then discuss where they marked the musical phrases as a class.
 - f. The facilitator asks the following questions during the group discussion:
 - i. Why did you choose that particular place in the music?
 - ii. What indicated the musical phrase?
 - iii. Have students practice singing a musical phrase from the given music.

Reflection:

4. Students will watch a video clip of “Tale as Old as time” from *Beauty and the Beast*.
 - a. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSRoYjRfjOc>
 - i. Use a clip of the song you chose for the musical phrases activity.
 - b. While watching, students will answer the following questions on a blank piece of paper:
 - i. Was proper posture being used by the actors?
 - ii. Were the actors breathing correctly between musical phrases?
 - iii. Even though the actors were singing, were they in character?

Day 2: Music and Emotions

Assign students their final project: to sing and act in a scene from a musical in groups of 2-4 on the last day of this unit. Students will choose the scene outside of class and it must be brought in for approval. Emphasize that you can help them pick a scene if needed.

Have the first group demonstrate their rehearsal warm-up. Today will focus on how music can communicate different emotions and thoughts and analyzing how it does so. Students will listen to 3-4 given pieces of music and fill out a worksheet in which students carefully listen to each song and write down emotions that the song creates.

Answering questions such as: what made certain emotions and feelings stir up? What was it about the music that created these feelings?

Day 3: Demonstrating Clear Voice

Have another group lead the warm-up. Today the facilitator will teach what it means to demonstrate a clear voice when communicating in performance. Teach things such as tone, pitch, and diction. Students will participate in activities that lead them to use different combinations of these aspects both while singing and speaking.

Day 4: Dancing

Have another group lead the warm-up. Students will be introduced to basic dance. They will be taught a few basic dance steps often seen in musical theatre and taught some basic dance phrases. They will also watch some clips of musicals in which the dance enhanced the overall performance.

Day 5: Creating their own dance.

Have another group lead the warm-up. Students will learn a few more difficult dance steps or routines led by the facilitator. They will then use the steps they have learned over the past few days in order to create their own small dance phrases. Each group will then present their dance to the class and be given feedback on what they did well and areas they can improve. Keeping in mind that they may want to choreograph something in their final scene.

Day 6: Dressing the Stage

Have another group lead the warm-up. Today the facilitator will teach about acting when not singing. Focusing on things like ensemble acting, or dressing the stage, acting during the transitions, and of course staying in character while singing and speaking. Students will choose a musical and create a character from the ensemble. Giving them a name, background, and actions that they may realistically do while onstage.

Day 7: Character analysis

Have another group lead the warm-up. Students will delve more deeply into character analysis and staying in character at all times during a performance. They will each be given a brief character description that like the previous day they have to create a name

and background. They will then be grouped with other students to participate in an improvisational scene where they must come up with the actions for their character and remain in character the whole scene.

Day 8: Rehearsal

Have another group lead the warm-up. Allow a full class period for students to choreograph and rehearse their scenes. If needed the facilitator will help choose scenes. While the groups are rehearsing the facilitator will walk around the room observing and offering help if needed. Filling out a formative rubric to give to each group to improve their performance for rehearsing the next day.

Day 9: Rehearsal

Have the final group lead the warm-up. Students will have another day of rehearsal in which the facilitator again observes and gives feedback fro their final performance the next period.

Day 10: Final performance

Students will present their scenes to the class. As they are watching have students fill out a peer review rubric on elements such as staying in character, demonstrating proper posture and breathing, did they communicate emotions and feelings through the music, were they memorized, etc. There will then be a group discussion in which students identify the scenes that used a combination of dance, vocal technique, and acting to better enhance their script.

Tale As Old As Time

Howard Ashman

from Walt Disney's BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Alan Menken

Voice

Piano *mp*

Vo.

Tale as old as time,

Pno.

Vo.

true as it can be Bare-ly e-ven

Pno.

10
Vo. friends, them some-bod - y bends un - ex - ect - ed - ly.
Pno.

13
Vo. Just a lit - tle change. Small, to say the
Pno.

16
Vo. least. Both a lit - tle scared, nei - ther one pre - pared. Beau - ty and the
Pno.

19
Vo. Beast. Ev - er just the same.
Pno. *mf*

22
Vo. Ev-er a sure - prise. Ev-er as be -
Pno.

25
Vo. fore, ev - er just as sure as the sun will rise.
Pno.

28
Vo. Tale as old as time. Tune as old as song.
Pno.

32
Vo. Bit-ter-sweet and strange, find-ing you can change, learn-ing you were
Pno.

35
Vo. wrong. Cer-tain as the sun ris-ing in the

Pno.

39
Vo. East. Tale as old as time, song as old as rhyme. Beau-ty and the

Pno.

42
Vo. Beast. Tale as old as time, song as old as

Pno.

45
Vo. rhyme. Beau-ty and the Beast.

Pno.

99

Vo.

Pno.

The image shows a musical score for voice and piano. The voice part (Vo.) is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains four measures of whole rests, with a 'diva' marking above the final measure. The piano part (Pno.) is written on two staves (treble and bass clefs) with a key signature of one sharp. The right hand has a complex melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a trill-like figure in the final measure. The left hand has a bass line with a slur under the first two measures. The score is numbered '99' at the top left.