

Explore Music 7: Introductory Module

Contents

Introductory Module (Required)

Overview	5
Unit 1: Getting Started (3 hours)	9
Unit 2: Rhythm Review (7 hours)	11
Unit 3: Improvisation and Ostinato (5 hours)	17
Unit 4: Composing with Graphic Notation (8 hours).....	20
Unit 5: Culminating Activity (3 hours).....	25
Supporting Materials: Graphic Notation Symbols.....	28
References.....	34

The instructional hours indicated for each unit provide guidelines for planning, rather than strict requirements. The sequence of skill and concept development is to be the focus of concern. Teachers are encouraged to adapt these suggested timelines to meet the needs of their students.

To be effective in teaching this module, it is important to use the material contained in *Explore Music: Curriculum Framework* and *Explore Music: Appendices*. Therefore, it is recommended that these two components be frequently referenced to support the suggestions for teaching, learning, and assessment in this module.

Icons Used in this Module



Formative
Assessment



Summative
Assessment



Listening



Key Point



Extension



Cross
Curricular

Explore Music 7: Introductory Module

(26 Instructional hours with an option to complete it in 13 hours)

Overview

Rationale

The Explore Music curriculum is designed to meet the needs of those students not enrolled in the Band Instruments program. Students who register in Explore Music 7 will complete the Introductory Module plus other modules as their schedule allows, chosen from:

- Popular Music of the 50s and 60s
- World Drumming
- The Art of Guitar

Taking into consideration the current research on the brain and how it constructs meaning in the early teenage years, this module is designed to be interactive, applicable with authentic learning experiences, and based on a discovery approach. Students at this age construct meaning in similar ways as the pre-school child, making neural connections through trial and error, and discovering new insights as they build on their learning over time.

Grade 7 students are not content to be passive learners, confined to desks where they listen, respond, practice, and drill. They are excited to receive new information that has meaning for them – the hook – and to learn how it fits into their existing repertoire of knowledge. They want to play with this new information, tinker with it, try it out, experiment, just as toddlers explore their world as they discover new things in their immediate environment. Our task as teachers is to allow them the flexibility to apply their new learning, and to encourage them to take it to new limits – the meta-cognitive domain. This can be a challenge, particularly if students have learned through their earlier musical experiences that music can become mundane and limited in focus.

The challenge begins with the teacher. Constructing meaningful experiences will excite and engage students. Constant reflection throughout this module will allow the teacher to modify the activities that work best, differentiate the curriculum to meet the diverse learning needs, and create a dynamic learning environment that will motivate students to continue to develop musical understanding.

Glossary

- note values
- note names
- rests
- time signature
- bar lines
- measures
- sequence
- phrase
- improvisation
- questions/answers
- rondo
- graphic notation
- soundscape
- rhythmic fragments, cells, phrases

Introduction

It is highly recommended that the Introductory Module (Rhythmic) be completed before beginning any other Grade 7 Explore Music modules. It is designed in such a way as to allow students to complete all the activities (plus the “Extensions”) in 26 hours. If scheduling does not allow for 26 hours of instruction per cycle, it is advised that teachers complete only the basic activities without the “Extensions” which are highlighted in blue throughout the module.

A culminating activity requiring students to create a musical composition is a critical component of the assessment for this course. Teachers should introduce this activity to students on the very first day and build on the requisite skills as students progress throughout the module. In this way, they should discover how all the elements interact in music.

It is expected that all students registered in Explore Music 7 will have a background through their prior experiences in Music Primary – 6. The Introductory Module is intended to be a review of many skills and concepts taught to the end of Grade 6 and to establish the students’ fluency in musical literacy.

Knowing the nature of young teens, teachers must be aware of the limitations they may face with students in the class. We know that peer pressure influences how students react to new learning. Moreover, because of changes taking place at this stage of development, young teens often experience challenges with discovering their singing voice. Therefore, teachers must be sensitive to these issues, and not place students in situations where they will be uncomfortable. While we need to encourage students to sing, the realities are such that it can be problematic for some students to achieve success in this medium, and therefore other forms of expressing and communicating musical thoughts and ideas might be necessary.

The range of learners is amplified when one considers the prior learning experiences outside the school that some students may have had. There may be some in this course who have a strong background through private instruction. Teachers need to be aware of this range of abilities and differentiate instruction to ensure that all students are challenged and can achieve success.

It is suggested that at the beginning of this module, teachers do a class profile and needs assessment to discover the range of learners and skill level among students. This will allow for more effective instruction that is tailored to meet the needs of all students.

Outcomes Addressed

- Learners will analyse how rhythm, meter, and tempo communicate meaning.
- Learners will analyse the role of melody and harmony in the communication of meaning.
- Learners will evaluate the role of texture and form in communicating meaning.
- Learners will evaluate how composers and performers synthesize the elements of music to communicate meaning.
- Learners will analyse how the cultures of local and global communities are expressed through music.
- Learners will create original musical works reflecting personal, social, and cultural contexts.
- Learners will perform music in ensembles to communicate meaning.

Tips for Teaching Success

To be effective, assessment must be part of the teaching and learning process. Teaching, learning, and assessment work best when informed decisions are made based on how well the students are progressing. If left to the end of a unit or at the end of this module, teachers will find themselves making subjective decisions, and students will find the actual assessment meaningless. Therefore, to be able to arrive at a final mark at the end of this module, teachers must include an assessment activity every day. For examples of assessment instruments, see Appendix D in *Explore Music 7–9: Appendices*.

Tips for Teaching Success

Refer to the “Big Ideas” in *Talk About Assessment* to get a sense of how you will be assessing student progress in this module. In your introduction to the module, tell the students about the eight big ideas and explain that this is the process you will be using in assessing them. It will be necessary for each student to maintain a portfolio of their progress, and this can be a binder in which they can insert assignments, extra practice, journal notes, reflections, etc.



While the activities that follow are written in a sequential order, allowing for flexibility with the time spent on each section as well as the entire module, teachers should exercise flexibility when facilitating them. For example, if the module will be completed in 13 hours, the extension activities may be used for those students who have a solid background and may need greater challenge. It is important to realize that this module is intended to review the skills and concepts taught to the end of grade 6, emphasize their importance in an authentic context (composition, presentation, performance), and prepare students for the subsequent modules.

Materials

- a collection of non-pitched percussion instruments
- music writing software
- a quality sound system and access to computers with composition and recording capabilities

Unit 1: Getting Started

(3 hours)

Introduction

Music making is a team activity, and as such, musicians must work together to create, make, and present music. When playing solo work, the team effect grows from the communication that exists between the performer and the audience. In the *Explore Music 7* classroom, this team approach must also be created to build trust, rapport, and a sense of collaboration throughout the activities.

Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Process



The following exercise is intended to be an introduction to the course, to provide the teacher with a profile of students in the class, and to provide opportunities for students to work together as a team.

PART A: CLASS PROFILE (2 HOURS)

Discuss with students the role that music plays in their lives. Ask the following guiding questions:

- What genres of music do you like? What genres do you not like? Why?
- What experiences have you had in making and performing music? Were they good experiences? Explain.
- In family settings, when is music important? Expect answers like birthday parties, weddings, church services, graduations, concerts, while driving on trips. What is the significance of music at these times?
- What is your favourite piece of music? What makes it your favourite? Is there a person attached to this music, i.e., does it allow you to recall someone when you hear it?

Have students list all the people who have had a role in shaping their musical development to date. These might be former music teachers, parents, peers, a cleric, choral or band director, festival adjudicator, sibling, friend. Using a web design, have students place their name in the center bubble, and from that in each bubble of the web place the names of those who have had a part in their musical development.

Have students record their favourite piece of music and ask them to write a brief reflection on it. During the next class, ask students to share their musical web, and to play a one-minute excerpt of the piece of music that they have chosen. Encourage them to discuss their choices but be aware that this activity may evoke strong emotions that could be upsetting for some students. Also, be aware that at this age, students are influenced by their peers, and so they may not wish to divulge much information. Be patient at this point, and only invite students to share at their own choosing.



Together with the class, co-create a rubric that will allow students to self-assess their web design, recording, and presentation. Self-assessment will work best in this situation because of the sensitive nature of the material presented. Specific ideas to be assessed include:

- completed the assigned task following the guidelines presented
- justified choices effectively
- used good presentation skills
- sought assistance with technology if needed

Samples of rubrics and blank forms can be found in Appendix D of *Explore Music 7–9: Appendices*.

PART B (1 HOUR)

To get a class profile, do a simple needs assessment of their musical understanding to date by creating a game. Focus on the elements of music and make the activity as fun and relaxed as possible. If students feel it is a “test” that is being graded, it may evoke strong emotions that may not give a true picture of their musical development.

Distribute file cards and have each student create two flash cards based on musical symbols. Have them put their name and the correct answer on the back of the card. Examples:

- What kind of note is this? (♩)
- How many beats in a measure in $\frac{2}{2}$ time (show a measure with 2 half notes)?
- What note is this? (draw a middle c on the staff)
- What is the name of this symbol (♯)?

Collect the cards and ensure that all the answers are correct.

Divide the class into two teams. Play a game whereby you ask a question and someone from one team answers it. If the answer is incorrect, ask someone else on the other team. Keep score and keep asking questions until all the cards are used. Repeat if necessary, developing variations to make it exciting.

These cards can be kept on hand for review throughout the module, and students can add more cards to the pile throughout the course.



As students are answering, take note of those who are having difficulty.

Unit 2: Rhythm Review

(7 hours [4 hours + 3 hours extension])

Introduction

In this unit students will review terms and skills associated with rhythmic concepts in music. In addition, they will develop a deeper understanding of how rhythm interacts with other elements in the compositional process.

Realizing that students will be at different stages in their musical development, it is important as teacher to be continually observing and conferencing with students on an individual basis to assess adequately their skill level. In doing so, it will be necessary to differentiate within the activities, and to challenge those who have greater fluency with the terminology and application of the rhythmic concepts. Although the suggestions are prescriptive, there is the potential for flexibility as students progress through the unit, and teachers are encouraged to draw on their own experiences and musicianship to create the most effective lessons possible.

For those students who are struggling in their rhythmic understanding, it is suggested that supplementary exercises be assigned on an individual basis.

Key Concepts

- elements of music
- musical symbols
- musical terms

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Process

PART A: FOCUS ON BEAT (1 HOUR)

(Adapted from J. Berarducci, Level 1 Basic Orff Course)



Have students listen to a popular song with a steady pulse that propels the music forward at a speed of approximately ♩ = 120. Examples include “Jai Ho” (*Slumdog Millionaire* soundtrack), “Please Don’t Stop the Music” (Rhiana), “Axel F” (Harold Faltermeyer), or “I Want You” (Savage Garden). Tell them to feel the beat and observe them as they listen.

- Do they appear to intrinsically move to the music?
- Are they tapping to the beat with fingers, toes, head, etc.?

Have them move around the room to the music keeping the beat. Change direction: walk forward, backward, sideways, in a circle, diagonally. Place the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 on the board and tell them that they are moving to quarter beats. When they come to beat 4, the pattern repeats. Now place various combinations of the measure on the board by omitting numbers:

	} }	} }
} } }	} }	} }
} } }	} }	} }
} } }	}	}
} } }	}	} } } }

As students walk this time, have them step only on the notes and not on the rests. Discuss which measures were easier to walk to and why. Have them conduct a 4-beat pattern and try having them conduct as they walk. Discuss the challenges they faced.

Using this as a springboard, ask students how many combinations in $\frac{4}{4}$ time that they can create using only a quarter note and quarter rest. Remind them that each combination should add up to 4. This can be done in pairs. Once they have their list, have them arrange it in an order that clearly shows groupings.

	}	} }	} } }	} } } }
	}	} } }	} } }	
	}	} }	} } }	
	}	} }	} } }	
		} }		

How are they grouped? Try clapping each group, and then the entire sequence.



Following this activity, have students write a short response to this learning experience in their journals. Ask them to list all the “musical” terms that were used in the activity (note names, rests, sequence, phrase, dynamics, time signature, measure, etc.).



EXTENSION (3 HOURS)

To be completed in those situations where the module will be 26 hours in duration.

Add movement to each quarter note. This can be as simple as walking or arms moving in a direction indicated by arrows. After there is relative ease with these patterns, have the students in pairs select any 4 and create a 4-measure sequence.

Have the groups take turns presenting their phrases. Now combine the pairs of students to make groups of 4, and in doing so, combine their rhythmic phrases to make an 8-measure sequence. Combine groups again and repeat the process making 16-measure rhythmic composition. After each group has performed, ask those students who are listening (the audience) to give one positive point about the phrase, and one suggestion for improvement. For example, could they have rearranged the measures differently to make the phrase more interesting and more musical?



As the students participate in the activity, observe their level of understanding of beat, and their ability to follow the “score” that was created. In a class discussion, debrief the activity, and allow them sufficient time to express their level of success in doing it. Elicit from the students suggestions for how they might improve their performance and their ability to follow the score.

Have the students go back to the last task in Part A (building a rhythmic phrase), and in pairs, ask them to substitute equivalent note values for any 4 beats of their 2-measure sequence. Have each pair combine with another pair, and then another until they have a group of 8 together to perform their 16-measure phrase, this time with some beats altered using the changed note values. Since there has not been a review of note values to this point, teachers may need to provide extra assistance to some students. Alternatively, the students with a stronger background can assist those who are having trouble.

For this part of the unit, you may want to suggest that they play their phrase on a rhythm instrument rather than clapping it. Alternatively, they can use body percussion (snap, clap, patsch, stamp) in any combination. As each group performs their revised phrase, offer suggestions for improvement, and solicit the same from the other students. For example, where do the rests feel most comfortable? When eighth notes appear at the end of a measure, does this make it more challenging to perform? Are there places in the phrase that feel like a “breathing point”? If so, do these come at the end of measure 2, 4, 6, and/or 8? Why do you think they feel good there? If there is a need, have the students go back and make any necessary changes based on these suggestions.

If students are using body percussion or percussion instruments, have them create a line for each instrument or body sound and notate the rhythm using actual notes on the line.



Have the students create and complete a group work rubric like those found in *Tools for Powerful Student Evaluation*.

PART B: FOCUS ON NOTES AND MEASURES (3 HOURS)

Play a selection of world drumming music that has a steady beat (e.g. Japanese Drumming, *Hachidan Uchi Daiko*). Play the selection several times, and each time ask a series of guided questions, such as:

- What are your first thoughts when you hear this music?
- Do you hear a steady beat?
- Can you recognize the time signature?
- Do you hear repeated patterns?
- What is the medium (drum, vocals, bell, other sound source)?
- How is this selection like the 16-measure phrase you created in the last activity? (steady beat, rests, dynamics)
- How is it different?

Review with students the following note values: whole, half, quarter, eighth, and sixteenth, as well as their equivalent rests. *ApRo Theory Level 1*, Lessons 10, 11, 12 have exercises to help reinforce this activity. It should be noted, however, that these should never be used as work sheets to keep students busy, but rather exercises to increase musical literacy in students. This is a good time to review time signatures and bar lines, and reference to *ApRo Theory Level 1*, Lesson 9 will be useful. When using this material, encourage students to “discover” new ideas and to create their own patterns.

In pairs, have students create their own rhythm patterns using whole, half, quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, as well as their equivalent rests. Begin with two measure patterns, followed by 4 measures and 8 measures. Have students notate their compositions using music software.



This is a good time to introduce (or review) the use of music software aware on the computers that you have access to. Some students may be quite proficient in this aspect of music making, and so they can coach others who may need more help.



Have each pair of students perform their patterns either to other pairs of students, or to the whole class. As they do, have those who are listening provide feedback to the performers, indicating what they liked best about the performance, and offering suggestions for how the patterns could be improved.

Have each pair of students combine with another pair and perform their 8-measure rhythmic patterns together. Substitute instruments for clapping (e.g. one pair uses sticks, the other uses tambourines). Have those pairs combine with two other pairs, so there is an ensemble of four. Now they will be able to combine all their patterns to make a 16-measure rhythmic composition.

Explain to students what a rhythmic score is and how it works. Provide each group of four with a handout that has four lines on it and a time signature at the beginning. Have them write their score on the handout and indicate the instruments that will be playing each line.

Demonstrate for students what would happen to the score if the time signature changed to $\frac{2}{2}$. Distribute another handout with lines and a $\frac{2}{2}$ time signature. Have them re-write their scores on this handout placing the bar lines appropriately.



Have the groups of students trade their scores with other groups so they get to perform rhythm scores of others. As they work on these, have the new group provide written feedback to the “composers” of the score they performed. Ask them to look for specific things, such as:

- Did they provide enough direction?
- Were the notes and bar lines accurate?
- Were the notes properly spaced to allow for ease in playing?

Unit 3: Improvisation and Ostinato

(5 hours [3 hours + 2 hours extension])

Introduction

In this unit students will continue to develop their understanding of rhythmic improvisation by developing an understanding of questions and answers using rhythms, and this will lead to the creation of a composition in Rondo ABA form. Students will quickly be aware that composing is not as onerous a task as it first appears, because there are so many techniques that composers use to build and enhance simple ideas to, they improvise spontaneously. In addition, they will learn that a basic ostinato performed throughout a composition can add to the overall texture of the piece.

Key Concepts

- improvisation
- questions/answers
- rondo
- ostinato

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Process

WARMUP: RHYTHMIC DICTATION



Clap 2-measure rhythms using whole, half, quarter, eighth and sixteenth notes and their rest equivalents, and have students write them in their journals. Check for understanding by emphasizing accuracy.

PART A: INTRODUCTION TO IMPROVISATION (1.5 HOURS)



Play a selection of world drumming (i.e. Drumming from Viet Nam). Ask students to describe what they are hearing. Look for comments like:

- Some parts do not have a steady beat.
- There seems to be one person playing, and then others join in (call and response).
- They sound like they are making it up as they go along.
- There is repetition.

Explain that in some percussion ensembles, improvisation plays a very important part in the overall presentation. Demonstrate improvisation by “playing” questions and answers with students. As the teacher, play a 2-measure rhythmic pattern on a tone block or drum using combinations of whole, half, quarter, eighth and sixteenth notes and rests, and ask a student to “answer” by creating a 2-measure rhythmic pattern on a contrasting instrument. Note that this is not a repeat of the first pattern but a contrast to it (question and answer). Check for accuracy of beat, rhythm, and length. Vary the exercise by incorporating dynamics to give it more of a feel of questions and answers. Now put students in pairs and have them create their own questions and answers. Have them begin with 2-measure phrases, and then try 4-measure questions and answers. Have them notate their questions and answers using real note and rest values placed on one line.

Combine pairs from the previous activity to make groups of 4. Play a four-measure phrase that was notated. After the group has played the phrase, have one student improvise for 4 measures followed by the group playing once again the notated phrase. Emphasize that a beat should not be lost between the solo and the full group. Have another student improvise a 4-measure phrase, followed by the whole group. Explain that they have created a Rondo (ABACADAE). If some students need to be challenged further, have them improvise an 8-measure or 16-measure phrase.



EXTENSION (2 HOURS)

To be completed in those situations where the module will be 26 hours in duration.

Introduce the students to notes on the grand staff. Although it is often easiest to explain these in terms of a phrase or word (every good boy does fine, face), avoid using these repeatedly as they sometimes create dependency on the part of the student. *ApRo Theory Level 1*, Lessons 2, 3, 6, 7 provide a review of these for the students. Have them practice writing the notes on a staff.

Next, go back to the previous activity and instead of notating the rhythmic patterns, indicate the pitch of each of the notes and place them on the grand staff. Always have the students check for correct time signatures, and bar lines. Using pitched percussion instruments, have the students try playing their phrases. This should be done in pairs or small groups, where students can assist each other, and it may require significant in-class time to practice.



Have each group perform the melodic score for the class and ask for feedback.

- What worked well?
- What did not work so well?
- What would you recommend the group try to improve the performance?

PART B: OSTINATO (1.5 HOURS)

Warm-up

Once again, begin this part of the unit with rhythmic dictation. Use combinations of whole, half, quarter, eighth and sixteenth notes and their equivalent rests. Start with 2-measure patterns and then try 4-measures. Have each student write two 2-measure patterns. This time have students in pairs, with one student improvising a pattern while the other writes it. Repeat until everyone has dictated their rhythm patterns.

Play a recording of *Bolero* by Ravel. Ask students to describe what they heard. Look for someone to say that there was a rhythmic pattern that kept repeating throughout the entire selection. Ask if they can tap the rhythm of the pattern. Now have them try to notate it. Explain that this is a rhythmic ostinato – a technique that is often used in compositions. What makes this selection so unique is that it continues throughout the entire piece.

Based on their knowledge of rhythm, ask students to create a 2-measure ostinato in $\frac{4}{4}$ time. In groups of 8, have them arrange their ostinati so that a rhythmic composition builds, beginning with the first person and each subsequent person joining in after a prescribed number of beats. You may want to consider having them create “spaces” or rests in their ostinato to leave room for the other parts to come through.



In their groups, have students discuss how they can create interest in the rhythmic composition that was just created. Look for ideas such as:

- use dynamics
- have contrasting rhythm instruments play the individual ostinati
- feel a sense of phrasing

Have them try these ideas and perform the composition again for the other students. Did the changes make the composition more interesting? Following the discussion and presentations, have students create and complete a performance rubric like those found in *Tools for Powerful Student Evaluation*.

Now go back to the 16-measure composition created in Unit 2, Part B. Consider an ostinato to be played throughout. Perform the piece again with the ostinato. Think of the overall shape of the composition by considering how the piece will begin, build, and end. This creates a musical idea.



In their journals, have students reflect on the results of the ostinato compositions. When reviewing these, check for understanding, looking specifically for correct terminology, and the overall interpretation.

Remind students of the flash cards they created in the activity that introduced the module. Distribute 4 more flash cards to each student and have them create additional flash cards with terms introduced so far in the module. Collect these and have them on hand for the next time you play the game, or when you feel a need to review.



Unit 4: Composition with Graphic Notation (8 hours)

(EXTENSION UNIT: To be completed if the module is 26 hours duration)

Introduction

Although composing music is sometimes viewed as a specialized activity for a select few, the previous activities in this module have proven that creating music can be simplified. Another example of effective composition is using graphic notation. This is an easy-to-learn method of organizing sound using abstract marks that represent sounds. In this unit, based on the work of Toronto composer, Michael Colgrass, students will create, notate, and perform their own soundscapes as a means of musical expression. Graphic notation is particularly appropriate for teachers and students not trained in composing because no knowledge of harmony, melody, counterpoint, or orchestration is necessary to create and perform their own graphic compositions. Composing with graphics encompasses all the principles of music.

Key Concepts

- graphic notation/symbols
- soundscape

Resources

RECOMMENDED RECORDINGS

- Varese: “Arcana for Orchestra”
- Berio: “Sinfonia for Orchestra”
- Penderecki: “Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima”, for string orchestra
- Peter Maxwell Davies: “Eight Songs of a Mad King”, for baritone voice and ensemble.
- George Crumb: “Ancient Voices for Children”, for mezzo-soprano and small ensemble

GRAPHIC NOTATION SCORES

- Michael Colgrass: Graphic notation examples
- Sydney Hodkinson: A Contemporary Primer for band, Volumes I-II-III Preliminary and Intermediate Studies in Graphic Notation for Any Number of Wind and Percussion Players (Theodore Presser Company).

TEXT

- My Lessons with Kumi: How I Learned to Perform with Confidence in Life and Work (Colgrass, Michael)

Materials

- Chalkboard (or whiteboard)
- 8-1/2 x 11 paper (lots!)
- Pencils & erasers
- Clear tape
- Graphic notation example sheets (optional)
- Musical instruments (optional)

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Process

GETTING READY

To begin, play recordings of a wide range of music – orchestral music, opera, popular music, tonal music, atonal music, musique concrete, and so on. As the students are exposed to a greater variety of music they can be introduced to the concepts of musical architecture (form), texture, function, etc. Discuss the nature of creating music.

- What constitutes “composing?”
- Why is music created?
- What resources can be used?

Tips for Teaching Success

“To allow the students to discover the process of composing, performing, and conducting on their own, the teacher’s role is to ensure that the graphics process is carried out efficiently acting like the rudder on an ocean liner, helping keep the ship on the desired course.”

Michael Colgrass

PART A: CREATING A GROUP SOUNDSCAPE (1 HOUR)

Invite a volunteer to place on the board a graphic notation figure that represents a sound they are hearing. Point out that the top and bottom of the board represent how high and low the voice can go and the soundscape will read left to right. After the first volunteer writes and sings a sound on the board, have them hold the marker until a second student volunteers to add another sound to the board. This continues until the group agrees the composition is satisfactorily completed.

Invite a volunteer from the group to go to the board and guide the group through a vocal performance. The leader may simply use their hand as a “cursor” or attempt more sophisticated gestures as required to achieve a group performance. Whatever the approach, allow the leader to discover their own method. Then invite a second and third person to interpret the piece with the group.

Michael Colgrass has developed a collection of graphic symbols (see Supporting Materials) expressly for graphic notation composition. These symbols can be introduced to students at this time. The symbols can be used to develop instrumental performance techniques applicable to reading student compositions and serve as inspiration for students to develop their own sounds and corresponding graphic symbols.

PART B: CREATING INDIVIDUAL SOUNDSCAPES (2 HOURS)

While still in the group setting, give each member of the group a sheet of blank paper. Each student creates their own graphic notation piece.

Invite a volunteer to write their piece on the board and guide the group through an impromptu performance (vocal/instrumental). This can happen with as many students as time will allow.

Now the class can be divided into two groups: those who want to continue to compose graphic pieces alone or in pairs (larger composition teams are not recommended), and those who want to practice reading graphics on their instruments. This reading practice on graphics can be done with the teacher taking the group through either the Colgrass graphic examples, or the other graphic pieces already written by the students.

Note: Gaining proficiency at reading graphics with voices or on instruments is vital to the success of graphic music performance.

Guidelines for Structuring Compositions

Unifying Idea

Strong pieces of music usually have one basic idea. In classical music this would be a theme or motif. For example, the first movement of Beethoven's 5th symphony uses one motif throughout (demonstrate by singing or playing a recording). A programmatic theme is the use of a subject or story as a unifying idea – like a rainstorm, auto traffic, sounds of birds and nature, etc. In programmatic pieces, encourage students to pick topics about which they feel passionate.

Contrast

Strong music creates interest using contrast – fast/slow, loud/soft, high/low, thin/thick texture, varied use of instruments. Ask students to complete a “What if” or “As if” statement to get ideas. For example, “What if” I start loud and then suddenly get soft? What if I have everybody whistle “as if” they were birds? What if I used only three people and then suddenly used everybody?

An Inciting Event

An inciting incident or event is an idea that stands out from the background and gets the listener's attention. Such an idea, once introduced, needs to be developed and resolved. A distinctive melody can be such an event. Introducing a special instrument (soloist) can be such an event. An inciting event is what makes one piece of music stand out from another.

Dreamer-Realist-Critic (“Triple position”)

Suggest to the composers that they alternately place themselves in three frames of mind, or “rooms”. In the “Dreaming” room they can imagine anything with no limits on their thinking.

They take ideas from this room to the “Realist” room where they ask questions about practical issues.

- How many players or singers do I need to perform this piece?
- What instruments and voices do I have available?
- How big a space?
- How long will it take to prepare?
- How much will it cost?

Finally, they will visit the “Critic” room where “why” questions are posed

- Is my idea original?
- Is it too long?
- Why drums?
- Why that topic?

Tips for Teaching Success

In working with the young composers, you must be willing to engage yourself in their world. Try to imagine what they are thinking or feeling so you can advise them while minimizing your own ideas of how their pieces should sound. Try to understand the sounds they are trying to produce and why.

Have students plan their pieces employing the triple position concept. In their journals they can record their thoughts, as they occur, in each of the three “rooms” (dreamer, realist, and critic). At the end of this process they may have the kernel of an idea for their compositions.



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PART C: THE CREATIVE CRUCIBLE – THE COMPOSERS’/PERFORMERS’ WORKSHOP

(5 HOURS)

In this part of the unit, students will begin composing, and to begin the process, it is crucial that they imagine. Encourage them to avoid putting pencil to paper until they can hear something in their minds. Allow them to vocalize with abandon as they explore their own “sound language.” This may prove challenging in a classroom environment and may be more effective if done at home.

Eventually, the composers will present their first drafts to the class. The composers need to make photocopies for the performers; they draw their pieces on a whiteboard; or they can project pieces. The composers now lead the class through a reading of their pieces thus hearing the effectiveness of their ideas and getting feedback from the group.

Conducting will be a new experience for the students. As much as possible, allow them to experiment with differing approaches to non-verbal communication. Discussion between players and conductor can be effective in developing appropriate gestures. Invite students to conduct pieces other than their own. This can produce remarkable discussions on the nature of artistic intent and interpretation.

To save time in class, it is vital that when conducting their pieces composers avoid lengthy descriptions *about* the music. They should provide only necessary instructions that proceed directly to practical performing of the music. As issues are identified, particularly in terms of a desired sound, the composer/conductor should vocalize the sounds as best as they can. There may also be significant input from the musicians—suggestions as to how they can produce the composers’ desired sounds, or even suggestions about the structure of the work itself. This is an exciting phase in the process.

Eventually, the pieces will reach a final state and performance for an audience is now encouraged. Students are inspired by time limits. Setting a date for a public performance tends to stimulate their creative thinking. Ensure that pieces are recorded so students may reflect on their efforts and have a lasting record. Also, video-recording the whole process can provide a valuable reference document.



In their journals, have students document their personal compositional experience using guided questions such as

- How did they choose the “topic” for their piece?
- Why/How did they develop specific graphic symbols?
- Did their piece effectively communicate their thoughts and emotions?

The students can also record their responses to other composers’ pieces heard in the class. Encourage them to place themselves in the minds of the other composers.

- What were those other composers thinking?
- What did they want the listener to think or feel about each piece of music?
- Why did they choose a medium?

Unit 5: Culminating Activity

(3 hours)

Introduction

In this unit, students will apply the skills learned throughout this module to create their final compositions. Drawing on comparisons to spoken and print text, they will see how a composition can evolve in a very systematic way. It is important to note that pieces composed in previous units can be used in this one to economize on the limited time available.

While this module has focused on rhythm, this unit will review with students the use of a pentatonic scale which they will have learned in Music Primary – 6. There may be students in the class who will not feel confident in composing using the pentatonic scale, and they should be paired or grouped with those who have a better understanding of it. Explain to students this will be a good transition to the Introductory Module in *Explore Music 8* which focuses on melody.

Key Concepts

- rhythmic fragments
- rhythmic cells
- rhythmic phrases
- pentatonic scale
- songwriters circle

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Process

In many ways, rhythm works like language. In language, letters form the smallest units, and these are combined to form syllables, which in turn form words. Words form phrases, phrases form sentences, paragraphs, sections, chapters, books, and volumes. Hindson, Barbeler and Blom in *Music Composition Toolbox* have stated musical equivalents to each language idea:

Text	Musical Equivalent
Letters	Notes
Syllables	Fragments
Words	Cells
Phrases	Phrases
Sentences	Melodies/Themes
Paragraphs	Subsections
Sections	Sections
Chapters	Movements
Books	Pieces

Note values (the letters) can be grouped to form rhythmic fragments. Five basic rhythmic fragments are given to simple or compound meters, adding up to two quarters or one, half note duration.

1	♩ ♩
2	♩ ♩
3	
4	
5	♩ ♩

These rhythmic fragments can be joined to five rhythmic cells, in the same way that syllables can join to form words. Here are examples of rhythmic cells:

- | |
- | □
- □ |
- ♩ | ♩ | |
- □ □ | □

Using music software, have students create 2-measure rhythmic cells using the four rhythmic fragments from above. With their knowledge of note values, have them select a time signature for each. If there are not enough beats to complete at least 2 measures, add more rhythmic fragments to make the correct number of beats. Have them select one of the cells and using a treasure hunt approach, have them seek out other students who have created rhythmic cells using the same time signature. As words are joined to form sentences, these rhythmic cells can be combined to form rhythmic phrases. Combine several students' cells to create a rhythmic phrase.

Play excerpts from a variety of recorded musical selections in various time signatures. These can be representative of classical, popular, or world music. Ask students to identify the time signature for each. As a class, listen again to some of the excerpts and try to identify rhythmic cells, and if possible, rhythmic phrases. Do any represent an ostinato? Why or why not?

Next, have students notate their rhythmic compositions using a 5-note (pentatonic) scale on the grand staff. Explain to them that the 16-measures will have four 4-measure phrases and that there should be a feeling of “question” in the first phrase, “answer” in the second; “question” in the third phrase, and “answer” in the fourth. Just as in punctuation in written sentences, there should be a feeling of rest or completion at the end of measure 8 and measure 16. Demonstrate this for students.

Students will most likely need a brief review of the pentatonic scale. This would have been taught in Music Primary – 6, but many students may not have composed in this scale. After students have worked on their compositions for a couple of classes, have each group perform their composition for the rest of the class as a “work in progress.” This is like a song writers circle, and the class will provide feedback for the student composers. Then allow time to incorporate the changes if they feel they are appropriate and have them perform the final compositions next day. If time permits, students should be notating their compositions using music software.



Note the level of discussion by students in the songwriters circle, the justifications provided, the ability to solve problems, and whether the composers incorporated the ideas.

Have students return to the 16-measure rhythmic composition they created in a previous class, in which an ostinato was added (Unit 3, Part B). How did the ostinato affect the sound? Have students record their compositions, and when they are content with a final performance that has been recorded, collect for critique and feedback. This can be used for evaluation purposes.

Co-create a rubric for the final compositions, and have students do a self-evaluation that includes both process and product ideas.

Have students pass in the compositions and this will serve as a part of the final grade along with the assessments conducted throughout the module.

Supporting Materials

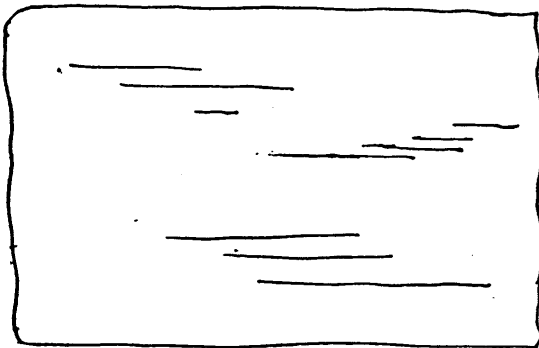
Graphic Notation Symbols

(as developed by Michael Colgrass, Canadian Composer)

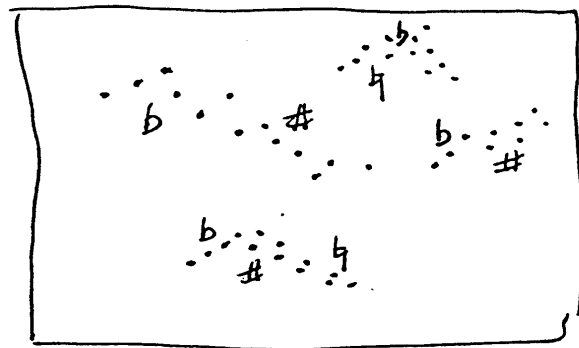
1.

GRAPHIC NOTATION EXAMPLES

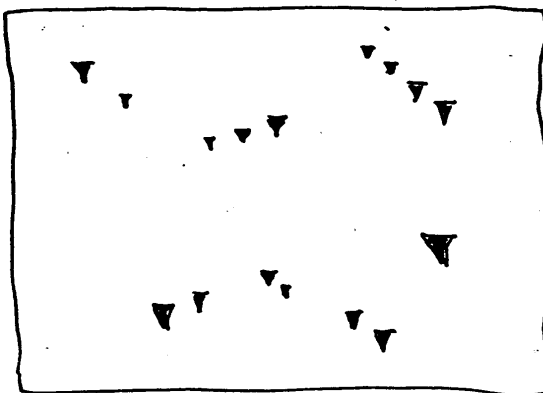
Typical graphics composers can use in creating new pieces.
These examples can also to be used by instrumentalists to practice performing graphics.



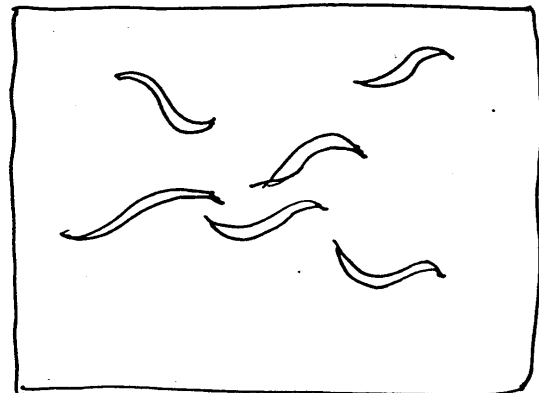
LINES
Long tones



SKITTERS
Very short notes



BITES
Short, sharp attacks

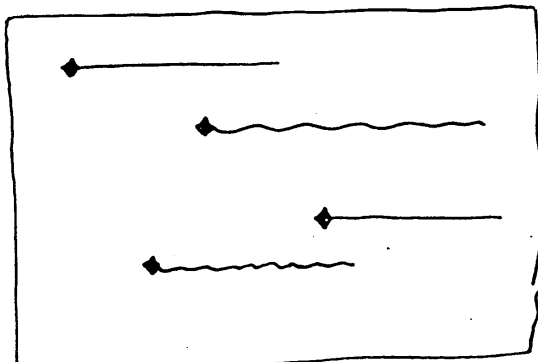


DOLPHINS
Swoops of sound
Thick = loud, thin = soft

GRAPHIC NOTATION EXAMPLES

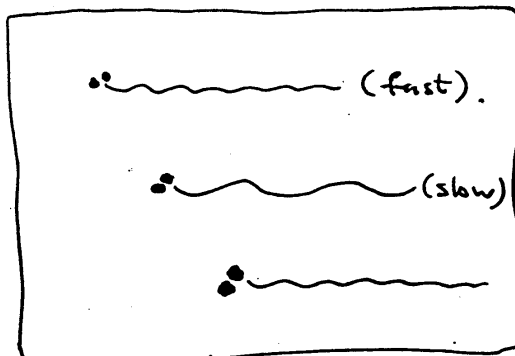
2.

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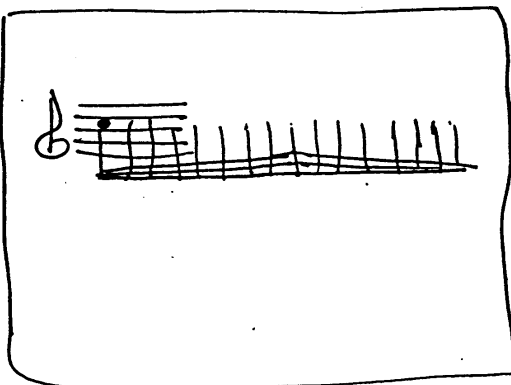
SURPRISES

Loud attack, then immediately soft,
with straight or wavy line



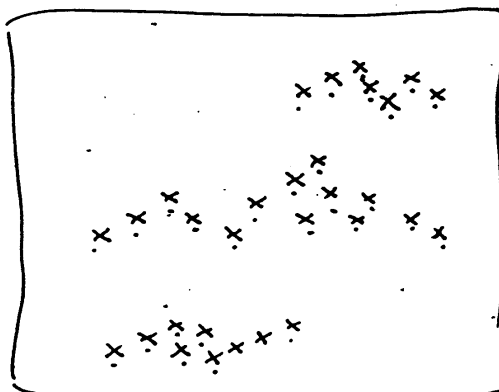
QUIVERS

Alternate quickly
between two adjacent pitches



SKIDDING

Speed up and slow down
on one pitch

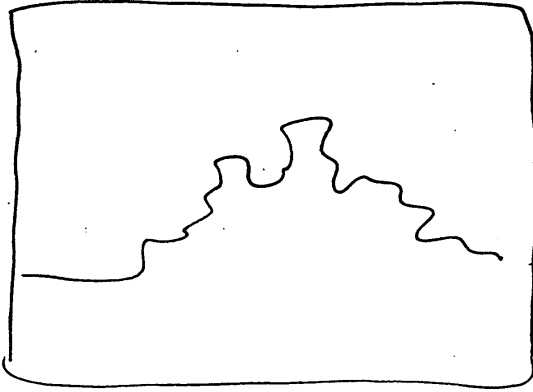


MICE

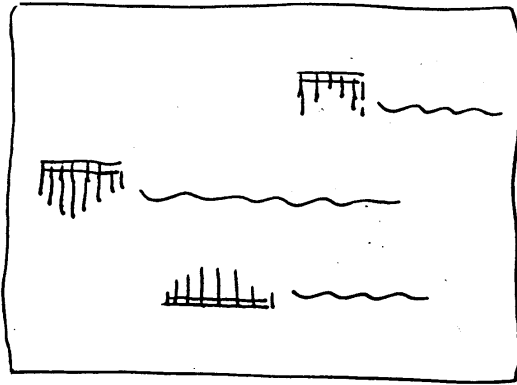
Random mouth clicks
or click keys on instruments

GRAPHIC NOTATION EXAMPLES

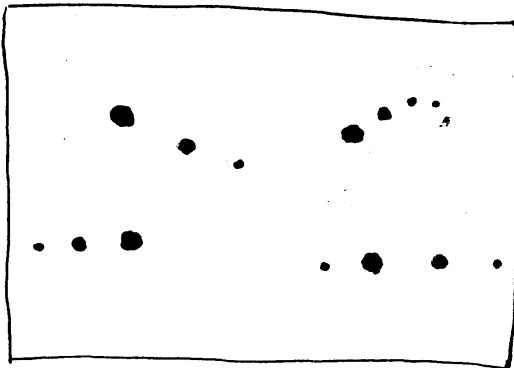
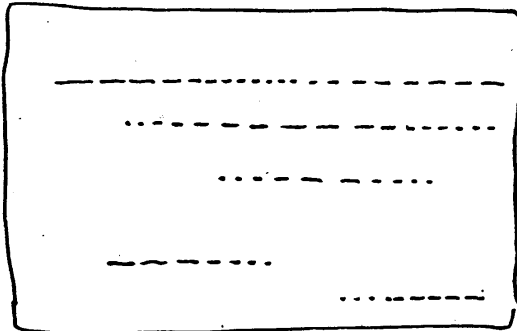
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LANDSCAPE

One long uninterrupted line

MURMURING

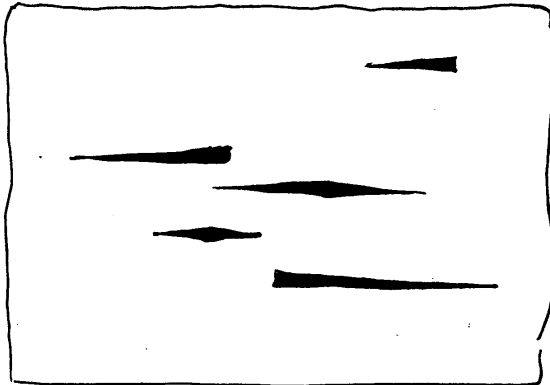
Rapidly play any convenient series of pitches

ROUND TONESShort but full sounds.
Volume according to size.LINES & DOTSCombine long and short
on same note

4.

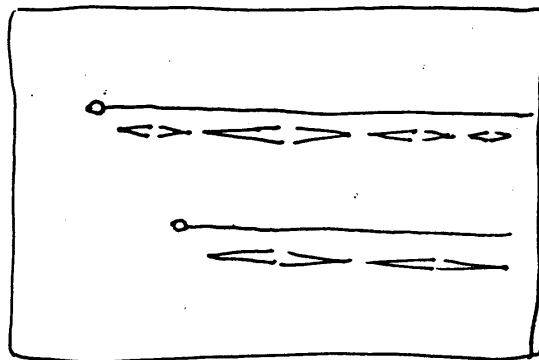
GRAPHIC NOTATION EXAMPLES

(continued)



SWELLS

Soft to loud - loud to soft



WAVES

Breath accents and swells
on one long uninterrupted tone

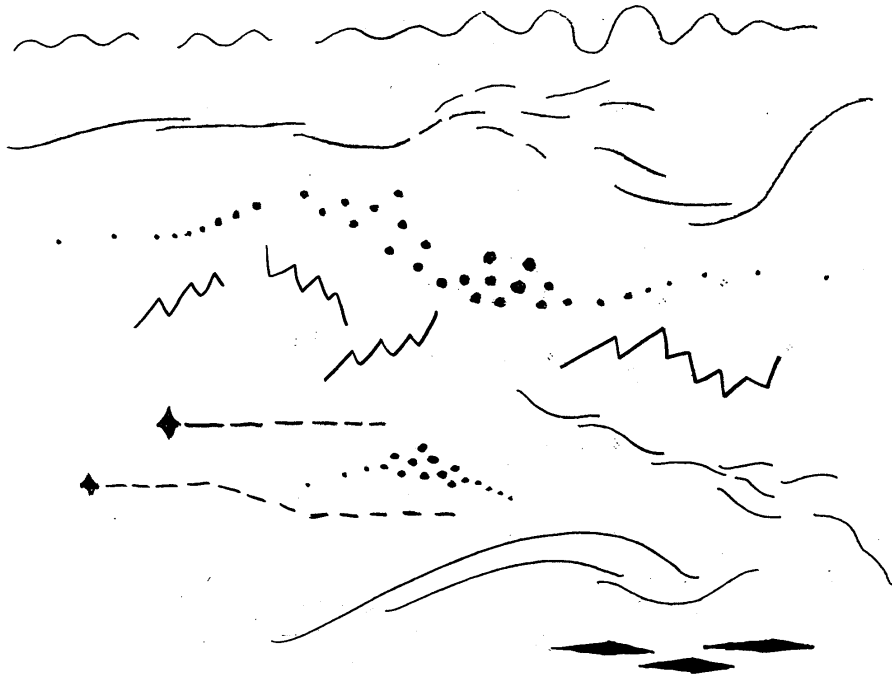
5.

EXAMPLE OF A COMPLEX GRAPHIC COMPOSITION

Note the complexity of this design. Six elements are employed: curved lines, dots, jagged lines, swells, wavy line and diamonds with straight lines.

This is a complex structure which is already so active it leaves little room for development.

Indeed, which idea would you develop?



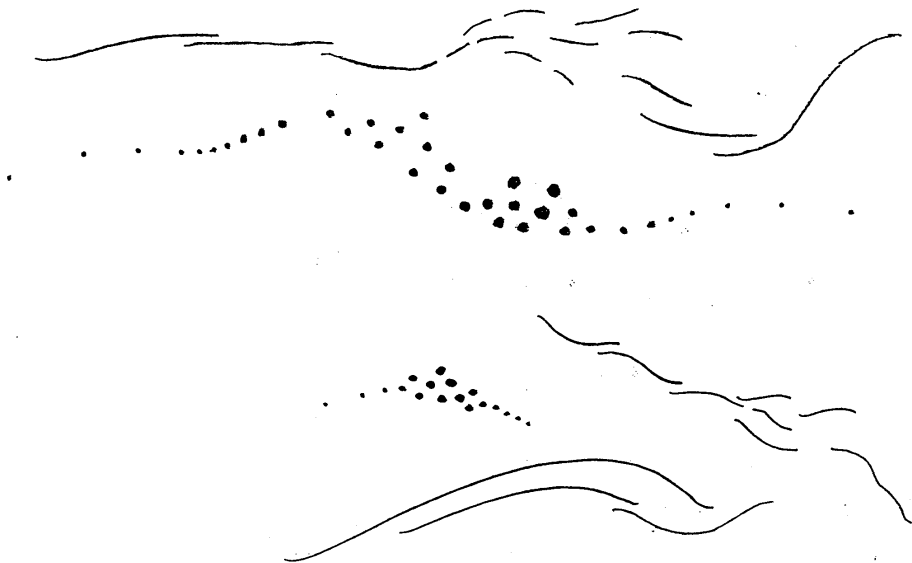
6.

EXAMPLE OF A SIMPLER GRAPHIC COMPOSITION

This graphic design employs only two elements:
curved lines and dots.

These two gestures are vividly contrasting and offer a clear
statement of the subject of the work.

Other elements can be brought in gradually, growing out of
the interplay between the dots and curved lines.



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- NS Teaching in Action (Language Arts)*
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