

# ***Band Instruments: Module 2***



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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 *Band Instruments: Curriculum Framework* and *Band Instruments: Appendices*. Therefore, it is recommended that these two components of the curriculum 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



## ***Band Instruments: Module 2***

**Correlated with Grade 7 Canadian Band Association Instrumental Music (Band) Standards  
(26 Instructional Hours)**

### **Overview**

#### **Rationale**

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This module is designed to build on the “sound before sight” learning experiences in Module 1. Students will connect the notes and rhythms that they have already learned with traditional notation and will move quickly through the first portion of the method book of choice. They will continue development of their playing technique, composition and arranging, improvisation, and music literacy activities. Melodic and rhythmic dictation will be a regular learning activity, and all students will have “individual percussion instruments” for rhythmic work. Students will experience focused, active listening to their own music and that of others. Finally, they will be introduced to quality, full band repertoire that involves the notes and rhythms that students already know, thus enabling them to experience the joy of interpreting, expressing, and performing as a concert band.



It is assumed that students will, in addition to regular *Band Instruments* class instruction (minimum 2 classes per week), have co-curricular, full concert band rehearsals. It is also assumed that students will achieve their musical learning goals through individual playing outside regular class time.

## Glossary

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- traditional notation
- whole, half, quarter notes and rests
- $\frac{4}{4}$  meter
- *fermata*
- repeat sign
- multiple bounce roll
- call and response
- B-flat concert scale and arpeggio
- G natural minor scale
- key signature
- $\frac{2}{4}$  meter
- clarinet “break”
- eighth notes
- flam
- flam tap
- folk song
- march
- canon
- E-flat concert scale and arpeggio
- pentatonic scale
- paradiddle
- anacrusis
- slur
- c natural minor scale and arpeggio
- dotted half note
- $\frac{3}{4}$  meter
- forte
- piano



Module 1 promotes approaches to music learning and making that are at the core of all subsequent modules. It is strongly recommended that teachers revisit key musical components from Module 1 before beginning any new module, term, or school year, in order that they keep these integrated components at the center of their planning and classroom practice.

## Introduction

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As previously suggested, this module presumes that students are already familiar with

- effective playing posture
- basic playing technique, including the production of a beautiful sound
- basic instrument care
- playing the notes of the B-flat concert scale
- using rhythm patterns involving whole, half, quarter, and eighth notes and rests
- improvising and composing using the above pitches and rhythms
- exploring possibilities for sound production
- notation of pitches and rhythms in both treble and bass staves
- preparing for and presenting their first concert



It is important to note that, in Module 1, percussionists will have spent more time on keyboard mallets than snare and bass drum. The improvisation activities will have been with keyboard mallets only. Students will also know how to play several rhythms by ear on snare, with perfect grip and sensitivity to the sound of the wind players in the full arrangements and will be able to perform a tight buzz roll.

## Outcomes Addressed

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- 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.
- Learners will implement appropriate technique.

# Unit 1: Connecting Sound and Sight - Bb Concert

## (5 hours)

### Introduction

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It is critical that playing and singing “by ear”, rhythmic exercises, improvisation/composition activities, music literacy and active listening activities be woven into each unit and be a key feature of the fabric of musical learning. Suggestions provided for these activities should be considered a resource to be adapted, according to the needs and interests of students. For example, a teacher may choose to use Ear Training/Improvisation activities other than the ones referred to below, but this component of the unit should not be omitted.

Teachers are encouraged to keep a checklist for the various learning components in each module. When components are inter-related and based on the key concepts/basic musical “building blocks” of each unit, they provide a framework for exciting and comprehensive learning experiences for young musicians.

See Appendix C in *Band Instruments: Appendices* for a Learning/Assessment Activities Planner that can be used for planning the present and subsequent *Band Instruments* modules.

### Key Concepts/Musical Building Blocks

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Introduction to playing and singing using traditional notation

- first five notes (Bb concert)
- whole, half, and quarter notes and rests
- articulation – tonguing and slurring
- $\frac{4}{4}$  meter
- fermata
- repeat sign
- multiple bounce roll
- call and response

Method book references are *Standard of Excellence*: pp. 6-9 and *Essential Elements*: pp. 4-7



## Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Process

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### *Tips for Teaching Success*

As students are introduced to these early experiences with playing and singing using traditional notation, teachers should be sure to consistently reinforce prior learning re tone, posture, breathing, articulation, etc. Incorrect habits that are not addressed at this stage will cause students problems later, and it is easier to make the necessary adjustments in these early lessons than to “unlearn” ingrained incorrect habits in the future.

### **BASIC SKILLS COMPONENT**

Teachers are encouraged to select exercises from each page of the chosen method book that are effective for learning/reinforcing key skills and concepts. It will not be necessary to play every exercise on a page. In addition, some exercises might be used exclusively for reinforcing rhythmic concepts (clapping, using personal percussion instruments), while others might be used for sight singing.

Students should be encouraged to internalize the expectation that “mastery level”, achieved through repetition, is the norm. Teachers can reinforce the knowledge that playing 80% of the notes correctly, playing with poor tone quality, or playing approximately on the beat with almost correct rhythms is not acceptable.

### *Tips for Teaching Success*

“If everyone is playing, for example, G out of the method book, get away from the written page. Say ‘Let’s do something interesting.’ Do some rote work (gets them to LISTEN). For example, ask students to play G and then the note lower - F. They may say ‘But we don’t know that note.’ Show them the fingerings. Then ask them to play the next lower note (E). Improvise riffs using these notes. Show them how to get a chord (some play G, some E). They’ll say ‘Wow!’ So, they listen. The brain starts to think ‘listen’. It’s always there.”

“Then go back to the written page. Do not get off the method book. Make little changes. Sing what you want them to play (maybe a whole note for the final note instead of the quarter that is on the page). They will work to LISTEN IN. It keeps it interesting. You have got to get them thinking ‘listen’. And the look on their face when they get it!”

“You have to be inventive. Keep moving around. But keep using [aspects of] the method book – don’t abandon it.”

Ron MacKay, February 5, 2008



*Teaching Music through Performance in Beginning Band, Vol. 2* (Miles, pp. 16-18) outlines a “Pass-Off Round” that can be adapted effectively for doing individual skills assessment while involving the whole group. In short, each student chooses an exercise from the required list and the list of choices is displayed. The full group (seated in a circle) plays each exercise and then the individual student plays it. This means that the whole group plays frequently. Refer to the pages noted above for further explanation.

Refer to *Tools for Powerful Student Evaluation* (Farrell, pp. 40-41) for rubrics for individual performance progress, both teacher and self-assessment, that can be adapted for use at this level.

#### *Tips for Teaching Success*

Consider accompanying students on the keyboard as they play their first exercises in the method book, particularly when the exercises involve a whole note followed by a whole rest. Refer to *Teaching Music through Performance in Beginning Band, Vol. 2* (Miles, p. 93)



Too many players on percussive instruments (i.e., snare drum) de-sensitizes the ears and balance of the entire class. Rotate students to practice pads and mallet instruments to avoid this problem.

Refer to *Improvisation Games for Classical Musicians* (Agrell, p. 98) for ideas re percussion “instruments” for all students. If students have these instruments close at hand, it is easy to switch from playing a given exercise on their regular instrument to playing only the rhythms. Percussionists can switch from mallet instruments to drum pads, tambourine, triangle, etc., depending on what techniques have been introduced for specific non-melodic instruments.

Rhythm flash cards that have notes, rests, and meters found in method book exercises and repertoire can be very effective in reinforcing rhythmic concepts. One or two bar patterns might be used. Refer to *Teaching Music through Performance in Beginning Band, Vol. 2* (Miles, p. 13) for suggestions regarding the importance of musical accompaniment for the flash cards.

## MUSIC LITERACY COMPONENT

Students should complete written exercises that are based on key concepts introduced/reinforced in method book exercises and repertoire. For example, in this unit students should become comfortable with writing whole, half, and quarter notes and rests in  $\frac{4}{4}$ , using the pitches that are found in their method book exercises, both treble and bass clefs. These exercises should be incorporated into music in class on a regular basis and their connection with what students are playing should always be reinforced.



Teachers are encouraged to select exercises/sheets that are best suited for their students and school setting. Recommended resources include Theory Sheets #5-8 in *SoundStart for Band* (Appleby) and *ApRo Theory Level 1* (see *Band Instruments: Module 1*).

## EAR TRAINING/IMPROVISATION COMPONENT

Module 1 is based on aural musical learning and emphasizes its importance for student success. Teachers are encouraged to read again the Introduction of that module re “sound before sight”. This component must continue to play an important role in band instrument classes. Suggested activities for this unit include

- Warm-Up Long Tones (Agrell, p. 56)
- Ostinato (Agrell, p. 57)
- Drone (Agrell, p. 57, 112)
- Call-and-Response: Basic (Agrell, p. 59)
- Call-and-Response Warm-Up (*Teaching Music through Performance in Beginning Band, Vol. 2*, pp. 6-10)
- Call-and-Response: Rhythms! (Agrell, p. 167)
- Hand Drills and Skills (Agrell, p. 77)
- Ostinato (Agrell, p. 89)
- Accent on Listening (TMP, Vol. 2, p. 93) This exercise suggests various options for playing and notating “missing notes” in standard songs that use the first five notes of the major scale such as “Mary Had a Little Lamb”.



A combination of teacher observation notes and student self- reflection (written or oral) about their progress can be used to highlight what is being learned and what the next steps might be.

*Tips for Teaching Success*

*Teaching Music through Performance in Beginning Band, Vol. 2* (Miles, pp. 6-10) outlines a process for starting classes with call and response. The teacher sings (using solfege) or plays for the class one-bar examples based on the first five notes of the B-flat concert scale. Students play the response. Page 92 in the same resource outlines another excellent audiation activity based on these same five notes.

## COMPOSITION COMPONENT

Composition activities provide key opportunities for young musicians to create, using notes, rhythms, forms, styles, etc. that are found in their repertoire. Composing activities that involve exploring new sounds and inventing new notation devices are important as well. Young musical learners develop a sense of empowerment as they construct their own music, much as language students are empowered as they learn to construct their own sentences and paragraphs.

As described in Module 1, it is important that the teacher set clear parameters for each composition activity. These parameters then form a clear framework for self-, peer-, and teacher assessment of completed compositions. Possibilities for the present unit include (without being limited to)

- Students might compose and notate an 8-bar melody for their own instrument in  $\frac{4}{4}$  meter, using the first three notes of the B-flat concert scale.
- Students can compose and notate a two-bar rhythmic ostinato using rhythms that they have learned. They might then create a small ensemble composition based on that ostinato, beginning with a single percussive sound, and then gradually adding three other percussive “instruments”. Students can teach their own compositions to their own group of four and perform them for the rest of the class members.
- Students might compose and notate a two-bar melody using the notes they have learned. This melody can then be played for a call-and-response activity.
- Students can compose a variation of one of their method book exercises, changing the pitches and/or rhythms in bars 2, 4, and 6.
- Students might compose a short work that is inspired by the sounds and rhythms of a chosen machine, choosing sound sources found in music classroom (instruments, vocal, body, or “found” sounds). They can notate their work using graphic notation. Compositions can be rehearsed in small groups and then performed. Listeners might speculate about what machine inspired each piece.



Teachers and students should work together, in advance, to build a rubric that is based on the parameters for the composition, plus other relevant aspects of the activity. Once students have completed the rubrics, group discussion and individual reflection can be a powerful tool for assessing for learning and planning the next steps.

## ACTIVE LISTENING COMPONENT



The active listening component consists of opportunities for students to do guided listening to their own music and that of expert musicians in live concerts or recorded performances. Suggestions for this unit include

- CBC Live, Radio 2, *Concerts on Demand* for performances by concert bands
- recordings that demonstrate beautiful tone for individual wind and percussion instruments
- examples of call-and-response songs in the music of Africa and early Blues
- variations on Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star (Mozart)

So that students can focus and listen actively, it is important to provide a context for the listening. Guided questions might include

- What is your first impression of the piece?
- What did you hear? (List instruments, voices, sounds, articulation, dynamics)
- Describe the melody.
- What is the predominant rhythmic motif?
- What do you think this piece is about? What does it mean to you?
- What did you hear that will influence your own playing?



Learning journals provide an excellent tool for self- and teacher assessment. It might be effective to have a regular time in the schedule (i.e., every second Day 1) for students to make entries in their journals. See *Tools for Powerful Student Evaluation* (Farrell, pp. 84-85) for numerous journal prompts.

A Weekly Student Self-Assessment form (Farrell, p. 92) is excellent for assessment of progress, identifying both successes and items that need further attention

## CUMULATIVE LEARNING ACTIVITY



An integrated activity that brings together the learning of the unit provides a key tool for students' awareness of their own progress and gives them a sense of accomplishment and enthusiasm about moving on to the next phase. Such an activity or class "project" plays a valuable role in student assessment. While it might not always be possible to wrap up a unit with an activity such as this, teachers should consider including one at the end of at least some of the units.

The following describes a possible cumulative activity for Unit 1.

Choose an exercise from the method book that uses all five notes the students have learned and have them create their own arrangement for an informal presentation.

- If it is an 8-bar exercise, they might decide to have woodwinds play the first two bars, brass play bars 3 and 4, percussion play bars 5 and 6, and tutti for bars 7 and 8.
- They might choose to do a call-and-response version, with one student playing each 2 bars, followed by the whole class repeating them.
- They can embellish what is written with notated "personal percussion" sounds.
- They might extend the exercise to 16 or 24 bars and give it a new title.
- A few students can be a "listening squad" and make suggestions about the playing (balance, rhythmic precision, tone quality, etc.).
- Another teacher (or the principal or janitor) might be invited to the class to hear the arrangement and students can explain their arrangement.
- Their playing can be recorded, and students can complete a rubric that assessed their creative work as a class and their individual performance as a member of the musical group.

## Unit 2: B-flat Concert and Beyond (5 hours)

### Key Concepts/Musical Building Blocks

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- B-flat concert scale and arpeggio
- g natural minor scale (rote)
- key signature
- $\frac{2}{4}$  meter
- clarinet “break”
- eighth notes and rests
- flam, flam tap
- folk song
- canon/round
- march (e.g., “Crown Point March” by Bruce Pearson for full band)

Method book references are *Standard of Excellence*: pp. 10-12 and *Essential Elements*: pp. 8-9.



The key concepts and musical building blocks that are listed correspond with method book and repertoire references. It is understood that teachers will make sound decisions regarding the most appropriate point at which to introduce concepts in each module, depending upon the needs of their students and repertoire. For example, a teacher might decide to delay the introduction of eighth rests until Unit 3 because they do not appear in repertoire or method book exercises that are planned for Unit 2.

# Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Process

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## BASIC SKILLS COMPONENT



Teachers are encouraged to establish the expectation that method book exercises will often be sung before they are played. Rhythmic counting of the exercise, using the system of choice (e.g., ta-ti-ti, or 1 ann 2 ann 3 ann, etc.) prior to the first play through, enables students to focus on written note/rest values.

To add interest and build ensemble playing while learning method book exercises, teachers are encouraged to organize students in three or four groups. On a given repetition of the exercise, each group can do one of the following

- Keep a steady beat using personal percussion instruments
- Repeat a simple ostinato using personal percussion instruments
- Sing or say rhythmic syllables
- Provide a drone or simple bass line
- Play the exercise as written

At this stage it is critical that effective breathing techniques be reinforced. Refer to *Developing the Complete Band Program* (Jagow, pp. 87-88) for rhythmic breathing exercises for the whole ensemble, including percussionists.

Introduce the B-flat concert scale (split octaves for French horns only) and arpeggio. This will involve the “break” for clarinets. Have students play the scale and arpeggio by rote using whole notes and various rhythmic patterns that they are working with in method book exercises. Be sure to include rhythmic patterns found in new time signatures.



It is important for young clarinetists to become comfortable with “crossing the break” before they are required to use the skill regularly in repertoire. Exercises can be done “by rote” so that players have an opportunity to learn the physical skills involved. Some of these are provided in recommended method books. Also, the Master Method for Band Book 1 (originally published by Kjos) has a page of excellent exercises. It might be very helpful to organize a special “Crossing the Break” workshop with these students – perhaps at lunch hour with treats (after the playing, of course).

Once students have learned the B-flat concert scale, have them play G natural minor by rote. Have them note that the relative minor scale begins 3 semitones below the major scale.



*Tips for Teaching Success*

It can be very effective to display the basic plan for the class. With students, review the plan and specific objectives at the outset and then, in the final few minutes of the class, revisit the plan to identify what was accomplished and what needs to be worked on next. This assessment strategy helps students to understand that they share in the responsibility for what is achieved. It also allows them to celebrate what they have accomplished, individually and as a group, and engages them in planning the next steps.

Rhythmic exercises should involve eighth notes (which were part of Module 1) so that they are in the students' rhythmic "repertoire" before they see them notated in the method book.

Have percussionists learn the flam and flam tap on drum pads, using correct sticking patterns. Wind students might pat hands on their thighs (personal percussion instruments) to duplicate the percussion sticking. Percussionists can then, in turn, play these rudiments on the snare drum, while the other percussionists continue working on drum pads.

When introducing the tied note, have students sing or "sizzle (sss)" the rhythm to be sure that the full duration of the note is understood (sound must continue until the beginning of the next note or rest). If this is reinforced at this early stage, there will be fewer problems with tied notes in the future.

Teachers are reminded of the "Pass-Off Round" suggestions (*Teaching Music through Performance in Beginning Band, Vol.2*, pp. 16-18) and rubrics for individual performance progress (Farrell, pp. 40-41) for assessing student learning.

*Tips for Teaching Success*

Refer to TMP, Vol.2 (p. 41) for an exercise involving long tones in the daily routine. Brass alternate between their instrument and mouthpiece only with woodwinds providing the reference pitch throughout. Percussion use multiple bounce rolls and eighth notes (mallet instruments).

When the first "march" style exercises have been studied in the method book (i.e., *Standard of Excellence*, p. 11, #39), it is appropriate to begin work on a full band arrangement such as "Crown Point March" (Bruce Pearson) that uses notes and rhythms already learned. It is important that students learn appropriate articulation and separation of notes as they play these first marches. This is also an excellent opportunity to work on dynamic contrasts.

Numerous folk song excerpts appear in method books at this level. Consider strategies such as the following for these exercises

- Have students sing the excerpt (using words or syllables). Emphasize correct phrasing, intonation, and breathing together as students sing.
- Add rhythmic patterns on personal percussion instruments as various instrument sections play the melodic line.
- With students, create an extended version of the folk song exercise.

## **MUSIC LITERACY COMPONENT**

Students should complete written exercises that are based on musical “building blocks” for the unit. In addition, when students notate their compositions, they increase their understanding of written notation while undertaking “authentic” music experiences.



Focus needs to be placed, at this early stage, on students’ understanding of key signatures and their relationship to the music that the students are playing. Numerous short, written exercises in the key signatures that they are using can help. In addition, teachers might regularly display a key and have students write or say the names of the notes in that key and then play the major scale.

As suggested previously, it is important to regularly incorporate written activities into classes. Sometimes, it might be effective to devote 20 minutes to music literacy once per week (e.g., when students first encounter writing scales with and without key signatures). In other cases, music writing might occur as an aspect of a composition task.

## **EAR TRAINING/IMPROVISATION COMPONENT**

In addition to the activities listed for Unit 1, the following are suggested

- Try to Remember (Agrell, p. 61)
- Round Robin (Agrell, p. 64)
- Name Game (Agrell, p.232)
- Working with the first five notes of the B-flat concert scale, teachers might sing or play a short melodic motif and ask students to repeat what they heard.
- Back and Forth (Agrell, p. 80). Note: This activity incorporates two pitches into the Hand Skills and Drills activity outlined on p. 78 (Agrell).
- Follow That Rhythm (Agrell, p. 97)

## COMPOSITION COMPONENT

Teachers are encouraged to refer to the suggestions made in Unit 1 of this module. Additional possibilities for Unit 2 include (without being limited to):

- Students might compose and notate an 8-bar melody for their own instrument in  $\frac{2}{4}$  meter, using the first five notes of the B-flat concert scale.
- Students can compose and notate a rhythm section solo to include in one of their marches.
- Students can compose an 8-bar melody “in the style of” a folk song they have played, using similar rhythms and the same tonality.
- Students who are advanced might be challenged to compose a countermelody or bass line to be played with a folk song excerpt in the method book.



When compositions are presented, group discussion or individual reflection about what students were trying to accomplish, what was successful, and what they would like to try next can provide rich formative assessment opportunities.

## ACTIVE LISTENING COMPONENT



This might be an excellent opportunity to have students listen to two different arrangements of a folk song, preferably one that they are playing themselves. They can discuss the style, instrumentation, etc. of each arrangement, decide which one they prefer and explain one or two reasons for their decision.

As students are working on their first march, take the opportunity to have them listen to a march played by a top-notch concert band. Discuss together

- what the predominant characteristics of the march style are
- what about the playing works so well (e.g., beautiful sound, crisp style, tight rhythm, exciting spirit, effective dynamic contrasts, great trumpet solo, full bass line)
- what they have heard that they might apply to the march that they are learning
- what they have heard that they will use to inform their own individual playing

## CUMULATIVE LEARNING ACTIVITY



An informal class recital might be planned during which all students are invited to play or sing (either solos or small groups) their own versions of a folk song excerpt they have learned. Their versions might

- be in a different meter than the original
- be in g minor rather than B-flat concert major
- have added eighth notes
- include contrasting dynamics
- be played as a round

Those listening can identify what musical elements had been altered in each version. In addition, this recital can provide an excellent opportunity to talk about recital etiquette.

# Unit 3: Pentatonic Play

## (5 hours)

### Key Concepts/Musical Building Blocks

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- E-flat concert scale and arpeggio (rote)
- B-flat and E-flat pentatonic scales
- eighth notes and rests
- paradiddle
- anacrusis
- march (e.g., “Crown Point March” by Bruce Pearson for full band)

Method book references are *Standard of Excellence*: pp. 10-12 and *Essential Elements*: pp. 8-9.

### Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Process

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#### BASIC SKILLS COMPONENT

Introduce the E-flat concert scale and arpeggio (in most cases, split octaves except for French horn). Have students play the scale and arpeggio by rote using whole notes and various rhythmic patterns that they are working with in method book exercises. Be sure to include rhythmic patterns found in any time signatures they have encountered.

#### *Tips for Teaching Success*

“In-tune-ness is a personal concept. The key is listening – listening is a big word. At the beginning, have the kids play the pitch, sing it (till they can sing it in tune), play it, ask them to sound it in their head, sing it, play it (in tune). Start this right from the beginning.

Once they can sing it in tune, they can play it in tune. The kids ‘lock in’ the pitch in their heads.”

Ron MacKay, February 5, 2008

Have percussionists learn the paradiddle on drum pads, using correct sticking patterns. Wind students might pat hands on their thighs (personal percussion instruments) to duplicate the percussion sticking. As suggested in Unit 2, percussionists can then, in turn, play rudiments on the snare drum, while the other percussionists continue working on drum pads.

When introducing the slur, refer to slurred notes that students played by rote in Module 1.

As notated eighth notes are introduced in method book exercises, organize the players into three groups. Group 1 keeps the quarter note beat on personal percussion instruments, Group 2 says a repeated eighth note pattern, using rhythmic syllables, and Group 3 plays the notated method book exercise. This

reinforces students' understanding of the relationship between the eighth note and previously learned note values. Use rhythm flash cards, with accompaniment, to further increase understanding of note and rest values.

Excerpts from marches that are found in the method book should be considered in connection with a full band march arrangement that students are working on (e.g., "Crown Point March"). A Venn diagram can be developed as a class to note similarities and differences between the two pieces.

*Tips for Teaching Success*

Make sure that clarinet exercises for "crossing the break" and brass lip slurs are incorporated into classes at least once per week. Other students in the class can play long tones or multiple bounce rolls simultaneously with each of the above (i.e., while clarinets are slurring a written B-flat to F to B-flat, remaining winds can play a long tone on A-flat concert. This long tone also provides a good point of reference for intonation on the upper clarinet note.)

Introduce the pentatonic scale (B-flat, C, E-flat, F, G). Have students play the scale by rote. Talk with them about the unique characteristics of this scale, including its lack of a strong tonic or "home base". This scale will be used in improvisation/composition activities in this unit. The pentatonic scale beginning on E-flat can also be introduced at this time.

## **MUSIC LITERACY COMPONENT**

Refer to Unit 2 and continue to reinforce learning about key signatures.

Have students notate the rhythmic and melodic motifs considered for the Five Smooth Notes composition project in this unit. They might also create a graphic score for a few bars of the composition.

## **EAR TRAINING/IMPROVISATION COMPONENT**

In addition to the activities listed for Units 1 and 2, the following are suggested

- Dark Music (Agrell, p. 73)
- One-Measure Rhythm Invention (Agrell, p. 92)
- Foot Music (Agrell, p. 93)
- Accent Solo (Agrell, p. 105) Note: This rhythm game, as well as Foot Music, can provide lots of fun and memorable rhythmic learning!
- Play or sing three- or four-note melodic motifs based on the pentatonic scale that students have learned and have them repeat the motif (a call-and-response activity). Students can also be soloists, using motifs that they have devised.

### *Tips for Teaching Success*

It might be useful to, from time to time, consider a planned or completed class in view of a checklist:

- Did I include at least one sight-reading exercise?
- Did I include at least one rhythmic exercise?
- Did I include at least one ear training/improvisation activity?
- Did I reinforce proper playing posture and breathing?
- Did I provide at least one opportunity for focused listening?
- Did I include at least one activity to increase motivation?
- Did I emphasize “mastery” level for all exercises?
- Were all exercises and activities directly linked to basic concepts of the unit and previous units?
- Did I include activities that address learning in all the outcomes?

This is only a sample, but a checklist such as this can provide a “friendly reminder” of components that may have been missed.

## **ACTIVE LISTENING COMPONENT**



This would be an excellent opportunity to have students listen to a recorded piece based on a pentatonic scale (e.g., Korean folk song “Ahrirang”). Discuss the character of the pentatonic music and have students consider discoveries as they work on their class pentatonic composition.

Together, listen to a short piece from traditional repertoire style played by a fine concert band (e.g., *Holst Suite in E-flat*, 1<sup>st</sup> movement.). Focus on balance – bottom to top - and listen especially for the bass voice. Note with students how this voice is the anchor and foundation for the ensemble. Listen again, noting how all voices must “listen down” to the bass voice. It would also be a super chance to listen for the balance of the winds and the percussion section.

## COMPOSITION COMPONENT/CUMULATIVE LEARNING ACTIVITY

### Five Smooth Notes

As a unit project, have students create a class composition in a legato style using the notes of the pentatonic scale that they have learned. After some experimentation with the pentatonic scale, decide on the parameters for their work. Decisions need to be made about, for example

- one-bar rhythmic motifs to be used (e.g., half note and two quarter notes, four eighths and two quarter rests)
- melodic idea to be at the centre (a four-bar phrase might work well)
- how many groups of players/voices there will be (3 or 4 voices might be effective)
- whether each group/voice will use only one rhythmic motif
- what the starting and ending notes will be
- whether a canonic device will be used
- whether each group/voice needs to rest for a given length of time (remember that silence is often as important as sound)
- how many measures there will be in total
- what the dynamics map will be
- how repetition and contrast will be achieved

Throughout the composing process, encourage students to listen to what they are doing and make decisions about their creative work. “Listening squads” can work effectively for this. When their composition is completed, decide on a title, and record a performance. This piece can be a highlight of their next concert.

Teachers might prefer to organize students in small groups for this composition project and have ensembles play their composition for the remainder of the class and, later, during a band concert.



With students, at the outset of the project, create a rubric for assessing the finished composition considering guidelines that have been established. In addition, students can reflect on what they learned during the composition process. A form such as the “Self-Evaluation Form for Drama” found in *Drama 10 and 11* (Nova Scotia, 1999, p. 109) can be adapted for this reflection. One possible adaptation is provided.



## Five Smooth Stones Student Reflection/Self-Assessment

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

	Working on It	Almost There	Nailed It
I contributed my ideas.			
I positively encouraged others in the group during the project.			
I helped to solve problems.			
I concentrated while playing our composition.			
I took risks by trying musical ideas that were new to me.			

What did I contribute to the Five Smooth Notes project?

What was the most interesting thing about what I did?

What was the most successful aspect of the group's work?

What problem(s) did I/we have to solve while working and how did I/we solve them?

What did I learn from this project? How might I use this in my next musical project or in other activities?

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### *Tips for Teaching Success*

Consider the Five Smooth Stones activity considering the whole list of curriculum outcomes. Note how many of the outcomes are addressed through a comprehensive activity such as this! It is very helpful to keep all the outcomes in mind as activities are designed.

# Unit 4: E-flat Concert and More

## (5 hours)

### Key Concepts/Musical Building Blocks

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- E-flat concert scale and arpeggio
- c natural minor scale and arpeggio (rote)
- dotted half note
- dotted quarter note (when required for repertoire)
- $\frac{3}{4}$  meter
- introducing tympani
- key Signature
- *f, p*
- Sample repertoire: “Anasazi”, John Edmondson

Method book references are *Standard of Excellence*: pp. 16-18 and *Essential Elements*: pp. 15-17.

### Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Process

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#### BASIC SKILLS COMPONENT

Once students have reviewed the E-flat concert scale, have them find the note on which the relative minor begins. Play c natural minor by rote. Discuss the differences in the two scales/tonalities, including colour/mood. Also review B-flat concert and g minor scales. Be sure to include *legato*, *staccato*, slurred, and two-tongued-two-slurred articulation patterns in the scale study.

Consider returning to the method book pages that have exercises that use the first five notes of the B-flat concert scale. Review solfege syllables of the scale. Have students play the exercise as written, sing it using solfege syllables, and then play it again in the key of E-flat concert.

*Tips for Teaching Success*

Continue to emphasize the importance of beautiful sound. Chapter 6: Tone Quality (Jagow, pp. 34-45) is recommended reading. It includes an analysis of factors affecting tone quality, suggested exercises, and an important section on long tones.

“Once students get a basic sound, they have to hear what that instrument sounds like when it’s played well. Take any opportunity you can for them to hear good playing! Or bring someone in. Once I brought a wonderful musician in to do a workshop and the kids said, “He wasn’t a very nice person”. I said, “It doesn’t matter whether you like him or not. Remember what he sounded like.”

Ron MacKay, Feb.24, 2008

When introducing  $\frac{3}{4}$  meter, have students walk a  $\frac{3}{4}$  pattern either on the spot or moving in a circle (right forward or to the right, left together, right together; left backward or to the left, right together, left together). RLR, LRL. They can then count (1-2-3) out loud as they move. You might also have students clap on each down beat. This can be a valuable learning experience for internalizing an understanding  $\frac{3}{4}$  meter.

*Tips for Teaching Success*

As students are working with the dotted half note for the first time, be sure to reinforce that the note lasts for a full, three quarter notes (until the beginning of the next note). Some teachers find it effective to have the students think of the dotted half as equivalent to three tied quarter notes. Another learning strategy is to have one group of students play a steady eighth note pattern (either on a given pitch or on personal percussion instruments) while the other group plays a dotted half note and then switch roles.

Once *f* and *p* have been introduced in written exercises, be sure to always insist on the dynamic contrast indicated. This is another time when having a “listening squad” of three or four students who stand to one side and listen while the class plays can be very effective.

A work for full band that can be introduced at this point is “Anasazi” (John Edmondson). The g minor “feel”, contrasting dynamics, and legato style make it an excellent repertoire addition. This piece also provides a “jumping off point” for exploring Indigenous music.

*Tips for Teaching Success*

To both challenge and motivate low brass players, it is important that early full band repertoire contain at least some opportunities for these instruments to play a melodic line. It might be necessary to re-score in some cases. For example, bars 3-11 in “Anasazi” might be rescored to feature trumpets and low brass playing the melody in octaves (while remaining winds rest for 8 bars or play the rhythmic ostinato on personal percussion instruments).

## **MUSIC LITERACY COMPONENT**

Written exercises for this unit should include work in  $\frac{3}{4}$  meter and naming notes (with accidentals) in passages that have a key signature. At this time, students might also reinforce their knowledge of the correct placement of accidentals in key signatures that appear in their repertoire and write scales that they know with and without key signatures.

## **EAR TRAINING/IMPROVISATION COMPONENT**

Teachers are encouraged to revisit improvisation games from previous units that students have particularly enjoyed. Often it is possible to make a slight variation in the original exercise to add interest.

Continue the expectation that students regularly sing exercises before playing them. There should be at least one opportunity for singing during each class. In addition, playing only the rhythm of a given exercise or musical excerpt while saying counting syllables should be a strategy that is incorporated regularly.

Refer to the Call-and-Response: Basic (Agrell, p. 167). This can be adapted so that players, in turn, play a one-measure motif beginning on E-flat concert. The motif is repeated by the whole group. Motifs can begin with only stepwise motion and then add leaps within the tonic triad.

As a departure from major/minor tonality, and to reinforce playing together rhythmically, consider including Follow That Rhythm (Agrell, p. 97) in a class.

Other activities recommended for this unit include Dynamics Map (Agrell, p. 109), Nothing Exceeds Like Excess (Agrell, p. 109), Wisps (Agrell, p. 109), and Ritual (Agrell, p. 248).

## ACTIVE LISTENING COMPONENT



The following ideas are suggestions that might weave well into this unit

- Have students listen to excerpts from three or four recorded pieces in  $\frac{3}{4}$  meter. Together, draw conclusions about the unique character of  $\frac{3}{4}$  and some of the types of pieces that use it. It might be interesting to discuss why  $\frac{3}{4}$  meter has been all but abandoned in contemporary popular music.
- This would also be a fine opportunity to listen to a short, recorded work that has contrasting *f* and *p* sections. It would be especially effective to use a piece played by a wind and percussion ensemble. Alternatively, or in addition, teachers might like to play a piece on their own instrument. Talk together about what dynamic contrasts add to a musical work.
- Have the students listen to an example of music of native Americans. Revisiting the questions for active listening suggested in Unit 1, challenge students to identify musical characteristics of the piece and identify links with *Anasazi*. What makes the music unique and powerful?

## CUMULATIVE LEARNING/ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY



Teachers might choose to design an activity that requires written response from students (a kind of “look how far we have come and what we hope to learn next” retrospective). Together, a thumbnail sketch of the unit can be reviewed. Students can then be asked, for example, to list individually the five most significant things that they have learned about music during this unit and identify two things that they hope to learn next, providing reasons for their choices. This activity might also be adapted/extended to a class discussion format, providing an opportunity to reinforce respect for various musical opinions.

In addition, an Individual Performance Self-Assessment: Instrumental (Farrell, p. 41) can be adapted, if necessary, and completed by each student.

# Unit 5: Review and Celebration

## (6 hours)

### Introduction

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This unit will provide a chance for students and teachers to consolidate, celebrate, and evaluate the learning that has taken place during this module. The various components that have been articulated in the first four units will all be included in the comprehensive project for this unit – a class concert. The processes of choosing what will be included, rehearsing, organizing the concert itself, and reflecting on successes and next steps will be as important as the product (i.e., the concert).

### Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Process

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The steps/considerations that are outlined below are meant to provide a guideline that teachers and students might adapt, as appropriate, to meet their own needs and those of their students.

#### Step 1: Outlining the Challenge

Review with students the various steps of the project. Make sure that they understand that this will be an exciting chance to bring together all that they have learned in this module and that they will be very much involved in the decision-making throughout.

#### Step 2: Where, When, Who, What

Decide when the concert will be held, what the title/theme will be (e.g., A Musical Fiesta, Music for Winter, Sevens Play) where (either the music room or another room in the school) and who will be invited to attend (e.g., parents and grandparents, senior citizens, one or two municipal councilors, local musicians or people in the music industry). Students might have ideas and should be encouraged to issue invitations. Establish a clear guideline re length (i.e., 30 minutes).

#### *Tips for Teaching Success*

Remember that as teachers and students work and play together, some of the most memorable learning moments occur when spontaneous, creative ideas are nurtured and developed. Curriculum documents and detailed lesson plans should not prevent these special learning experiences from happening!

Indeed, when teachers and students bring their own creative ideas to their music learning, curriculum documents and lesson plans are brought to life.

### **Step 3: Suggestions for Program Inclusions**

- Beginning and closing short pieces that feature all players (full band arrangements or arrangements of pieces found in the method book)
- Solos/duets/trios/quartets playing method book exercises of choice (with accompaniment as desired)
  - every musician in the class should participate in at least one of the small ensemble numbers
- Two to three selected activities from Improvisation Games (either whole class or small groups)

Additional possibilities include

- the school principal (or a parent or radio station host or a high school musician, etc.) can be asked to emcee the concert
- a local professional musician can be invited to play a short number as part of the program and provide feedback to the students about their performance

### **Step 4: Choosing the Repertoire**

Collaborate with students to determine the repertoire for the opening and closing numbers. Students and teacher together should make decisions about what other numbers will be included, working for a balanced representation of what they have learned and the pieces of which they are most proud. In the case of improvisation exercises, students might choose ones that they enjoyed the most or that they thought were the “coolest” or “out there”. Group decisions should be made, as well, about concert order, considering what would be most enjoyable for the audience and what would be most effective musically.

It is suggested that final decisions re repertoire be made in the second hour of the unit, so that the third and fourth hours can be used to refine and polish.

## Step 5: Designing an Assessment Rubric



Together, agree on an assessment tool that will be used for evaluation following the concert, keeping in mind that both the concert and the preparation process should be included. Music Class Critique (Farrell, p. 47) can be easily adapted to become \_\_\_\_\_ (Concert Title) Critique. Possible additions to this critique form can include comments on

- What was strongest about our preparation for the concert as a class?
- What can we have done better during preparation?
- What was I proudest about in my own preparation?
- What was the most magical musical moment during the concert?
- What was my biggest surprise during this whole project?

Students might be encouraged to record their comments and submit them on a CD. This would be a fine option for students who have difficulty writing.

## Step 6: Rehearse and Refine

It is suggested that two hours be used to rehearse the full and small ensemble numbers. Appropriate concert deportment (including a routine for bowing) should be reviewed. During the class prior to the concert, a dress rehearsal should be held, and students should assume responsibilities for such things as

- moving equipment or stands as necessary
- welcoming guests when they arrive
- introducing each of the small ensemble numbers
- thanking guests prior to the final number

It might be useful to prepare a concert checklist and review it with the students. This is also an excellent time to stress the responsibility that students have for working at home to make sure that their own playing during the concert will be “at a mastery level”.

## Step 7: The Concert

During the program, teachers should make brief comments about the purpose of the concert, the preparation process, the improvisation pieces, etc. so that audience members who may not be musicians themselves are able to understand the context of what they will hear.

If possible, have the video record the program.



## Step 8: Review, Celebration, and Evaluation

During the final class of the unit, take an opportunity to talk together about the concert. If possible, view the video recording of the program. Review plans that were made and identify bravos and points for improvement. Have students complete the evaluation tools that were agreed upon.

Teachers might also like to increase student motivation by giving “hints” about what new things they will be learning during the next module.

As part of the beginning or closing minutes of each of the classes in this unit prior to the concert itself, teachers should be sure to include brief sight-reading exercises that incorporate the melodic and rhythmic building blocks of this module.

### *Tips for Teaching Success*

“You have to get them to want to do their best ALL the time. This means the conductor too. Right from the beginning.”

Ron MacKay, February 5, 2008

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