

## Why *Solfège*?

The study of *Solfège* gives the musician the opportunity to enter the space of his/her inner ear, where our very own personal sound resides. Listening is certainly the musician's most basic and relevant endeavor, and it is through listening that a musician can actually overcome, and eventually master the technical and mechanical requirements of any piece of music. It is also through listening that we can transcend the musical intricacies of a given piece of music. Listening is always the point of departure and the point of arrival in everything we do as musicians, and this is where the journey of *Solfège* comes in.

As musicians, it is necessary for us to develop an intimate and very personal understanding of what sound means to us. The study of *Solfège* allows the young musician to connect to and develop a direct relationship with the mechanisms and needs of his/her inner ear—that inner sound world that is the basis not only of his/her own musicianship, but also of his/her own being. Through a detailed and precise deconstructive study of pitch on the one hand, and durations on the other, young musicians embark on the intensely personal journey of sound. They analyze pitch and durations separately, and they learn to feel and think of these as complementary entities that can actually be combined in one's inner ear, before they can be articulated on an instrument. Sound should always resonate in our inner beings, long before it is passed on through an instrument. And as sound awareness and presence evolves in the young musician, so does the intuitive and personal understanding of time, which is inherently associated to sound, as it relates to the musical space.

And as the training progresses, students begin to take their new personal perspective to the practice room, where the synthesis of the inner sound and the one written on the page takes place with the help of their instruments. Eventually, students realize that the performance of any piece of music is, in many ways, the representation of the succession of steps followed by the composer as he/she was writing the work in question. Performance is also the re-construction in time of the space of a composition, and *Solfège* opens the way for this space to resonate in the inner sound world of the performer. And there is a great deal of philosophy involved in the approach to the possibilities offered by *Solfège*, but there is also an extensive practical aspect to it, which not only takes place in the practice room, but also in the rehearsal room and in life in general. Indeed, sound is the essence of the musician's life, and *Solfège* helps us stay connected to it in our very own and personal way, allowing for a more fully engaged life in and around music.