

Band Instruments: Module 4

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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.

In order 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 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 4

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, 2 and 3. Students will continue developing their playing technique, composing, and arranging, improvisation, ear training, and music literacy activities. Students will experience focused, active listening to their own music and that of others. They will further their involvement with a range of full band repertoire that includes the concepts learned to date (e.g., “Ahrirang”, “Suncatcher”, “Walkin’ Cool” and “A Song for Friends”), and will arrange and present a concert group for full ensemble that will be adjudicated by a guest director.



As stated in Modules 2 and 3, 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

- A-flat concert (rote)
- Lip Slurs/Register Change
- Dotted Quarter and Eighth Note
- March style
- Quick tempos
- 5, 9, 17 stroke rolls
- Dynamics: *p-ff*, *crescendo*, *decrescendo*
- Articulations: *staccato*, *legato*, accent, slur
- Ritard
- Tempos: *slow/largo*, *moderate/moderato*, *fast/allegro*
- Sustained *legato* style
- B-Flat and F chromatic scales
- Solo performance skills
- Audience etiquette
- Full ensemble playing skills
- Selecting repertoire for a concert group
- Musical decision making/refining repertoire
- Using feedback for further learning

Introduction

As previously suggested, this module presumes that students are already comfortable with the basic skills, concepts, and musical attitudes introduced in Module 3. During this module learning experiences are “centred” around building facility, interpreting musical terms and articulation markings, and incorporating this learning in solo and full ensemble playing.



As a reminder, 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: Building Agility

(7-8 hours)



Important Note re Canadian Band Association Standards for Instrumental Music (Band): The intention is that, when this module has been completed, students will have attained “Achieves the Standard” requirements for Grade 7 as articulated in National Voluntary Curriculum and Standards for Instrumental Music (pp. 27-29). The complete document is available on the CBA web site.

Key Concepts/Musical Building Blocks

- A-flat concert (rote)
- Lip Slurs/Register Change
- Dotted Quarter and Eighth Note
- March style
- Quick tempos
- 5, 9, 17 stroke rolls

Method book references are *Standard of Excellence*: pp. 28-31 and *Essential Elements*: pp. 25-29.

Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Process

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

As the title of this unit suggests, the central focus is on increasing agility – guiding students to move around their instruments with facility, developing skill with both stepwise motion and wider intervals. Thus, the concentration is on building fluency with what students already have in their repertoire, rather than on introducing new rhythms and written notes. Teachers are encouraged to use creative strategies for motivating students for this challenge. Needless to say, as fingers move faster, it is crucial that clarity and tone quality not be sacrificed.

Once the A-Flat concert scale has been introduced by rote, incorporate the scale into daily scale and arpeggio warm-up routines. Note that scales and arpeggios are meant to be played: a) all slurred; b) all legato; and c) all tongued in quarter notes at a speed of approximately 92 beats per minute.

Tips for Teaching Success

Developing the Complete Band Program (Jagow, p.256) outlines a Paper-Clip Method that could be very helpful for students when they have particular problem areas in their repertoire, especially as they work to increase facility.

As percussionists are working on their double stroke rolls, have wind players use personal percussion instruments (e.g., patting thighs, tapping index fingers or two pencils on music stand) to perform patterns of sixteenth notes. For example, non-percussionists would play a pattern of four sixteenths and a quarter as percussionists play a series of nine stroke rolls.

When working on a sight-reading exercise, have students repeat it once or twice, after the first playing, increasing the tempo each time.

Using method book exercises such as p. 31#136 (*Standard of Excellence*) or p. 21#106 (*Essential Elements*), challenge students to play with accuracy and clarity at quicker tempos. The metronome could be used effectively to establish the tempo and some students might tap or clap quarter notes while others play the melody as written. Teachers might also find that revisiting exercises from previous pages in the method book could be effective, giving students an opportunity to readily hear how much their agility has improved. Such activities might be titled “Agility Challenge”.

Band Technique Step by Step (Elledge and Haddad) contains scale, tonguing, major chord, interval, and rhythm studies at various levels of difficulty in major and minor keys. Many of these studies would be excellent vehicles for building agility.

During this unit, use a method book exercise such as “Manhattan Beach March” (*Standard of Excellence*, #139) or “American Patrol” (*Essential Elements*, #179) to reinforce march style articulation as students perform the excerpt at an allegro tempo. This learning could be transferred to a full band arrangement such as “Stratford March” (see below).

Regularly incorporate the dotted quarter note-eighth note pattern in warm-ups, sight reading, ear training, rhythm flash card exercises, etc. so that students are very comfortable with the rhythm pattern.

Students’ motivation to increase their playing agility might be heightened by keeping a class record of the metronome speed at which the whole class or instrument groups can play a particular exercise or passage.

Tips for Teaching Success

The importance of tone quality, whatever the tempo, must be emphasized. *Developing the Complete Band Program* (Jagow, pp. 38-40) has excellent points re factors affecting tone and re daily long tones.

Suggested full band repertoire that could be introduced during this module includes “Stratford March” (John Higgins). Note that it is understood that repertoire that has been introduced in previous modules

will often continue to be a valuable learning resource for students. When working with “Stratford March”, teachers might consider strategies such as the following

- Ask students to explain what “crisp march style” really means.
- Have students play the march without a conductor.
- Encourage students to internalize the beat.
- Assign “listening squads” to check on separation of notes and 4-bar melodic phrases.
- Emphasize balance during the sections where low brass and woodwinds have the melody.
- Challenge students to check their own music after the key change and mark with a pencil all the notes that they will need to watch carefully.
- Have students listen to a march that is played at a tempo of M.M. quarter note = 116 and then play a section of the march at exactly the same tempo.
- Have students listen to a section of a march where the melody is in the low brass and woodwinds. Talk together about what they noticed about the balance and transfer this learning to their own performance of bars 15-31. Listening squads can assess the effectiveness of the balance.

Tips for Teaching Success

A director with a good band can think it is a great performance but still have lots of wrong notes because they are not paying attention to what is on the page because he knows it so well. He ends up just listening to the piece as he knows it. I call it fantasy. Fantasy. He gets up on the podium and all of a sudden, it is no longer his band, but what he hears in his head. You can compare wrong notes (like missed key signature notes) to a baseball field. With wrong throws there would be balls all over the place!

Ron MacKay, March 13, 2008

MUSIC LITERACY COMPONENT

As suggested in Modules 2 and 3, teachers are encouraged to select exercises/sheets that are best suited for their students and school setting.

Once A-Flat Concert scale has been introduced by rote, have students write the scale, both with key signature and without. In addition, have them correctly name notes in A-Flat concert melodic passages.

Rhythmic patterns from full band repertoire might provide a basis for an activity in which students re-write the rhythm of the passage in their notebooks and indicate the counting syllables that they have learned underneath.

To reinforce chromatic scale skills, challenge students to write short melodic passages that include only semitones.

EAR TRAINING/IMPROVISATION COMPONENT

Note: It is suggested that the Canadian Band Association Ear Tests 7 Quality standards (Voluntary Curriculum and Standards, p.29) could be adapted somewhat. For example, the Melody Playback might include only stepwise motion and always begin on the tonic.

Suggested activities for this unit include:

- Using the first five notes of A-Flat concert, play simple stepwise melodic passages for the students to play back.
- Challenge students to play back simple 5-note stepwise melodies in each of the major keys that they have studied.
- Use rhythm flash cards to reinforce understanding of challenging rhythm patterns found in method book and full band repertoire.
- Revisit improvisation activities from previous modules that students particularly enjoyed.
- Drones (Agrell, p. 57)
- Oom Pah March (Agrell, p.59)
- Size Matters (Agrell, p. 65)
- Que Sera Sera (Agrell, p. 214)

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 and perform an 8-bar melody that incorporates slurred “running” eighth or sixteenth notes to depict musically a rapid fluid movement (e.g., water running over stones, wind blowing in the trees) or rapid staccato movement (e.g., hooves of a herd of galloping horses, raindrops beating on a tin roof). Each composition should be titled.
- Invite students, working in like-instrument groups of 3-4, to compose a fanfare based on the tonic triad of a key that they have been studying. Teachers might choose to discuss the purpose for a fanfare as an introduction to this activity. Possible rhythm patterns for a fanfare could be explored as a whole class before beginning the compositions. It might be effective to include one percussionist in each group and have the group make decisions about which percussion instrument they would like to include and incorporate it into their fanfare. Rhythm patterns for the fanfare could be notated. Each group could decide what occasion their fanfare is for and title their work “Fanfare for” The fanfares could then be performed by the composer groups and/or by the whole class.
- A Unit 1 Composition rubric might be created together in advance that would include both self- and peer assessment. Such a rubric might include aspects of the composition activity such as
 - Effectiveness of slurred sixteenths
 - Choice of Fanfare rhythm pattern

- Appropriateness of the chosen title
 - Effective sharing of ideas in the group work
 - Responsibility of each group member in music making
 - How convincing the performance was
- As part of the learning, there could be reflection by each group and the full class regarding the intent of each composition, what musical elements were chosen, and what students learned from it. This discussion, when combined with the completion of a rubric such as the one outlined above, might address a range of learning outcomes including, but not limited to, SCOs 1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 4.2, 6.1, 6.2, 8.1, and 8.2.
 - As a follow-up, students could create a bizarre fanfare using only extended techniques and give their fanfare a funky title (e.g. Bad Hair Day Fanfare, Dog Show Fanfare).

Tips for Teaching Success

It is important to remember how much benefit there is for students in notating their own compositions, whether by hand or using notation software. By manipulating notation symbols, students increase their confidence in working fluently with notated music.

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 wind soloists that feature very fast passages
- Recordings that demonstrate beautiful tone for individual wind and percussion instruments
- Examples of recordings of Sousa and/or Kenneth J. Alford marches can be invaluable in building students' understanding of march style.
- Have students listen very carefully to their own playing and that of a partner to ensure that clarity and tone quality is not sacrificed as the speed is increased.
- Refer to *Developing the Complete Band Program* (Jagow, p. 107) for questions that could be adapted for use in rehearsal of specific pieces in the full band repertoire.

Tips for Teaching Success (Repeat from Module 3)

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 previous modules, 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 activities also provide opportunities for assessing a broad range of learning outcomes.

An activity that focuses on agility is a suggested possibility for this unit. As an example, the students might hold a Tortoise and Hare Day. During this class, individual students would present one exercise (of their choice) from the method book, playing the exercise twice – once slowly, demonstrating their best tone quality, and once quickly, demonstrating their playing agility. Self and peer assessment rubrics could be based on the criteria outlined in advance. Practice journals could also be used to record progress made during the preparation phase of the activity.

Tips for Teaching Success

Play 8 bars of quarter notes for the students. Ask them how long each note is (it stops when the next one starts). Then have them play the long note exercise again (breathe in for 4, out for 8) and “dent the air column” to make quarter notes. Do not tongue. A comparison is the stream of water coming from a tap and passing your finger through the stream. The air column has to keep going. Then use other rhythms (quarters and eighths). The air column has to keep going. It takes practice and concentration. Do not stop the air. Only add the tonguing later.

Why do players so often miss a pianissimo attack? Because they think “Am I going to get it?” and only take a mouthful of air. Then – no note. They have to breathe in for 4, set the embouchure and then simply release the air. A “p” consonant can be added at the beginning of the note. An example of this kind of entry would be the horn solo at the beginning of Ravel’s *Pavane*.

Another tip – a player has to be able to measure silence as well as sound.

Ron MacKay, March 13, 2008

Unit 2: Focus on Tempos, Dynamics, Articulation (6-7 hours)

Key Concepts/Musical Building Blocks

- Dynamics: *p-ff*, *crescendo*, *decrescendo*
- Articulations: *staccato*, *legato*, accent, slur
- *Ritard*
- Tempos: slow/*largo*, moderate/*moderato*, fast/*allegro*
- Sustained *legato* style

Method book references are *Standard of Excellence*: pp. 29-35 and *Essential Elements*: pp. 30-35.

Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Process

BASIC SKILLS COMPONENT

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

- Place concentrated emphasis on articulation and dynamic markings at this stage in order to enable students to become comfortable with the concepts and with the techniques required to include them, naturally, in their own interpretation of notation – whether in method book exercises or full band repertoire.
- Once again, listening squads can be effective in providing critical feedback about articulation and dynamics.
- Encourage students to record their own playing and listen critically for dynamics and articulations. Can these really be heard in their playing or does the listener have to imagine that they are present?
- See suggestions in the Active Listening Component below that relate to dynamics and articulation.
- Encourage students to revisit an exercise from previous pages in the method book, add their own dynamic and articulation markings, and play the exercise accordingly. The full class could be challenged to play the exercise using articulations added by individual students. This activity could provide excellent information for assessment of understanding.
- Use pieces from the full band repertoire that are in students' folders from previous modules to refine interpretation of dynamic and articulation markings and to reconsider the most effective tempo for the piece.

The following strategies are provided for working with suggested full band repertoire. It is understood that teachers will find many creative and effective strategies for their own students- these are merely suggestions that will hopefully lead to other ideas.

“Ahrirang” (Arr. R. Garofalo and Whaley, G.)

- Introduce the work by talking with students about the peaceful, meditative aspects of the culture of the Far East (e.g., yoga, sand gardens). Talk with them about how this kind of effect (peaceful, mystical) could be obtained in music.
- Have students sing and play the pentatonic scale on which the piece is based. Then have them sing or play “call and response” patterns using notes from the same pentatonic scale, the 2-bar rhythm pattern found in bars 11 and 12 of the piece (woodwinds), and only slurred articulation. One student could improvise the call and the other students could do the response, or the teacher might play or sing the call and ask all students to respond.
- Introduce the concept of “staggered breathing”. Have students decide, in pairs, which of them will breathe on the bar lines and which will NOT breathe on the bar lines within each 8-bar phrase. Once students understand the concept, use a listening squad as various instrument groups play an 8-bar phrase using staggered breathing. Challenge students not to allow any “light” within the 8-bar phrase- only continuous sound.
- Encourage students to play “inside the sound of others” and to play with their most warm sound. As students talk about what is at the heart of this work and what they want to communicate when they play it for others, ask them whether “the ultimate in smooth” would be an appropriate subtitle for the piece. It might also be helpful to explain that this piece is quietly beautiful – not like the showy sunflower but like a small, white flower in the shade.
- Have students sing the melody in the octave most comfortable for them using only an “oo” syllable and their singing line as legato as possible with no audible “bumps”.
- Involve all students in making decisions about the percussion interlude between “D” and “E”. Things to consider would include such as what the overall dynamics map would be, what instruments would be used and with what sticks or beaters, what rhythm patterns for each instrument would be, etc. Percussion instruments other than those indicated in the score might be used as well.

Tips for Teaching Success

By having all students use pencils to number the bars of their own parts in full band repertoire, many precious rehearsal moments are saved.

“Furioso” (Robert W. Smith)

- As an introduction to this piece, talk with students about why the composer chose the title and ask them to search their own music for indications that this is an energetic work.
- Have students listen to a short concert band piece that is highly energetic and talk together about what they noticed about the playing.
- During one or two rehearsals, consider having all students, using personal percussion instruments, play the Percussion I and II parts, being sure to note the dynamic markings and accents.
- Encourage students to play “inside” the sound of others, even during the *f* and *ff* passages, and to listen carefully for balance among the musical lines.

- Decide with students where THE MOMENT is in the piece (probably the final 2 bars). Encourage them to be sure that they build to that moment and do not reach the *ff* dynamic level at any point prior to those final two bars.
- Together, build a dynamics map of the piece.
- Prior to a presentation of the work, talk with students about what they hope to communicate to the audience when they play it. Perhaps they would like to choose an alternative title for the piece. Teachers could use this discussion and title choice as a means of informally assessing students' personal connection with the "heart" of the music.

"A Song for Friends" (Larry Daehn)

Although this piece has been introduced in previous modules, but it is still an excellent choice for working on lyrical, expressive playing.

- Talk with the students about why the composer may have chosen this title. As they are nearing a performance of the work, ask students to think of a personal friend to whom they would like to dedicate the piece.
- During rehearsal, all percussionists might play mallet instruments using soft mallets, practicing double stroke rolls on the half notes and dotted half notes.
- Consider having the students listen to a professional performance of a lyrical concert band piece such Granger's *Irish Tune from County Derry* or Larry Daehn's *As Summer was Just Beginning*. Talk together about the characteristics of this legato style.
- It might be effective to have students do long note exercises prior to rehearsing the piece.
- To develop a legato playing style for all instruments, consider choosing one section of the piece (e.g., bars 17-33 or 33-41) and have all students sing each of the three musical lines using an "oo" or "ah" syllable, in an octave most comfortable for them. Emphasize the connections between each note and the notes before and after it. Show students how expressiveness on long notes (half notes and dotted half notes) can be enhanced by building to the next note in a phrase. Then challenge them to transfer what they have learned to their own playing of the piece, really working hard on "singing" each phrase on their own instrument.
- Some students might like to write a poem or create an artwork inspired by the piece. These could be displayed when the piece is presented.

"Walkin' Cool" (Scott Watson)

- As an introduction, ask students what "cool" means. How does one walk cool? Students might have fun walking "cool and happy" around the room. Remind them that this "cool and happy" style will be required for the piece. How will they play "cool and happy"? What tempo will be effective?
- It might be fun to have students listen to an example of "cool" jazz, noting the characteristics of the style.
- Have students say and then sing their own parts, bars 1-8, using the phrase "Walkin' cool" or scat syllables for each rhythmic riff, while they clap the backbeat.

- Bars 29-45 provide an ideal opportunity for working on listening for the melodic line in another instrument section while playing a sustained note, being sure adjust the volume of that note to allow the melodic line to sing through.
- As an alternative to full ensemble rehearsal, have students work in groups of 5 (one each of flute/trumpet, clarinet, alto sax/horn, low brass/woodwind, percussion) and prepare one section of the piece. This small group work can be very effective for balance and rhythmic “tightness” of the ensemble. Each small group could then play for the full class. A rubric that focuses on ensemble balance and rhythmic “groove” could be used to assess the learning. It could also be effective to have students reflect about what they learned from working on the piece in the smaller groups.

“Suncatcher” (James Curnow)

- As a warmup, ask students to play an F concert scale, first legato and then marcato. Then ask them to check their own parts carefully to see which sections use each of these two articulation styles.
- Consider having the full ensemble play the snare drum part on personal percussion instruments with a view to strengthening rhythmic skills of all players.
- Challenge trumpet players to listen very carefully to the 1st -3rd valve Ds in their music, using the 3rd valve slide as required.
- Once students have played through the piece a few times, talk with them about why this might make a good concert opener. Ask them why the composer might have chosen this title.
- So that students can really hear the rich harmonies that are found in this work, consider having them sustain quarter note chords for 4 or more beats, at a *mp* level. Encourage them to listen across the ensemble for tuning and balance, and keep in mind the pyramid shape of chords from bottom to top.

Tips for Teaching Success

What tips do I have for finding horn players? One way is to move kids from trumpet to French horn – watch for a student who’s not quite making it but who has a good work ethic and good ears – who gets a dark tone on trumpet (because of larger lip aperture). Talk with the student about it. “How are you doing on it?” Have the French horn beside you. Ask “What do you want to play? Trombone?” They might say “No. I don’t like the slide”. Say “I’ve got an idea!” Get them to try the horn mouthpiece first. Play a G on the mouthpiece. Then in the horn. Try other notes. They will get notes they could not get on the trumpet. Show them how to hold it. Let them sign the horn out for the weekend. 90% of the time, they will come back saying, “Can I take this out for a while longer?”

Ron MacKay, February 22, 2008

MUSIC LITERACY COMPONENT

Emphasis for this unit could effectively be placed on writing major 3rds and perfect 5ths, both with and without key signatures, above the tonic of B-Flat, E-Flat, A-Flat, and F concert.

In addition, working with written rhythm patterns that appear in method book exercises and other repertoire could reinforce students’ fluency with these rhythms. Teachers might like to give students a

notated excerpt that contains many of the dynamic, tempo, and articulation markings that students have learned, asking them to explain each and every marking.

EAR TRAINING/IMPROVISATION COMPONENT

Suggested activities for this unit include

- Encourage students to identify by ear, sing, and play intervals of a major 3rd and perfect 5th, both melodic and harmonic. Challenge them to be “interval detectives” and find these intervals with their ears when they appear in method book exercises and full band repertoire.
- Invite students to improvise a pentatonic lullaby in 3/4 meter (link this with *Ahrirang*)
- Invite students, working individually or in groups of 2-3, to choose an emotion (e.g., fear, contentment, boredom, excitement) and talk about what dynamics/articulations/tempo might be effective to express that emotion in music. Have them improvise a short piece (e.g., 30 seconds in length) based on their discoveries. As individual students/groups play their own improvised piece, other students could speculate about which emotion is being portrayed and identify the dynamics and articulations that were used.
 - Surprise! (Agrell, p. 110)
 - Contrast Game (Agrell, p. 64)
 - Feelings (Agrell, p. 184)
 - Timing is Everything (Agrell, p. 256)
 - Hare and Tortoise (Agrell, p. 185)
 - Combination 1 (Agrell, p. 69)

COMPOSITION COMPONENT

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

- Have students compose a “bugle call” for a particular purpose (wake-up signal, funeral tribute, celebrating a sports hero) that uses only intervals of a major 3rd and a perfect 5th in the major key of their choosing. Accents and contrasting dynamics could be included as well.
- Challenge students, working in groups of 3-4 to compose and perform a piece titled “Signs of Spring”. Their composition should evoke sounds and colours that we associate with this welcome time of year. Encourage them to use both traditional and extended techniques, dynamics, and various articulations and to prepare a graphic score for the composition.
- To link with the Robert W. Smith’s *Furioso*, ask students, again working in small groups and using both traditional and extended techniques, to compose and present a piece called “The Storm”. As an introduction, talk with students about storms that they remember - sounds of a storm, the approach and retreat, etc. Students might decide to focus on a storm at a time of the year (e.g., a blizzard in January, a lightening storm on a hot summer evening). Encourage them to use various dynamics, tempos, and articulation styles to heighten the musical effect. Alternatively, this activity might involve a full-class composition. Refer to Module 1, Unit 4 for related suggestions.

ACTIVE LISTENING COMPONENT



- As an introduction to the composition activity, it might be valuable to play Grofe’s “Storm” from Grand Canyon Suite and have students discover what ways the composer found to evoke the storm.
- Teachers might like to play an excerpt from Vivaldi’s “Spring” from *The Seasons* as an introduction to the Signs of Spring composition activity. Ask students what signs of spring Vivaldi evoked in his work using only stringed instruments.
- Have students listen to performances by excellent concert bands that highlight a wide range of dynamic levels and articulation styles. Challenge students to list all the dynamic levels and articulation styles that they heard.
- It might be fun to have students play a piece from their repertoire—purposely playing at a single dynamic level and using only one articulation style. Then they could play it again, begin sure to include all dynamic and articulation indications. A class discussion about what dynamic levels and contrasting articulation styles can add to a piece could naturally follow.

CUMULATIVE LEARNING ACTIVITY



Teachers may find that it is appropriate to consider Unit 4 as a cumulative activity for this unit. Alternatively, it might be very effective to record a full ensemble performance of one or two of the pieces being studied. Prior to recording, students could identify the various aspects of dynamics and articulation that they wanted to include in their performance. Students could then listen to the recording and do a full class “adjudication” of the performance. *Tools for Powerful Student Evaluation* (Farrell, p. 76) provides a form for performance critique that could be easily adapted for this activity.

Unit 3: Solos and Chromatics

(5-6 hours)

Introduction

As was stated previously, teachers may find it effective to plan this unit (that focuses on a solos project) so that it runs parallel with Unit 4 (that centers on a full ensemble concert group). The intent of this solos project is that every student will prepare and present a solo for the rest of the class. In the process, students will also learn about solo performance etiquette and audience etiquette.

Key Concepts/Musical Building Blocks

- B-Flat and F chromatic scales
- Solo performance skills
- Audience etiquette

Method book references are Standard of Excellence and Essential Elements solos.

Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Process

BASIC SKILLS COMPONENT

The following suggestions are provided:

Encourage students to build facility with chromatic scales, being sure to reinforce use of alternate fingerings and positions. Challenge them to play the scales by rote using a range of articulations and dynamic levels. Students might also be challenged to work individually to play the scales in eighth notes at a tempo of approx. 100 quarter notes per minute.

Have students identify chromatic passages that appear in their solos or full ensemble literature.

When introducing the solos project, talk with students about criteria for choosing a solo (technically comfortable, musically interesting for the performer, appropriate for presenting to a given audience, appropriate length, etc.)

Keeping these criteria in mind, have students choose a solo from their method books/other solo literature or a piece that they have composed that they will present to the rest of the class. Encourage them to discuss their choice and the reasons for it with a partner to ensure that the criteria have been met. A simple rubric based on these criteria being met could be completed by the groups of two students.

Provide time in class for students to do some research about the solo that they have chosen. Challenge them to find two or three pieces of information that would be helpful in introducing the solo to an audience.

Encourage students to keep a solo performance log, noting - for each date - the amount of time spent playing, particular musical challenges that have been worked on and solved, and aspects that still need to be worked on. These logs could be a valuable part of the assessment process and students could use them when completing a self-assessment at the end of the solo project.

Tips for Teaching Success

Work with students to develop self and peer assessment rubrics in advance. *Tools for Powerful Student Evaluation* (Farrell, pp. 41-42) suggests an excellent rubric that could be used/adapted for the performance.

Talk with students about audience etiquette. It might be interesting to discuss appropriate audience behaviour for various types of presentation (e.g., hockey game, rock concert, kitchen party fiddling, funeral address). Ask them to think about what audience behaviours will encourage and support them as solo performers, explaining that audience members contribute an enormous amount to the success of a live concert, that the musical success is really a collaborative effort.

With students, develop the solo concert program, asking each student to provide the title and composer/arranger of her/his solo. Decide together on a title. A printed program that could be included in their music portfolio might be provided for each student. Depending on class size, it might work well to do the actual solos performance in two or three sections/classes, having 8-10 soloists in each section.

As the date(s) for the solos concert approach(es), have students view video clips from solo performances, and note with them important tips for the performer (being prepared, focus and concentration, bowing for and acknowledging the support of the audience, etc.)

It might also be valuable to have a full class discussion about what a solo musician needs to do when performing in a formal concert that is different from what they do when playing the piece informally.

Involve students in arranging (and re-arranging) furniture in the room for the actual performance. One or two students might act as stagehands during the performance, re-arranging music stands and such.

During the actual performance, teachers might find it helpful to use an observation checklist to record supportive/inappropriate audience behaviours.

When the performance is complete, have a full class de-briefing, asking students to identify what they learned from the project that they will carry forward.

Tips for Teaching Success

When Ron MacKay took his 80-plus piece concert and stage bands “on the road”, the buses would arrive at a school, Ron would find the music teacher/staff room and sit for a chat. Meanwhile, his students and band parents would bring in and set up all the equipment and stands, distribute music and ensure that pieces were in concert order, ensure all students were ready to play, and then send a messenger to tell Ron that they were ready for him. He would go in, do a quick warmup/tune up, and leave again, only to appear on stage when the band had been introduced. Once the final bows were done, Ron left the stage and, once again, students and chaperones prepared for departure. He credited this routine with allowing him to conserve energy and enthusiasm for musical tasks.

Even at this relatively early stage, students should become accustomed to such “stagehand” functions as arranging chairs and stands, moving equipment, distributing music folders, etc. If they become used to assisting with these functions in their music class and rehearsal routines, they will take ownership for these important aspects of group music making. Also, the teacher’s valuable energy will be preserved! Time spent working out these routines, at the very start, will be worth its weight in gold.

MUSIC LITERACY COMPONENT

The emphasis for this unit should be on exercises related to the chromatic scale. In addition, students might be involved in interpreting all musical signs and symbols in their solo literature, and in adding symbols to reflect decisions they make re dynamics, phrasing, etc. in their own compositions or in chosen solos.

EAR TRAINING/IMPROVISATION COMPONENT

Ear Tests 7(Quality) in the CBA Voluntary Curriculum and Standards (p. 29) will guide teachers in planning ear training activities designed to enable students to meet these requirements. Note that, in the melody playback exercises, teachers may decide to include only leaps of a third in the tonic triad.

Suggestions for improvisation activities include any number of games for one player listed in Appendix C of *Improvisation Games for Classical Musicians* (pp. 333-342). Teachers might like to choose 6-8 of the games and provide students with brief descriptions of each. Students could then have fun with these solo improvisations during individual practice and report back to class about which ones they enjoyed the most/which they thought would be most helpful for their solo project. A few possibilities include

- Scale Accents (p. 107)
- Glacier Music (p. 112)
- Rainbow Scales (p. 113)
- Nostalgia (p. 118)
- Bumblebee (p. 126) Note: This uses chromatic segments
- Eye of the Beholder I and II (p. 128)
- Alphorn Solo (p. 133)
- Sing It, Sam (p. 161)

Tips for Teaching Success

In order to build trust among class members and thus increase their confidence as they make music together, it is very effective to involve students in creative drama foundation activities such as those found in Appendix D of *Drama 10* (Nova Scotia, 1999). Suggestions from that guide include This is a What? Mirror Action Sequence, This is My Ear, Clapping Rhythm, Crossed Hands, Machines, and Zip-Zap-Zop.

Note also that *Drama 10* (pp. 102-112) contains several checklists, rating scales, and other assessment forms that could be easily and effectively adapted for this module.

COMPOSITION COMPONENT

Invite students to compose a short lyrical solo for their own instrument that will provide an opportunity for demonstrating beautiful sound. Suggest that they use a tonality with which they are familiar and have them include at least one chromatic passage. Ask them to choose an appropriate title for their composition and prepare a final score for the work. Some students might choose to use this composition for their solos project.



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

ACTIVE LISTENING COMPONENT



Preparation for the solos project presentation presents an ideal opportunity for students to listen critically to themselves and their peers. Teachers may find it helpful to refer to *Tools for Powerful Student Evaluation* (Farrell, p. 41) as they discuss aspects of listening critically to their own solos and those of others.

Students might record themselves for self-assessment or play their solos in small groups to receive peer feedback.

An alternative format for critical listening and providing helpful feedback is to identify 2-3 strong points and 2-3 aspects that require further work.

It is suggested that teachers show video clips from a few live solo performances, asking students to identify aspects of the performance that impressed them the most, including reactions to musical strong points and aspects of stage presentation that they observed. Questions that might be discussed include

- Did the soloist seem to be well prepared for the performance?
- Did the soloist communicate effectively with the audience? Seem totally focused on the music? Play the music convincingly?

- Did the soloist introduce the piece to the audience? Play with confidence?
- What rhythmic/melodic/dynamic aspects were the most memorable?

Encourage students to find recordings of memorable solos played on their instruments and note the information about the recordings in their listening journals.

CUMULATIVE LEARNING ACTIVITY



The actual solos project presentation and “debriefing” activities constitute the suggested cumulative learning activity for this unit.

Unit 4: Full Ensemble Concert Group Presentation

(5-6 hours)

Introduction

This unit will centre around a full ensemble concert group that students will prepare and present for a guest adjudicator. The focus for learning will be on preparing a convincing musical presentation. The intent is that students will be working with full ensemble literature (whether arrangements from the method book, band pieces, or class compositions), the notes and rhythms of which have already been learned.

The learning components (e.g., active listening, basic concepts, ear training, improvisation, music literacy) will be incorporated 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.

Key Concepts/Musical Building Blocks

- full ensemble playing skills
- selecting repertoire for a concert group
- musical decision making/refining repertoire
- using feedback for further learning

Standard of Excellence and *Essential Elements* full band numbers can be used, in addition to full band repertoire, including class compositions.

Tips for Teaching Success

Developing the Complete Band Program (Jagow, pp. 185-190) suggests several alternative methods for a full ensemble rehearsal that teachers might find helpful. Also, Jagow, pp. 86-87 has useful suggestions for having students make good use of pencils that are in their folders.

PRELUDE

Introduce students to the project, explaining its various dimensions (choosing and preparing a concert group, performing it for a guest adjudicator, using feedback to further refine full ensemble playing skills). Explain that this project will give them an opportunity to really consolidate what they have learned to date about full ensemble playing and to celebrate, individually and as a group, their developing musicianship.

In a full class discussion, explore the concept of a “concert group” as it applies to this comprehensive project (i.e. three pieces for full ensemble to be performed as a group). If you were choosing three pieces for a concert group, what sorts of considerations would there be? For example,

- Do the pieces compliment the ensemble’s abilities?
- Should they be easy technically or more difficult?
- Do all instrument groups have some melody passages?
- Are the players/director enthusiastic about the pieces?
- Who will the audience be?
- Should there be a variety of tempos? Styles? Concert keys?
- How would you decide on the order? Difficulty for certain instrument groups? What type of piece would be best as the opening number? The closing number?
- Could there be a theme that unifies the pieces (e.g., music for celebration, folk songs of Canada)?

Once a list of considerations has been developed, develop, and display a list of all full ensemble repertoire currently in students’ music folders that is comfortably “in the fingers”. This might include the first full ensemble piece that they learned, several months ago. It might also include full ensemble pieces that are found in their method books or class compositions. Ask students, working in groups of 5-6, to choose three pieces from the list and decide the order in which they should be played. Groups could present their choices, explaining their choices. In a full class discussion, a consensus could be reached. Note: Teachers might prefer to omit the small group activity and proceed directly from the list of pieces to a full class discussion.

Tips for Teaching Success

Developing the Complete Band Program (Jagow, pp. 208-210) has considerations for concert programming that could be a useful reference when choosing the concert group.

Once the three pieces have been chosen, share with students the timeline for their preparation and presentation for a guest adjudicator. Highlight the presentation date on a class calendar.

At this point, it is critical to talk with students about how the project will be evaluated (self-, peer, and teacher assessment). *Tools for Powerful Student Evaluation* (Susan R. Farrell) contains several excellent forms that could be used/adapted for this project. Note that responses to questions included could be either oral or written. These tools include

- Journal Prompts for Student Reflection, pp. 84-85
- Concert Band Rehearsal Critique, pp. 49-50
- Music Class Critique, pp. 47-48
- Individual Performance Self-Assessment: Instrumental, pp. 41-42
- Student Self-Assessment, p. 89

Student reflection in the form of journal entries or class discussion can focus on students' understanding about what they need to work on individually and as a full group with each piece that has been chosen. This reflection might be done following the first playing of each of the pieces (What aspects do I/others/the full group need to work on? What aspects am I/others/the full group doing well?) and again, when the presentation date is only a couple of weeks away.

It might also be effective to develop an adjudication form, record each piece, and have students complete the form as they listen to the recording. The form could be as simple as having students identify 2-3 strengths of each piece and 2-3 aspects that need more refining.

Tips for Teaching Success

A director with a good band can think it is a great performance but still have lots of wrong notes because they are not paying attention to what is on the page because he knows it so well. He ends up just listening to the piece as he knows it. I call it fantasy. Fantasy. He gets up on the podium and suddenly, it is no longer his band, but what he hears in his head.

You can compare wrong notes (like missed key signature notes) to a baseball field. With wrong throws there would be balls all over the place!

Ron MacKay, March 13, 2008

MUSICAL PREPARATION

As students are working on the chosen concert group pieces, consider strategies such as the following

- Each time that students begin work on a piece during any given class or rehearsal, involve them in identifying what specific things need attention. At the end of the class, take a few moments to ask whether they succeeded with their musical goals and whether there are aspects that need to be addressed in individual practice and/or during the next class/rehearsal.
- Use “listening squads” frequently. This involves students actively in listening and analyzing musical elements and develops their own musical decision-making skills.
- Be sure not to omit key considerations re what is at the “heart” of the piece and what students really want to communicate to listeners when they play it. Students will need to review the background information for each piece to make these decisions.
- When small practice areas are available, organize students in either like-instrument or unlike-instrument groups and have them work on specific passages in the chosen pieces for a specific length of time (e.g., 10 minutes). Then bring the full group back together and play the piece(s) once more. Have students identify what they accomplished as a full group through their small group study.



A Repertoire Fact Sheet such as this sample, contributed by Paul Hutten, could be an effective way to assess students' understanding of and connection to pieces in their repertoire as they prepare for their full ensemble presentation.

REPERTOIRE FACT SHEET

Name: _____ Instrument: _____

Title of Piece: _____

Composer/Arranger: _____ Genre: _____

Key(s): _____ Time Signature(s): _____ Dynamics: _____

Tempo Indications: _____

Colour(s)/Mood(s): _____

Terms/Articulations	Composer's Intent

Add your clef to the staff below. Using whole notes, write in your highest and lowest notes and name them. Next, write in all the notes in between and name them as well.

Copy the most difficult or important rhythm for your instrument (time signature!).

Tips for Teaching Success

Shaping Sound Musicians (O’Toole, pp. 215-280) suggests unit teaching plans for three middle school band pieces – “**Balladaire**”, “**The Headless Horseman**”, and “**Cajun Folk Songs**”. Though these pieces are somewhat more advanced than the ones that students will have in their folders, O’Toole’s ideas for analysis and rehearsal could be very useful for teachers as they plan this unit.

EAR TRAINING/IMPROVISATION CONSIDERATIONS

Improvisation activities that focus on musical communication are key for this unit. They might effectively be used as a prelude to, or an interlude between, work on the concert group selections. Suggestions include

- Program Notes (Agrell, p. 238)
- Grimm Tales (Agrell, p. 238)
- Other Story Telling Games (see Agrell Intro, p. 237)
- Dragon Tale (Agrell, p. 241)
- Warmup/ Connections (Agrell, p. 73)
- Ritual (Agrell, p. 248)
- Rhubarb, Rhubarb (Agrell, p. 249)

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

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 identified.

Be sure to talk with students, in advance, about the guest adjudicator/director that you have chosen. This would also be a good time to review the reasons why this presentation will be so special for them as musical learners. It is also important to review together why they chose these pieces and what they want to communicate through each.

On the day of the presentation, have two or three students explain briefly, prior to playing their concert group, why they chose these pieces and what they think is at the “heart” of each one.

Tips for Teaching Success

Re getting musicians in to work with your students, get the right people in to do the right jobs.

Ron MacKay, March 22, 2008

CODA



It would be very effective to do an audio recording of the presentation, so that students could listen critically to their own playing - celebrating their successes and identifying goals for the future. A video recording of the presentation might also be put on the school/music department web site.

A full class discussion about the project could include identifying what they learned, surprises, challenges, what they are most proud of, etc. A learning journal could also be used to record reflections.

One or two students might write a thank you card for the guest adjudicator/director.

Tips for Teaching Success

What Suggestions do I have for motivating kids for band rehearsals? It changes depending on the age of the kids and what is happening around you. I found an idea in a magazine –Band Bucks (I would not use it beyond Grade 8 or 9). You get Band Bucks printed and then give them to players (e.g. 2 bucks for every rehearsal on time, 2 bucks for helping to set up stands). There would also be fines for being late, etc. Get someone to record everything. Then, at the end of the month, students can use their Band Bucks to buy music supplies (e.g., reeds, valve oil). A reed might cost them 50 Band Bucks. Have the Parents' Association pay for these supplies – it might amount to \$200 for the year. I used this and it worked great!

Ron MacKay, March 13, 2008

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