

Band Instruments: Module 3

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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 3

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

Overview

Rationale

This module is designed to build on learning experiences in Modules 1 and 2. Students will continue developing their playing technique, composing, and arranging, improvisation, ear training, and music literacy activities. They will also explore theme and variation form and syncopated rhythms. Students will experience focused, active listening to their own music and that of others. They will further their involvement with quality, full band repertoire (e.g., “Silly Samba”, “African Folk Trilogy”, and “A Song for Friends”) and will prepare and present a Chamber Music Festival featuring small ensemble pieces that they have composed/arranged.



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

- accents
- phrasing
- articulation- Tonguing and slurring
- march style
- Latin rhythms/syncopation
- F concert
- d minor (rote)
- sixteenth note rhythms
- paradiddle
- phrasing
- sustained legato style
- dotted quarter and eighth notes
- d minor
- B-Flat chromatic scale
- theme and variation form
- blend and balance
- small ensemble playing skills
- chamber music
- building a recital program
- music management
- community connections



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

As previously suggested, this module presumes that students are already familiar with the basic skills, concepts, and musical attitudes introduced in the first two modules. They will have been actively involved in two to three musical presentations.

Full band repertoire that is suggested in this module is directly related to concepts that have been a focus during regular class time and is meant to give students an opportunity to apply their musical learning. It is strongly recommended that repertoire *never* involve notes and rhythms with which the students are unfamiliar.

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.
- Learners will implement appropriate technique.

Unit 1: Exploring Articulation and Phrasing

(6 hours)

Introduction

As in Module 2, it is intended that the various components be inter-related and based on the key concepts/basic musical “building blocks” of each unit, so that they will provide a framework for exciting and comprehensive learning experiences for young musicians. In the case of this unit, an effort has been made to “centre” learning experiences around articulation (especially accents), phrasing, Latin, and march styles.

Key Concepts/Musical Building Blocks

- accents
- phrasing
- articulation: tonguing and slurring
- March style
- introduction to Latin rhythms/syncopation

Method book references are *Standard of Excellence*: pp. 19-21 and *Essential Elements*: pp. 18-20.

Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Process

BASIC SKILLS COMPONENT

Teaching Music through Performance in Beginning Band, Vol. 1 (Miles, pp. 14-26) contains an excellent “snapshot” of basic goals and objectives for beginning students regarding tone quality, playing fundamentals, skill development, literature, ear training, etc. A review of these pages can provide a valuable reminder/reinforcement when planning the lessons in this module.

It is also strongly recommended that teachers read *Developing the Complete Band Program* (pp. 118-122), for a wonderful outline of considerations for “encouraging the heart” - motivating students and themselves. The Encouragement Index on pp. 121-122 provides a valuable checklist in this regard.

Tips for Teaching Success

“How do you motivate kids to want to play really well? You have to spend time with the musical answers, not just the technical answers. Try to work more on the musical side of things. I remember a 1968 clinic at Waterloo Music. About rehearsing a band based strictly on the technical points and sending it out as a musical number – it won’t happen. . . It’s a matter again of using the ears. It’s the head AND the heart. And that’s the part you miss when you just deal with what’s on the page. The band can be playing really well technically, but...”

Ron MacKay, March 22, 2008

Teaching Music through Performance in Beginning Band, Vol. 2 (Miles, pp. 16-18) “Pass-Off Round” with variations and *Tools for Powerful Student Evaluation* (Farrell, pp. 40-41), both of which have been recommended in Module 2, can be adapted for use at this level as well.

Rhythmic Concepts

- Continue to use rhythm flash cards, personal percussion instruments, verbalizing the rhythm patterns while the beat is being sounded, etc. to ensure that students really understand rhythmic fundamentals.
- “Eight-Count Rhythm Machine” (*Improvisation for Classical Musicians*, p. 85) is an excellent, fun game for physically experiencing eighths and quarter notes.
- When working on accents, encourage students to create their own accent patterns in method book exercises and scales. Note which accent patterns create syncopated passages.
- Create exercises for varying durations of sound and silence. (Refer to Jagow, p. 103)
- Refer to *Teaching Music Through Performance in Beginning Band, Vol. 2* (pp. 27-31) for suggestions for reinforcing sound and silence within a rhythmic pattern, using Offenbach’s “Can Can” and Grieg’s “In the Hall of the Mountain King”. These ideas can easily be adapted so that they use full band repertoire that students are learning. Students can place squares and triangles under notes in their own parts and then the full class can read and chant the rhythms.
- As percussion students are working with rhythmic patterns in method book exercises (especially those in Latin excerpts), involve all students in playing the patterns on personal percussion instruments.

Phrasing Concepts

- Regularly have students sing method book exercises or known songs and make decisions about phrasing. Demonstrate for them two or three different ways of phrasing an exercise. Discuss which version is most successful musically. Demonstrate effective phrasing for them on your chosen instrument.
- Jagow (p. 111) states that a musical phrase can be approached through the concept of motion that provides a connection between music and e-motion.
- Encourage students to write and play their own musical phrases and question-and-answer sequences.

- When working on full band repertoire, involve all students in finding phrasing solutions. For example, when working on “Silly Samba”, have all band members consider the phrasing for the clarinet line that begins on the pick-up to bar 17 and appears later for the trumpets at the pick-up to bar 41 (four bar phrases that finish at the end of beat 3). They might play together an ascending B-Flat concert scale using the quarter-dotted half rhythm of the first phrase, one pitch per note, breathe, and play the descending scale using the same rhythm.
- Invite a “listening squad” (3-4 students) to listen to the class as they play a passage and comment on whether the phrasing was effective or how it can be improved.
- Return to exercises done previously in the method book and replay them, focusing on phrasing. If students become conscious of the importance of phrasing at this early stage, they will naturally incorporate it in their playing.

Tips for Teaching Success

“Developing the Complete Band Program” (Jagow, pp. 214-216) provides valuable considerations re selecting repertoire for beginning band, including “food for thought” that should not be missed.

Don’t give the students pieces that are too hard for them. Choose music that is appropriate – never so hard that they can’t concentrate on listening. The first time that they play through a piece, they need to be able to play 60% of it. If less, then the piece is too hard.”

Ron MacKay, February 2, 2008

Articulation Concepts

- Encourage students to play scales and simple melodic passages (e.g. do-re-mi-fa-so-fa-mi-re-do) in known keys (B-Flat, E-Flat concert, g minor, c Minor) or the pentatonic scale, using various articulation patterns (two slurred – two tongued, two tongued - two slurred), always using a supported air stream.
- Have students, individually or in pairs, add accents to scales and arpeggios and perform them. The rest of the class can identify where the accents have been added.
- Using appropriate excerpts from method book exercises or full band repertoire that have a Latin flavour, have all students explore accenting patterns that create syncopation. They can compare the syncopated patterns to patterns found in a march that they are studying. Note the importance in both patterns of staccato treatment of unaccented notes.
- Using “Silly Samba” as a focus, consider the effectiveness of precise articulation. Have all students work on detached quarters as they appear in the bass line, and on the short-short-long-short eighth note figure that appears for upper woodwinds and brass.

Tips for Teaching Success

“When you are working with, for example, 200 kids or more – that’s a lot. But if you get things established in your own mind and the kids’ minds in the first couple of years, then you develop all the things they need to have by the time they’re 14 years old.

I tell students that a grade of B in music means that in 100 notes, you only get 15 of them wrong.”

Ron MacKay Feb. 24, 2008

Weekly sight-reading activities (either playing or singing) can be based on method book exercises that have not been played in class. Teachers might like to establish a sight-reading procedure such as the following

- Have students spend a given length of time (i.e., 1 minute) examining the exercise, looking for rhythms that might need care, checking key signatures and accidentals, checking the musical road map (repeats, 1st endings, etc.), checking dynamic and articulation markings.
- Without any “prompts”, have students play the exercise.
- If there are major problems, ask students to focus on those sections and think about what might not have been correct in the first playing.
- Have students play the exercise a second time.
- Ask what improvements were made, whether there are still things that caused problems.
- Have students complete a quick self-assessment (a simple rating scale of 1-5 would work) of their own success with the activity and identify specific things that caused them problems.
- Observe whether there are notation concepts that need to be re-addressed and be sure to include those same concepts in the next sight-reading activity.

Tips for Teaching Success

Refer to *Teaching Music Through Performance in Beginning Band, Vol. 2* (p. 135) for a challenging breath support “game” involving holding a piece of toilet paper against the wall by blowing a supported air stream at it.

MUSIC LITERACY COMPONENT

Written exercises that are based on key concepts introduced/reinforced in method book exercises and repertoire should continue to be incorporated in class activities on a regular basis and their connection with what students are playing should always be emphasized. Thus, in this unit, writing activities should focus on writing in key signatures that appear in method book exercises and repertoire, using rhythm patterns, articulation marks, etc. that students are interpreting when they play. It is recognized that as students become comfortable with manipulating written notation tools, they become more confident interpreting notation that they encounter as players and singers.

As suggested in Module 2, teachers are encouraged to select exercises/sheets that are best suited for their students and school setting. A recommended resource is the online theory program available from the Canadian Band Association.

Because students are now encountering exercises and repertoire in various keys, it is recommended that emphasis be placed on being able to correctly name notes in each key signature. Method book exercises and full band repertoire can be used for this aspect of learning.

EAR TRAINING/IMPROVISATION COMPONENT

This component must continue to play an important role in *Band Instruments* classes. Suggested activities for this unit include

- Eight-Count Rhythm Machine (Agrell, p. 85)
- Quarters to Two (Agrell, p. 91)
- Rhythm Machine (Agrell, p. 99)
- Accent Solo (Agrell, p. 105)
- Accents I and IV (Agrell, p. 106)
- Scale Accents (Agrell, p. 107)
- Rainbow Scales (Agrell, p. 113)
- Warm-Up/Connections (Agrell, p. 73)
- Improvisation activities from previous modules
- Have students notate two-bar rhythm patterns that are played or sung and mark accented notes
- Play for students, short melodic passages in B-Flat Concert or E-Flat Concert that have key signature “errors”. Have them identify the incorrect notes and suggest what needs to be done to correct the error (raise/lower the note in question).

Note that some of Agrell’s activities can be used for home practice.

Tips for Teaching Success

Teaching Music Through Performance in Beginning Band (pp. 65-71) outlines an excellent “by ear” demo/echo melody exercise for “Chant and Celebration” (Feldstein and O’Reilly) that can be effectively adapted for method book exercises or full band repertoire.

COMPOSITION COMPONENT

As explained in previous modules, 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)

- Have students compose two four-bar phrases in 5 meter that are “question and answer”, using the first five or six notes of one of the keys with which they are familiar. The first two bars of each

phrase should be identical. In some cases, teachers might like to provide the first two bars and have students complete the phrases.

- Students can then rewrite the same composition in another key.
- Working in groups of two and using extended techniques and personal percussion, invite students to compose musical conversations and notate them using graphic notation. They might like to agree in advance on the topic/mood/resolution of the exchange. For example, the musical conversation can be excited – about skateboarding after school; angry – a disagreement about chores; sad – summer holidays being over.
- Using a method book exercise or repertoire excerpt, have students change the rhythms and accent patterns and rewrite the passage.
- Organizing students in groups of three to four, have them compose a bizarre march using extended techniques and personal percussion. The march might be titled Crocs’ March, March of the Hippos, or March of the Knives and Forks. Parameters for the composition might include
 - exactly 30 seconds in length
 - must contain an “oom-pah” figure
 - must have march-style rhythms
 - When the marches are performed for the class, members of each ensemble can explain the musical decisions that they made. Class members can ask questions and comment constructively on the success of the composition (e.g., “The “oompah” figure really worked well” or “ The music didn’t seem to reflect the title of the march – marching hippos would have to sound heavy. Perhaps use longer notes instead of staccato?”)
 - *Tools for Powerful Student Evaluation* (Farrell, pp. 87) provides a Music Class/Group Work Reflection that can be effectively adapted for this project. Members of each group can note what positive things their group had accomplished (e.g., “We created a piece that was exactly 30 seconds in length” or “We used a great march-style rhythm from a march in our method book”) and wishes/concerns (“Another 30 minutes would have given us more time to polish our march”).

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 of marches by concert bands
- recordings that demonstrate beautiful tone for individual wind and percussion instruments
- examples of pieces in a Latin style (video clip of Latin dancing, especially the samba, provides another option)

- recordings of pieces that demonstrate use of accents to heighten rhythmic energy

It is critical that students learn to listen actively to themselves and others while they are playing, in class and during rehearsal, so that they become confident musical decision-makers rather than players who must have the teacher or conductor tell them what worked or did not work. *Developing the Complete Band Program* (p. 107) provides questions such as

- “At what dynamic level were we just playing?”
- “What instrument voice released the latest on the chord we just played?”
- “What instruments have the melody at bar 68?”
- “What other instruments are playing the same part that you have at bar 124?”

It is strongly recommended that teachers refer to the sample questions in the resource noted above and plan to include similar questions during classes and rehearsals.

Tips for Teaching Success (Repeat from Module 2)

Learning journals provide an excellent tool for self- and teacher assessment. It might be effective to have a regular time in the schedule (e.g. 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



As noted in Module 2, 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" can also play 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 suggested "bizarre march" activity (composition component) might work well as a culmination for this unit.

Another option is for students to choose two or three longer exercise(s) from the method book or a full band repertoire excerpt that has four-bar phrases. It might be especially effective to choose either march or Latin-style numbers.

- Have students, working in groups of two to three, choose one of the exercises and add accents and contrasting dynamics to heighten the musical impact. They might also like to choose a new title for their arrangement.
- Provide a short period of time (i.e., 5 minutes) for groups to rehearse their selection.
- As each group performs, the other students consider where the accents have been added and whether the dynamic contrasts are obvious. The musical/emotional impact of these should also be considered.
- If possible, record the performances so that students can refer to them during an assessment activity.
- Self-, peer, and teacher assessment should focus on the accents and dynamics requirements of the activity.
- Having talked a bit about the origins of the steel drum band and played an excerpt of the music, invite students, working in groups of two to four, to compose a Minute Latin Dance in 4 meter (rather than a minute waltz!). Challenge them to use only "found" percussion sounds and a simple, repetitive vocal line. The compositions can be prepared, "choreographed" and presented to the whole class.



As an optional extension for this unit, if students showed interest in the Latin-style pieces introduced, consider having them learn a short Latin dance routine and include it with the performance of the piece. One of the students, another teacher, or a parent might be able to assist with the dance routine.

Tips for Teaching Success

Effective practice habits must be established at this early stage. Students need to be encouraged to identify their own goals, explain what they have accomplished when they play outside class time, and know what they need to work on next time. These goals and objectives can be recorded in their practice journals. *Developing the Complete Band Program* (Chapter 35, pp. 253-259) gives excellent suggestions about how to practice, including a “Musical Muffins Recipe” (A Beginning Instrumental Practice Plan) that can be used/adapted for students at this level.

A variety of “external motivations” exist for encouraging private practice. However, the goal must be “internal motivation” – students wanting to play in order to achieve specific goals that have been identified. Ideally, young players need to work on what **they** want to do better, rather than have as a goal a certain number of minutes per day. When these specific goals are identified and achieved, students’ confidence as musicians will gradually grow.

Unit 2: Introducing F Concert, Sixteenth Note Rhythms (7 hours)

Key Concepts/Musical Building Blocks

- F concert
- d minor (rote)
- sixteenth note rhythms
- paradiddle
- phrasing
- sustained *legato* style

Method book references are *Standard of Excellence*: pp. 22-23 and *Essential Elements*: pp. 21-22.

Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Process

BASIC SKILLS COMPONENT

The following suggestions are provided for this component of the module:

- When working with F concert, attention should be paid to the second tetrachord, and students should be encouraged to listen, listen, listen. Teachers can demonstrate short simple passages in F Concert that include an incorrect E-Flat. Challenge students to identify the error. When students can hear the seventh degree of the scale in their heads, they will be much less apt to make key signature errors. Having students sing the tetrachord in tune (in a comfortable octave) is another valuable strategy.
- By playing the d minor scale and short phrases based on the first pentachord of the scale by rote, the e-natural will be reinforced.
- Choose method book exercises from previous pages that include the 7th degree of the E-Flat concert scale and challenge students to replay them in F concert.
- Gradually incorporate F concert scale and arpeggio in basic skills routines.
- Note that *Teaching Music Through Performance, Vol. 1* (p. 55) has a very useful outline of tuning problems that occur in F major.
- As percussionists are learning the paradiddle, have other students duplicate the rhythm and sticking patterns by slapping their thighs, or using a personal percussion instrument.
- With students, associate the various combinations of eighths and sixteenths with related words or phrases (e.g., two eighths = Big Mac; four sixteenths = quarter pounder; eighth plus two sixteenths = cheeseburger; two sixteenths plus eighth = apple pie). They can then have fun saying rhythm patterns together, emphasizing the consonants and stressing the first note in each group (a kind of rhythmic choral reading).
- Refer to *Developing the Complete Band Program* (Jagow, pp. 92-97) for valuable considerations regarding teaching duration of notes including various learning styles, counting systems, tempos that rush or drag, and the question of foot tapping.

- When working with repertoire that has several voices, each with its own rhythm patterns, have students sing their own part or verbalize the rhythm while a steady pulse is being sounded. One section might keep the pulse while another sings its musical line.

Tips for Teaching Success

Tips for keeping a steady beat

- “Think about how close a heartbeat is to a second. Heart beats keep us together. Instill the heartbeat. Students must feel the pulse – get the beat throughout their bodies. The pulse always comes back to the centre – the heart.
- Try watching a hockey game – 5 seconds until a player gets out of the penalty box. One thousand and 1, one thousand and 2, one thousand and 3, etc. See if you can know exactly when they get out. [I do this all the time. Try to keep those tips in my brain.]
- Tapping feet is just muscles in the legs. The pulse is in the heart and work goes on in the brain – the length of time of the beat.
- Have little games with pulse. It’s fun for the kids too.”

Ron MacKay, February 22, 2008

“Anasazi” (John Edmondson) is another excellent possibility for full band repertoire and is in g Minor. It can be used very effectively for work on intonation and blend in the Dorian mode and it presents numerous possibilities for links with other subject areas. Because it is not technically demanding, it can also be a fine vehicle for work with phrasing, dynamics, and beautiful ensemble sound. *Teaching Music Through Performance in Beginning Band* (pp. 128-131) provides analysis of and key considerations for this fine work.



As students are working on method book exercises and repertoire for this unit, they might complete a Student Self-Assessment such as the one found in *Tools for Powerful Student Evaluation* on page 89, using key concepts such as sixteenth note rhythms, sustained legato style, or paradiddle as their topics. This is another version of the Exit Card introduced in *Band Instruments Module 1*. Such open-ended assessment tools are invaluable for teacher planning and encourage students to identify themselves what they have learned and what they need to learn.

Tips for Teaching Success

Teaching Music Through Performance in Beginning Band (pp. 45-60) provides a valuable outline of important considerations for selecting repertoire for the young band. Ideas for concert programming are also included. Vol. 2 (pp. 62-65) also provides suggestions for concert band programming.

MUSIC LITERACY COMPONENT

The focus for this unit should be on working with newly introduced rhythms and with naming notes in the three key signatures that have now been encountered. Students might also become confident with correct placement of accidentals in each of those key signatures in both treble and bass clefs.

If music notation software is available, encourage students, working in like-instrument groups of two to three, to write a short passage in B-Flat concert and then transpose it to E-Flat and F Concert.

Encourage students to notate the rhythm of the melody of a popular song. This can be extended to having members of the class determine which song each student has used.

EAR TRAINING/IMPROVISATION COMPONENT

Suggested activities for this unit include

- One-Four-Five (Agrell, p. 58)
- Squiggle Quartet (Agrell, p. 59)
- Guess the Machine (Agrell, p. 60)
- Echo (Agrell, p. 63)
- Round Robin (Agrell, p. 64)
- Combination 1 (Agrell, p. 69)
- Rhythmic games from Unit 1 of this module
- Have students notate one bar rhythm patterns that include quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes
- Have students aurally identify melodic intervals of a tone and a semitone and sing them as well (e.g., sing a given note and the note a tone/semitone higher or lower). Note that visual reference to a keyboard chart can be helpful.
- Have students sight sing or repeat by rote simple stepwise melodies, using a syllable such as “oo” or “aah” and focus on shaping the legato phrase as they are singing. This activity can be included as “A Song for Friends” is being studied.

Tips for Teaching Success

Teaching Music Through Performance in Beginning Band (pp. 65-71) outlines an excellent “by ear” demo/echo melody exercise for “Chant and Celebration” (Feldstein and O’Reilly) that can be effectively adapted for method book exercises or full band repertoire.

COMPOSITION COMPONENT

Once again, it is important to include newly learned concepts in composition activities. Possibilities for this unit include such as

- Have students, working in groups of three to four, compose and present an 8-bar canon for personal percussion instruments that includes both eighth and sixteenth notes. Encourage them to use accents in their work.
- Challenge students to compose and perform an eight-bar lyrical melody in the key of F concert, beginning and ending on the tonic and using only stepwise motion. They might also include a rhythm pattern that is found in their full band repertoire.

ACTIVE LISTENING COMPONENT



Refer to Unit 1 for suggestions in this regard. In addition, have students listen to examples of legato playing by an expert soloist (e.g., “Down by the Sally Gardens” – James Galway, “Memories of Father Charles MacDonald” – Buddy McMaster), helping them to focus on how phrases are shaped and how beautiful tone quality is at the centre of the power of the music.

As students listen to examples of lyrical playing (especially at a slow or andante tempo), consider with them the emotional connection that the music makes with listeners. Ask them to suggest other lyrical selections with which they “connect” emotionally. Why is this style frequently used for music that expresses regret, longing, love for a child, etc.?

Once students have had an opportunity to become comfortable with the basic musical elements of “A Song for Friends” and to explore shaping of four-bar phrases, listen together to an arrangement of a Canadian folk song such as “Un Canadien Errant” or “Let Me Fish Off Cape Saint Mary’s”. Identify aspects of the performance that can inform their work with “A Song for Friends”.

If “Anasazi” is being studied, teachers might have students listen to one or two examples of the music of North American native peoples and discuss the musical connections between these and the Edmondson work.



Teachers might find it helpful to have students complete a weekly self-assessment form such as the one found in *Tools for Powerful Student Evaluation*, p. 92. Reflections such as these can also provide an excellent basis for full group class discussion.

CUMULATIVE LEARNING ACTIVITY



Teachers might like to consider recording the students playing a *legato*-style method book exercise or excerpt from something from the full-band repertoire such as “A Song for Friends” or “Anasazi” shortly after it has been introduced. After attention has been paid to phrasing, intonation, balance, shaping, dynamics, etc. record the piece once more. As students listen to both recorded versions, have them reflect on what progress they have made, what they have been able to communicate through their playing, and what they have learned that will inform their future experience with legato-style repertoire.

This might also be an excellent time to have students think about the most exciting and meaningful things they have learned since they first joined the *Band Instruments* class. They can identify two or three of these and identify two or three things that they are hoping to learn next.

Tips for Teaching Success

Ideas for working with percussion players

- “Follow the method book and do what it tells you.
- When I was first teaching, anyone who came around with a pair of sticks and could play a roll – I watched what they did. When they left, I would do it on my own.
- Encourage percussion students to take lessons. Get percussionists in to work with the kids.
- Add percussion parts to easy band arrangements. When we were playing for adjudication, I would write on the score “To enhance the piece, I added mallet parts. I hope that it was appropriate for the piece.” That way, it put me on the chopping block and not the kids.
- It’s not necessary to take piano first BUT I highly recommend it.”

Ron MacKay, February 24, 2008

Unit 3: Theme and Variation Form, Dotted Quarter (6 hours)

Key Concepts/Musical Building Blocks

- dotted quarter and eighth notes
- d minor
- B-Flat chromatic scale
- sixteenth note rhythms (continued)
- theme and variation form
- blend and balance

Method book references are *Standard of Excellence*: pp. 24-26 and *Essential Elements*: pp. 22-25.



Musical “road signs” that are introduced in method book exercises and repertoire are not mentioned individually in these modules. It is understood that they will be “deciphered” and added to students’ musical vocabulary as they appear.

Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Process

BASIC SKILLS COMPONENT

Considerations for the basic skills component of Unit 3 include:

When introducing the dotted quarter and eighth note rhythm pattern, involve students in clapping, using personal percussion instruments, using syllables, etc. to be sure that they really understand this pattern. Teachers may wish to have some students keep a steady eighth note pulse while the others play/clap/say the dotted quarter and eighth pattern. Alternatively, all students can keep the steady eighth note pulse with hands on thighs while saying or singing the pattern. When students seem comfortable with this exercise, add a quarter-two eighths pattern to the activity. The challenge is to find creative ways of reinforcing this rhythmic learning that will work for all students in the classroom.

Students should continue to work with rhythm patterns that include quarter notes and rests, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes. Use of rhythm flash cards is once again recommended, always having the patterns performed over the foundation of a basic pulse or keyboard accompaniment. When such patterns appear in percussion parts, having all students play them together will also reinforce the percussionists’ learning. The aim is for wind players to have these rhythms solidly in their “vocabulary” when they appear for the first time in method book exercises and full band repertoire.

Students will already be familiar with concepts of blend and balance in their ensemble playing. As they approach their method book exercises, scale and arpeggio skills, and full band repertoire, it is critical that

these concepts be part of the musical “agenda”. *Developing the Complete Band Program* (Jagow, Chapter 7, pp. 46-53) describes key considerations for ensemble balance and blend, including reference to Lisk’s “Logical Steps to Effective Balance and Blend” (p. 47) and a useful diagram and description re “pyramid balance” for young bands (pp. 47-49). The same resource (pp. 55-56) provides suggestions for volume and balance in higher, middle, and lower voices. Note that the “listening squad” strategy works effectively when working on ensemble dynamics.

Tips for Teaching Success

“What tips do I have for “tuning” chords in the full band? The 3rd of the chord is most often the key. Start with the instruments that have the 3rd of the chord. Have them play the root and refer to do-re-mi, sing it, so that they can hear the third. Then have them play it. If there are mistakes (often key signature), suggest that their fingers are doing something wrong. Get them to fix it. Add the root in the bass. This work strengthens their ears.”

Ron MacKay, February 5, 2008

All musicians know that effective blend and balance are impossible without good tone and intonation from each member of the ensemble. *Developing the Complete Band Program* (Jagow, Ch. 8, pp. 57-75) deals with a number of key considerations re tone quality such as tuning of ensemble chords, factors affecting pitch, best tuning notes for specific instruments, tuning the ensemble, intonation tendencies, and singing as a means of improving intonation.

Encourage students to become comfortable with the B-Flat chromatic scale, played using various articulation patterns. It can be effective to play 3-5 note ascending or descending chromatic passages for them on your chosen instrument and ask them to echo the phrase. Try to follow aural work on chromatic passages with written exercises in the method book that involve chromatic work.

Tips for Teaching Success

Tips re long note exercises

- “At the beginning, the embouchure and the breath are fundamental. Of course, they must be coordinated. A big breath is the most important thing. This long note exercise is very simple. It can be done from memory. Just use a whole. I start players with “Breathe in for 4 counts, breathe out for 8”. Then “Breathe in for 4, breathe out for 12.” Then, “in for 4, out for 16”. Etc.
- They can use only the mouthpiece or the horn as well. If a student can only get to the 12th count, just say “Fine. Try for 13 next week.” (I got these ideas from a 1st trumpet player with the New York Philharmonic.)
- This is harder for the flutes but tell them it will take longer but it will come. Ask them to try for one count longer tomorrow. Also ask them to listen to a flute recording at home to see how long the player goes without taking a breath. Ask if they can hear where the player took a breath. They will really listen.
- After they work on this exercise, then it’s controlled breath. I had a young clarinet player blow out for 90 counts. Try making it a challenge – who can hold a note longest by the end of the month. You can have the players start together and then put their hand up when they have to drop out.
- The exercise can be incorporated a hundred different ways in your playing.”

Ron MacKay, March 13, 2008

Search in the method book for examples of theme and variation form and have students play them and identify what was varied in each variation. Compile together a list of the musical elements that might be altered to create a variation on a theme. In addition, “African Folk Trilogy” (arr. Anne McGinty), involves simple melodies, the scoring of which is varied with each repeat. Involve students in plotting the scoring and identifying which instruments have the melody, countermelody, harmonic background, etc. for each section of the work.

Encourage students to sing two or four bar phrases from simple exercises that they have studied in the first several pages of the method book, using doh-re-mi syllables and then transpose them to the key of d minor and play them again.



Suggested repertoire includes “African Folk Trilogy”. It is rhythmically engaging and incorporates pitches and note values with which students are already familiar. It is thoroughly analyzed in *Teaching Music Through Performance in Beginning Band* and suggestions are made for related listening. This piece also presents rich possibilities for links with social studies learning and as part of African Heritage Month programming in the school community.

Tips for Teaching Success

Patricia O’Toole (*Shaping Sound Musicians*, 2003) refers to the “heart” of a piece – what attracts a conductor or player to it – and gives suggestions for considering the affective side of the music, rather than only the technical details. Teachers are encouraged to ask students questions such as

- What is this piece really about?
- What is at the “heart” of the piece?
- What do you want to communicate to the audience when you perform it?
- What do you want audience members to “get”?

When students feel a personal connection with the essence of the piece, their experience of it will be deeper and more meaningful and their musical involvement more rewarding.

Teachers are encouraged to provide students with relevant “background” information about their full band repertoire – to help students put the piece in a context that they understand. For example, if using “Court Festival” (arr. Bruce Pearson), teachers might talk briefly about the European Renaissance nobility, show drawings of period dress, describe some of the kinds of events, dances and games that might accompany a gathering of nobility during this era. They might also ask students to speculate about how a march written for nobles clad in Renaissance finery might be different from a football march or a military march. What would the purpose of this march really have been?

MUSIC LITERACY COMPONENT

The emphasis on music literacy in this unit should be on exercises related to the dotted quarter-eighth note pattern and on chromatic concepts such as writing and identifying semitones, identifying enharmonic equivalents on a keyboard diagram, etc.

Students might also be asked to transpose simple melodic phrases in F major (concert) to the key of D minor (concert).

Students can be challenged to “decipher” a melodic passage that contains a number of “road map” signs (e.g., D.C. al fine, 1st and 2nd ending, repeat 2 bars) and chart the actual passage (e.g., bars 1-8, 1-8, 9-14, 15-16, 9-14, 17-18).

Note again that composition and ear training activities linked to music literacy and playing activities will strengthen students’ confidence with notation.

EAR TRAINING/IMPROVISATION COMPONENT

As students are now engaging with music in both major and minor keys, ear training should include recognition of major and minor thirds.

Teachers are encouraged to have students notate rhythm patterns that are played for them. A focus on combinations of dotted quarters, quarters and eighth notes are suggested for this unit. It would also be effective to include rhythm patterns that occur in full band repertoire.

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.

Suggestions for improvisation activities include

- have individual students improvise a variation on a simple chant-like melody
- invite individual students to improvise variations on two or four bar phrases of “African Folk Trilogy” while the full group plays alternate phrases, in a call-and-response kind of style
- Name Game (Agrell, p. 232)
- African Switchback (Agrell, p. 88)
- Rhubarb, Rhubarb (Agrell, p. 249)

Remember that activities recommended previously provide a rich treasure chest of possibilities. It is often highly motivating for students to return to activities done in earlier units, with a view to enjoying them, while incorporating something new.

COMPOSITION COMPONENT

A composition activity that involves writing variations outlined in *Teaching Music Through Performance in Beginning Band* (pp. 85-86) can be adapted effectively for students. They might use a well-known tune that is in their method books or a simple melody from something in their full-band repertoire.

Teachers might also consider having students write a short theme that uses extended techniques, vocal sounds, etc. and then write two variations, contrasting in character. A graphic score can show the connection between the original theme and each variation.

When music-writing software is available, it is strongly recommended that students have opportunity to work at the computer.

ACTIVE LISTENING COMPONENT



Listening suggestions that are provided for “**African Folk Trilogy**” (TMP, p. 103) might be added to or replaced by examples of African Nova Scotian gospel or rhythm and blues music. Students can be encouraged to find out all they can about this rich musical heritage and to consider the similarities between these songs and the piece that they have in their full band repertoire.

A member of the African Nova Scotian musical community can be invited to the classroom to talk about their musical heritage and about the role that music plays in community life. Students might like to play “African Folk Trilogy” and have the guest musician join as a soloist, improvising on the main themes.

After students have listened to a set of variations in the classical tradition (e.g. Mozart’s “Ah! Vous Dirai-je Maman”), identify together what musical elements have been altered in each variation. As a fun activity, then listen to a few of Charles Ives’ “Variations on America” or perhaps even Victor Borge’s variations on “Happy Birthday”. Students can be grouped in listening teams to see how many of the composer’s strategies they can identify for each variation. A class chart can be compiled and referred to during a final listening.

CUMULATIVE LEARNING/ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY



Teachers may find it appropriate to include individual skills testing on all scales and arpeggios learned to date, since Unit 4 focuses on a chamber music project.

It is also recognized that this unit may well coincide with African Heritage Month, in which case full-class participation in related school and/or community activities can provide an effective wrap-up.

At this point in the Module, students should be demonstrating considerable progress towards facility with musical building blocks in Units 1, 2 and 3, including:

They should be able to, for example

- correctly articulate tongued notes, accents, slurs in exercises and repertoire
- clap, sing, write and play rhythm patterns that include sixteenth notes and dotted quarter notes
- play and write F concert, d natural minor and B-flat chromatic scales, one octave, in quarter notes, at M.M. quarter note = 96
- play and shape lyrical, legato phrases in exercises and repertoire
- play in March style
- recognize accidentals required by key signatures in their repertoire and play them with accuracy
- percussionists play the paradiddle and any other standard rudiments that appear in exercises and repertoire
- know the context in time and place of full band repertoire and make a personal connection with the “heart” of those pieces



Module 1, UNIT 2 PROGRESS REPORT black line master found in *Band Instruments: Appendices* can be adapted to include skills such as those listed above. It is important to note, however, that these skills/targets represent **only one** aspect of students’ journey toward comprehensive musicianship. Thus, such a progress report should represent only one aspect of an assessment package that addresses the full spectrum of learning outcomes.

Unit 4: Chamber Music Festival Project

(7 hours)

Introduction

This unit will centre on a chamber music “celebration” that students will plan and present. The various learning components (e.g., active listening, basic concepts, ear training, improvisation, music literacy) will be included in this comprehensive class project.

Suggestions given for the project are meant to open the door to possibilities. It is understood that teachers and students will make the project their own and craft a musical experience that is both valuable and memorable.

Undoubtedly, some time will be required during each class for basic warm-ups and perhaps also for work on full band repertoire. Depending on length of class periods, teachers may choose to allot a portion of each class (i.e., 30 minutes) to planning and preparation for the chamber music festival.

Key Concepts/Musical Building Blocks

- small ensemble playing skills
- chamber music
- building a recital program
- music management
- community connections

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Process

PRELUDE

Introduce the term chamber music and give students an opportunity to explore such questions as

- What is “chamber music”?
- Why is the word “chamber” used?
- What are two or three traditional chamber ensembles (e.g., string quartet)?

Talk with students about the fact that chamber music involves a small group of musicians, each playing their own part. It does not include solos with accompaniment. Discuss the fact that it has been called “the music of friends” and that originally it was not meant to be a performance but simply playing together in a kind of musical conversation and merriment. Students should understand that prior to radio, CDs, iPods, etc., people needed to make their own music. Note also that chamber music does not have a conductor

standing at the front of the group. It might also be interesting to talk about whether a Cape Breton “kitchen party” group or a jazz trio jam session is a kind of chamber music.

Outline the dimensions of the project and provide students with the expectations for everyone. These dimensions would probably include planning the program, choosing pieces, arranging/ composing as required, rehearsing in small groups, providing and receiving peer feedback, dress rehearsal, setting up a space for the recital, having a class “debriefing” following the event. Project evaluation rubrics should be agreed upon at the outset.

Explain that “Chamber Music Festival Project” is only the working title and that a class decision on the project title will be made after work is underway. Encourage students to be thinking of an appropriate title.

Tips for Teaching Success

Consider spending some time with students doing team building and trust building exercises at the beginning of classes. The *Drama 10* curriculum guide describes a number of these that can be used effectively to build skills for small ensemble playing.

Index C (Agrell, pp. 333-342) lists activities according to number of players required. Many of those for two to four players would be effective in building small ensemble skills.



and/or



Tools for Powerful Student Evaluation (Susan R. Farrell) contains several excellent forms that can be used/adapted for this project. Note that responses to questions included can be either oral or written. These tools include

- Music Class/Group Work Reflection, p. 87
- “What I Learned in This Project”, pp. 78-79
- Project Checklist, p. 73
- Chamber Music Performance Assessment, pp. 74-75
- Peer Critique of Chamber Music Performance, pp. 76-77

MUSICAL PREPARATION

When playing groups have been decided, work with students to help them make decisions about what piece each group will contribute to the program. They might consider method book pieces, arrangements of a band piece, arrangements of a well-known tune, or original compositions.



Spend time listening to two to three professional chamber music ensembles (CBC Live *Concerts on Demand* is an excellent resource) and talk together about the special skills that chamber musicians require, including musical and personal skills.

Consider some more contemporary chamber pieces such as Stockhausen's *Helicopter String Quartet* or works by R. Murray Schafer or performances by the Kronos Quartet. Students might be inspired to compose their own work for the program, using extended techniques.

Once students have had opportunity to work in their small groups and they have spent some time working on dynamics, tempo, etc., provide an opportunity for them to receive feedback from the rest of the class. They can ask questions such as

- “Can you hear the loud-soft contrast?”
- “Can you hear the melody when the tuba had it?”
- “Did we seem to be playing together?”
- “Was the ending effective?”

This feedback can then inform their next rehearsals.

Tips for Teaching Success

A suggestion for emphasizing the intimacy of small ensemble playing is to have students sit in a very deep U-shape or a complete circle, so that they can see one another when they are playing. This same arrangement should then be used for the festival, having those who are not playing seated in a semi-circle as well, or even in a “theatre in the round” arrangement, emphasizing that this is a celebration of music with friends rather than a formal concert.

Spend time talking with students about what challenges they are having with the project. Refer again to the musical skills and group skills that are especially necessary for playing in a small group. Together discuss possible strategies for meeting the challenges that they have encountered to date.

During the class immediately prior to the recital, talk together again about how the project will be evaluated. Ask students to suggest aspects of their work that they feel should be included that have not been mentioned and modify the project rubric as appropriate.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Approximately four weeks prior to the date for the festival, decide on an exact title (e.g., “Music with Friends”, “Playing Together”), the location (e.g., music room, multi-purpose room, library, room in local church), possible guest musicians (e.g. high school flute trio, community ensemble from the classical, jazz or folk traditions) to be invited to participate. Involve students in making these management arrangements. Note that the intent is that everyone who attends will participate in the program.



It is critical that teachers participate as well. They might join one or two of the small groups that are having challenges, or they might arrange for friends to join them for a small ensemble number.

Take time with the full class to make decisions about the order of pieces for the program. Students may wish to do a printed program for the event, or they might like to simply display it on a flip chart, LCD screen, etc. Talk about what needs to be included (title of piece, composer/arranger, musicians’ names, and instruments).

Encourage each group to prepare brief program notes that one member will give prior to their presentation. They might include comments about what type of piece it is, why they chose it, and what the most difficult or exciting thing about it was.

Together, make decisions about preparing the festival venue, trying to identify touches that would enhance the “ambiance” of the setting (e.g., one or two comfortable chairs, an antique music stand, a floor lamp or two rather than only ceiling lights, closed drapes).

It might also be appropriate to talk together about respectful behaviour and support for each another during the chamber music festival.

CODA

Once the festival has taken place and assessment forms have been completed (probably in a subsequent class), engage students in a discussion about the successes of the whole project. Students might like to compile a class list of all that they learned during the project, noting especially surprises – things that they did not expect.

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