

Band Instruments: Module 6

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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 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 6

Correlated with Grade 8 Canadian Band Association Instrumental Music (Band) Standards

(26 Instructional Hours)

Overview

Rationale

This module is designed to build on learning experiences in *Band Instruments Modules 1- 5*. Students will consolidate their understanding of and facility with concepts already introduced. They will continue to develop their knowledge and understanding of playing techniques, composing, and arranging, improvisation, and music theory. In addition, melodic and rhythmic dictation will continue to be a regular learning activity. Students will experience focused, active listening to their own music and that of others. Finally, they will work comprehensively with quality, full band repertoire that includes the notes, rhythms, tonalities, articulations, dynamics, etc. to which students have already been introduced. This will enable them to experience the joy of connecting with, interpreting, and expressing music in a full ensemble setting.



As stated in previous modules, 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. Often jazz band provides an additional co-curricular full ensemble experience for students at this level. Jazz band members also participate in concert band.

Important Reminder re Canadian Band Association Standards for Instrumental Music (Band)

As noted in Module 5, the intention is that, when Module 7 has been completed, students will have attained “Achieves the Standard” requirements for Grade 8 as articulated in National Voluntary Curriculum and Standards for Instrumental Music (pp. 30-33). Scales and rhythmic skills, sight-reading, and ear training in this module are designed with these objectives in mind.

Glossary

- Lip Slurs
- Crossing the break
- Concert Scales/Keys: B-flat, E-flat, F, A-flat, C major, B-flat chromatic, d, g, and c minor (natural and harmonic), B-flat blues
- Chromatics
- Enharmonic equivalents
- Metres: $\frac{4}{4}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{2}{4}$, $\frac{2}{2}$, $\frac{3}{8}$, and $\frac{6}{8}$
- Note/Rest Values: whole, half, quarter, eighth notes and rests, dotted quarter and eighth notes
- Ostinato
- Syncopation
- Drum Rudiments: 5-stroke roll, Flam paradiddle, Flam tap, Double paradiddle, 9-stroke roll, syncopated 9-stroke roll, 17-stroke roll, drag, flamacue
- Articulations: slur, *tenuto*, *staccato*, accent
- Expressive *legato*
- Melodic intervals: 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th
- Harmonic interval: Major 2nd
- I, IV, V triads and chord progressions
- 12-bar Blues form
- Tempi: *Andante*, *Moderato*, *Allegretto*, *Allegro*, *Lento*
- Dance music
- Celtic air
- Acadian/Celtic jig
- Chant
- Chorale
- Graphic notation
- Terms and Symbols: All from previous modules and in addition (or including) syncopation, enharmonic, *accelerando*, *fermata*, *DS al fine*, *DC al fine*, L.V., monophony, polyphony, *poco rit.*, *piu mosso*, *rallentando*, *molto rall.*, *a tempo*, *maestoso*

Introduction

This module presumes that students are already comfortable with the basic skills, concepts, and musical attitudes introduced in Modules 1- 5. During this module, experiences are “centered” around: consolidating previous learning; playing and composing in 6/8 meter; sight-reading; exploring the Blues; and playing and composing full ensemble works that evoke ancient times.



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.

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: Focus on Sight-Reading

(6 hours)

Introduction

As the title suggests, the focal point of this unit is on working together and individually to improve sight-reading skills. Self-assessment will play a key part on the learning process as students identify the aspects of notation that they need to work on and the progress that they have made. Cut time will be introduced, while and concepts including syncopation, expressive legato playing, and chromatics/enharmonics will be explored further.



As stated previously, it is critical that playing and singing “by ear”, rhythmic exercises, improvisation/composition activities, music literacy and active listening activities be woven into each unit. Suggestions provided for these learning/assessment activities should be considered a resource to be adapted, according to the needs and interests of students. For example, a teacher may choose to use Ear Training/Improvisation activities other than the ones referred to below, but this component of the unit should never be omitted.

Key Concepts/Musical Building Blocks

- Consolidation of learning in Modules 1-5
- Sight reading
- $\frac{2}{2}$
- Syncopation
- Ostinato
- Expressive *legato*
- Flamacue
- Dance music
- Celtic air
- Writing melodic intervals: 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th
- Suggested full band repertoire: “As Winds Dance” (Hazo), “Fantasy on an Irish Air” (arr. Saucedo)

NOTE: Method book references are *Standard of Excellence*: pp. 13-15, *Essential Elements*: p. 24 *Band Technique Step-by-Step* pp. 2-3, 6-7, 10-11, 36 (select exercises). It is suggested that teachers using *Band Technique Step-by-Step* choose the “basic” studies that correspond to keys/concepts introduced in each unit.

Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Process

Because the focus of this unit is a sight-reading “challenge”, emphasis will be on reinforcing previous learning. As teachers plan this, and each unit, they may find it helpful to use a chart that maps learning/assessment focus for the unit (see Module 5, Unit 1 for a sample chart). Such a planning chart is invaluable for effectively weaving theory/ear training, listening, and composition/improvisation activities throughout the basic skills components.

Tips for Teaching Success

Shaping Sound Musicians (O’Toole, pp. 211-212) provides outlines for Unit Plans and Daily Teaching Plans that are based on the comprehensive musicianship model. Teachers may find these outlines, or aspects of them, very helpful as they plan for learning. In addition, ideas for repertoire analysis, outcomes, strategies, assessment, and music selection are found in the same chapter (“CMP at a Glance”, pp. 199-210).

BASIC SKILLS COMPONENT

Once again, it may be helpful to review once more clarinet exercises for crossing the break such as those suggested in Modules 4 and 5. Other woodwind players should work on octave slurs, while brass lip slurs and percussion rudiments require regular attention. See Module 5, Unit 1 for a few suggestions for incorporating these exercises in the heterogenous class setting.

Tips for Teaching Success

“For brass players I use a lip slur improvisation activity. Each student improvises a lip slur which is then repeated by the other students in a call & response format.”

Stephen Hartlen, March 2010

Regularly incorporate chromatic scales and segments of scales (e.g., first 5 notes ascending from tonic), both written and by ear, in lessons. This learning will be reinforced by work with enharmonic equivalents in theory.

Sight-Reading Challenge

Introduce the Sight-Reading Challenge by talking together about the reasons why strong sight-reading ability is so important for musicians. Explain that, during this unit, each student will be challenged to significantly build on their own sight-reading skills.

- Together, examine sample melodic and rhythmic phrases and identify everything that would need to be understood in order for them to be sight-read correctly (e.g., key signature, time signature, pitches on the staff, note values, rudiments for percussionists, articulation markings, dynamic markings, phrasing, tempo indication, and “road map” instructions).



- Provide an opportunity for students to assess “where they are now” and create a chart on which each will record specific basic concepts (e.g., e-natural in F concert, quarter note-two eighths rhythm pattern, repeat sign, flam tap, 4th line D in treble clef, *staccato*). The musical “chapters” could be listed vertically, in the left-hand column, with separate horizontal boxes for each date that sight-reading is done. See a sample chart that follows.

NOTE: This chart is only a sample – teachers are encouraged to adapt it or create one that will work for their students.

Concept	Date-Remarks	Date-Remarks	Date-Remarks	Date-Remarks
Melodic	Nov. 7- missed all 3 F-sharps in G major	Nov. 9- only missed one F-sharp in G major		
Rhythmic	Nov. 7- played quarter-two eighths pattern correctly	Nov. 9- did not do the quarter-half-quarter pattern correctly	Nov. 14- missed the quarter rests	Nov. 17- played the quarter-half-quarter pattern right on – still missed two rests
Style (Articulation, Dynamics, Phrasing, Tempo)	Nov. 7- played staccatos as marked but did not play <i>p</i> in the last 4 bars	Nov. 9- missed the accents but got the staccatos	Nov. 14- staccatos were even clearer today	Nov. 17-
Road Map Signs	Nov. 7- forgot the repeat sign	Nov. 9- played the 1 st and 2 nd ending correctly		Nov 17- got the repeat sign this time!
Sound and Attitude	Nov. 7 – I was nervous trying this and my sound was thin and out of tune		Nov. 14- I really could imagine what the melody sounded like before we played it	Nov. 17 – I think that my confidence is growing – and my notes had a nice round sound

- Sight-read, as a class, an exercise 4 to 8 bars in length in each of B-flat, E-flat, and F-concert keys (choose or write exercises that incorporate the note values and articulations that were found in Modules 2-5). Before the students begin, review the “rules” for sight-reading including:
 - 1-2 minutes for silently checking such as: key signature; time signature; instructions re repeats; 1st and 2nd endings; articulations; hints about style and tempo
 - Speed of the beat indicated by metronome or teacher prior to first playing
 - No stopping, no going back (do not stop to correct wrong notes)

NOTE: *Band Instruments Module 3*, Unit 1 suggests a possible procedure for sight reading that might be adapted for this unit.

- After each exercise identify together successes and errors. Have students note what their individual successes were and what they need to work to improve (e.g., a student might note that they read pitches well but do not correctly play the rhythms). This initial assessment can provide goals for the Sight-Reading Challenge.

Once these goals have been set, teachers may find that a few rhythmic sight-reading exercises, played on a single pitch, might be the most effective place to begin the Challenge process.

Tips for Teaching Success

The Music Director's Cookbook (pp. 99-100) has thoughtful, practical suggestions for incorporating sight-reading in full band rehearsals. The author, Deborah Sheldon, provides solid rationale and ideas regarding sight-reading materials, timing during rehearsals, and goals.

Encourage students to spend time every day (even if it is just 5 minutes) sight-reading something on their own. Suggestions such as these might be helpful for them.

Ingredients for Sight-Reading Success

- As a warmup, play scales and exercises in the dark.
- Do not look at your fingers when you play.
- Practice sight-reading every day.
- Play only the rhythm first.
- Play only the pitches next.
- Force yourself to keep going – no matter what!
- Do not worry about errors the first time.
- Use the metronome to keep a steady beat.
- Start with easy music.
- Before you start a sight-reading exercise, determine what the key signature is, the time signature, the suggested speed, the starting note, dynamics.
- Sing through the first few bars in your head.
- Play music!



As part of the learning/assessment process, talk together about the progress that has been made through the Sight-Reading Challenge. Identify the goals that have been met. Students might use their completed concept/date/remarks chart to identify specific sight-reading progress that they have each made. If possible, have students together sight-read an exercise that they would not have been able to do successfully at the outset. Engage them in celebrating what they have learned.

Tips for Teaching Success

“I have a new respect for the topic of sight-reading and its value in the development of young musicians. I think a lot of us as teachers are guilty of not doing sight-reading on a regular basis, but in 3 weeks (cycles) of working on this topic, the students are much more aware of what’s on the page before they start to play.

There were so many great references in the resources to the value of and long-term gains from doing sight-reading regularly, and I think the students understand the results that stem from it. Although it was somewhat time consuming, I went through many old band methods and did a “cut and paste” of songs and exercises to continue this topic in the future. I will now do sight-reading on a more regular basis, with all grade levels.”

Ken Howatson, March 2010



We know that establishing effective habits for playing/practicing is a key challenge for students and teachers. It is an unfortunate reality that busy schedules for both students and parents, and unfocused use of time often conspire to result in unproductive and increasingly infrequent practice sessions. *Developing the Complete Band Program* (Jagow, pp. 253-259) contains many suggestions that could be helpful for students at this level. In addition, refer to Appendix B in *Band Instruments: Appendices* for a fine document prepared by Jack Brownell and adapted for use in the school curriculum. It provides numerous ideas for individual practice – how, when, how to structure it, etc. Teachers are encouraged to select those sections that will be most helpful for their students, at any given point. For convenience, his form titled “Practice Practicing”, adapted somewhat, is included on the next page, and might well be completed by students two or three times during this module. These forms could become a valuable part of the students’ learning portfolio.

PRACTICE PRACTICING

Name _____

Date _____

Title of music you are working on _____

Identify the “problem” spots _____

Describe how you decided that you needed to work on this spot.

What is your goal in this practice session? Rhythm? Difficult notes? Articulation? Phrasing?
Expressiveness? Range? Tempo? Tone quality? Other?

Describe why this spot was challenging for you ("I didn't understand the rhythm" or "I could do the counting, but I couldn't play the spot & keep track of the beat" or "The combination of flam & triplet confused me" or "The notes bobble when I slur between them" or whatever describes your issue.)

Describe what techniques you used to tackle this passage.

How many times did you practice this passage in one session? _____

Describe some of your successes or frustrations.

What will your next steps be?

What did you learn during this session (Did you learn something about your instrument, or about you as a “practicer,” or about practicing in general, or about the piece of music? Was the practice session useful? Was it fun? Was it satisfying? Or....)

Tips for Teaching Success

Alternatively, a checklist such as the one that follows (less daunting for young students) could be developed that might be appropriate for some students.

Rhythm ___ notes help proper length
 ___ counting
 ___ silence on rests
Notes ___ correct notes
 ___ key signature attended to.
 ___ quality of sound
 ___ accidentals

Gale Lohnes, March 2010

When working with “As Winds Dance” (Hazo), consider the following suggestions:

- As an introduction, talk together about what the title might imply. What are the most important characteristics of most dance music? (lightness, emphasis on beat #1, infectious and repetitive rhythmic patterns). What is the speed for this dance for winds and percussion?
- Work together, without instruments, on the two, 2-bar syncopated patterns that are found in the work (see the Teaching Tools listed in the score). Have fun with them! Students could invent their own spoken phrases for each. In addition, half the class might clap the quarter note beat while the other half say or tap the syncopated pattern with a pencil or pen on the music stand. Challenge students to get up and move. They might stand and tap the beat with their foot/feet while clapping the syncopated pattern. They might clap only the accented notes in the syncopated patterns while saying or walking the main beats. Be sure to remind them that this is a dance that needs to be light and infectious. All notes in the rhythm patterns need to be detached. The “listening squad” strategy might be used very effectively with this.
- Display the rhythm pattern that occurs in the snare drum and tympani in bars 43-50. Group the class into two sections and have one clap the snare drum pattern (accented quarter-triplet eighths-quarter) while the other responds with the tympani pattern (accented quarter -two eighths-quarter). This will provide a useful reference point for $\frac{6}{8}$ meter in Unit 2.
- When working on the melody in bars 35-55 and bars 71-79, encourage students to play *legato* 3- and 4-bar phrases without slowing down.
- Do not hesitate to assign some flutes to the oboe part in bars 71-the end with a view to improving the overall balance of the ensemble in this section. Also, some 1st clarinets could play the 3rd clarinet line during this section.
- Record a rehearsal run-through, listen, and reflect together about whether it has the lightness and dancing quality that is required to make this really scintillating. If not, what can be done to improve?

- If there are students who especially like to dance, encourage them to choreograph a simple movement sequence that all could try while listening to a recorded version of the work. Such a movement sequence could become part of a public presentation.
- See the Active Listening Component on p. 18 for related listening suggestions.

Tips for Teaching Success

Michael Burch-Pesses (*Music Director's Cookbook*, pp. 16-17) provides some simple but clear suggestions for marking the score, enabling increased eye contact with students during rehearsal and improved musical results.

When working with a slow Celtic air such as “Fantasy on an Irish Air” (arr. Saucedo), consider the following suggestions:

- Do a few of the breathing exercises suggested in *The Breathing Gym* prior to each time that the work is rehearsed to reinforce correct use of the air and breath support. Also, play some long tones or a known chorale, encouraging students to produce the most beautiful tone that they can.
- Talk together about why this melody/song has been such an enduring one. Why does it work so well? What are the lyrics about? Why do we feel an emotional connection with the melody (see the Active Listening Component on p. 18 for related suggestions)?
- Emphasize 4-bar phrasing (rather than 2-bar) and have students sing or hum the melody, shaping the phrases expressively. Challenge the low brass and woodwind players to listen carefully and shape their phrases as well. Remind them that they need to think “all smooth, all the time”, even when melodic leaps are involved (e.g., bars 45-46).
- Challenge students to always listen for the melody and to make sure that their own notes support and enhance it, without overpowering it. If possible, organize students in groups of four to six, with soprano, alto, tenor, and bass voices in each group, and have them work on an 8-bar phrase with a view to achieving a balanced ensemble sound. Percussion students could play the bass line on mallet instruments) for this activity.
- When presenting this for an audience, invite one of the students or a local singer to sing a verse or two of the song just prior to the band’s version.

NOTE: Teachers who are using *Essential Elements* may decide to use the arrangement of “Danny Boy” that is found on student page 24 rather than the one referred to above.

Tips for Teaching Success

Practical ideas for portfolio management are found in *Shaping Sound Musicians* (p.88). The chapter also includes examples of evaluation forms, including rating scales, a rehearsal critique, a scale and key signature worksheet, a band practice log, and a goof-up certificate (mentioned previously) that could be adapted for students at this level.

WRITTEN THEORY COMPONENT

Be sure to include ample opportunity for students to work with writing and counting rhythm patterns that are found during their Sight-Reading Challenge and in cut time. They should also name notes and write excerpts in the relevant key signatures.

This is also a perfect time to do a review of enharmonic equivalents that students have encountered up to now.

Have students write the intervals of a 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th above and below notes in each key signature. Note that naming the quality of the interval is not included at this point.

EAR TRAINING/IMPROVISATION COMPONENT

Using both the singing voice and their instruments, have students do melody playback (See CBA Standards for Grade 8), using melodies that begin on the tonic and that have only stepwise movement. Be sure to include 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4 meters. It might be fun to invite individual students to compose melodies that meets these requirements and use them for melody playback.

Invite students to use personal percussion in a “call and response” activity involving rhythm patterns. Syncopated patterns should be included. Always be sure to have a steady beat being sounded (students could take turns doing this) as the rhythm patterns are performed.

Keeping in mind the concepts that have been included in this unit, the following games from *Improvisation Games for Classical Musicians* (Agrell) are suggested:

- Holiday Time (p. 56)
- Echo (p. 63)
- Accents (p. 66)
- Brass Warmup (p. 73)
- Murmuring (p. 74)
- Rhythm Machine (p. 99)
- Steal That Tune (p. 163)

COMPOSITION COMPONENT

Suggestions include:

- Invite students, working in groups of two or three, to compose a 16-24 bar duet or trio in $\frac{3}{4}$ meter that includes a syncopated ostinato (1- or 2-bar pattern) and a melody above it. They might choose to play or sing the melody and the ostinato could be for wind or percussion/personal percussion instruments. As the compositions are presented, listeners could be challenged to notate the rhythm of the ostinato.
- Invite students to compose a very expressive melody that is meant to convey a specific mood such as sadness, longing, loneliness, excitement, joy. It need not be more than 8-bars in length (or some may wish to make it much longer!). As the compositions are performed, have the composer and listeners reflect about what musical devices they used to convey the chosen mood, why they chose them, and which aspects of the compositions were the most successful in conveying that emotion.
- Challenge students to write a simple 4-bar melody in cut time and use the melodies for class sight-reading.



Any composition work (including individual reflection) should be placed in the student learning portfolios. Prior to the portfolios being evaluated (perhaps at the end of the module), students might, in a cover statement, indicate what they thought were their two most successful compositions and why they chose them.

Tips for Teaching Success

Classroom management is always a “work in progress”. *Developing the Complete Band Program* (Jagow, p. 269) provides a few very thoughtful considerations for your own classroom management procedures.

ACTIVE LISTENING COMPONENT



- Have students listen to one or two recorded versions of the Celtic air that they are studying. Some students might like to bring recordings that they have of the melody. Try to include at least one vocal version. Talk together about what ideas each recording gives them for interpreting the arrangement that they are learning.
- As an aspect of the work with *As Winds Dance*, have students put their instruments down, and listen to an infectious Latin dance of some type (e.g., reggae, calypso). Teachers might choose to use a video clip found on YouTube that shows happy, relaxed, group dancing. Perhaps, initially, students might simply clap the syncopated rhythms of the dance.
- Then have students stand, in several rows and columns, all facing in the same direction, for a Latin “line dance”. They should imagine sun and warmth and no homework and big smiles. Students in the front row could initiate the dance moves, with students in the rows behind copying them. An alternate formation for this activity is to have one student at the head of the “V”, while the others “fan out” behind, in rows of increasing length, with columns staggered so that all can see the person at the front. In this case, that one student would be the “leader” for one verse or chorus and other student(s) who volunteer could take on the dance captain role for another segment of the song.
- Once they have danced and listened, talk together about how this music/dancing might improve their playing of *As Winds Dance*.

NOTE: To prepare students for creative movement response, use one or two exercises to “loosen up”. Suggestions found in *NS Drama 10 and Drama 11*, include activities that focus on physical movement and concentration such as:

- Zip Zap Zop (p. 212)
- Crossed Hands (p. 207)
- Machine (p. 211)

Unit 2: Introducing $\frac{3}{8}$ and $\frac{6}{8}$, A-Flat Concert (6 hours)

Introduction

As the title suggests, the new concepts for this unit are $\frac{3}{8}$ and $\frac{6}{8}$ meters, along with work in the key of A-Flat concert. Work with $\frac{6}{8}$ meter will include some investigation of Celtic/Acadian jigs. It should be noted that, though the suggested repertoire does not include the key of A-Flat concert, the intention is that students will work in that key in a variety of method book and ear training exercises so that it will be a “known quantity” when it first appears in repertoire. The unit also contains continued focus on expressive *legato* playing.

NOTE: A choice of three $\frac{6}{8}$ marches is provided. Teachers may well choose another that is more appropriate for their students.

Key Concepts/Musical Building Blocks

- Consolidation of learning in Modules 1-5
- Compound time
- $\frac{6}{8}$ meter
- $\frac{3}{8}$ meter
- A-Flat concert
- Expressive *legato*
- Chromatic phrases
- Flamacue
- Acadian/Celtic jig
- Suggested full band repertoire: “Washington Post” (Sousa, arr. Osterling), “Semper Fidelis” (Sousa, arr. Higgins), “A French-Canadian Suite”, Mvts. 1 and 2 (arr. MacLaughlan)

NOTE: Method book references are *Standard of Excellence*: pp. 17-18 (excluding C major), *Essential Elements*: pp. 15-16, *Band Technique Step-by-Step* pp. 6-7, 12-15(select exercises). It is suggested that teachers using *Band Technique Step-by-Step* choose the “basic” studies that correspond to keys/concepts introduced in each unit.

Tips for Teaching Success

Continue to include singing as part of the learning process, whether it be sight-singing, singing chorales as part of band warm-up and tuning, singing band repertoire parts, “call and response” ear training exercises, work with solfege, or using the voice as an instrument in composition and improvisation. Teachers enthusiastically affirm the value of singing for improving intonation, sound quality, phrasing, etc. See *Developing the Complete Band Program* (Jagow, pp. 70, 72) for specific suggestions for singing and intonation/tuning.

Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Process

BASIC SKILLS COMPONENT

The following suggestions are provided for this component:

When working with A-Flat concert, refer to previous modules for suggestions for reinforcing students’ comfort with the new key. These include, without being limited to:

- use of solfege
- playing simple B-Flat concert exercises and known tunes in A-Flat
- “call and response” in the new key
- Sight-reading (and singing the exercise first)
- related theory and composition exercises

When there are errors, encourage the students to listen, play the note again, and determine what needs to be corrected.

Also, it might be fun to have the students play an exercise in B-Flat concert, then in A-Flat concert and talk about whether one has a different “feel” than the other. Why might a composer choose to write in A-Flat concert, rather than B-Flat?

Tips for Teaching Success

Continue to include brief exercises that include chromatic movement as part of warm-up, ear training, sight-reading, theory work, etc. By coming back again and again to notes that move chromatically, students will gradually be comfortable with reading and playing them. *Essential Elements* (p. 16) has several excellent chromatic studies.

When introducing $\frac{3}{8}$ meter, use rhythm flash cards to involve students in counting, reading, writing, and playing rhythmic patterns that use eighth, quarter, and dotted quarter notes and rests, and sixteenth notes. Once they are comfortable with the rhythmic patterns, try sight-reading method book exercises that are in $\frac{3}{8}$ meter.

The same suggestions apply to the introduction of $\frac{6}{8}$ meter. Teachers may find that it is effective to introduce the “slow $\frac{6}{8}$ ” first and then proceed to “two beats to a bar” $\frac{6}{8}$. There are numerous counting systems that exist for quick $\frac{6}{8}$. Teachers will choose the one that they find works best for their students. See *Developing the Complete Band Program* (Jagow, p. 93) for a counting system that uses the syllables “lah” and “lee”.

Tips for Teaching Success

“Before introducing different time signatures, I often do a conducting exercise where the students need to count beats as I do the beat pattern at the front with the baton. This is a great way to introduce $\frac{6}{8}$ and $\frac{5}{8}$ while including some examples of $\frac{2}{4}$, $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{4}{4}$. I then ask student conductors to take the podium. Interesting results!”

Gale Lohnes, March 2010

It is strongly recommended that students have an opportunity to move to music in $\frac{6}{8}$ meter, so that they physically experience the “feel” of compound meter, prior to seeing and working with the notation. This might involve skipping, galloping, playing the spoons, doing a rudimentary step dance figure, etc. Teachers could use any of the many recordings of Celtic jigs for this activity.

At this point, teachers might also introduce compound triple and quadruple meters, with a view to students’ understanding $\frac{6}{8}$ within the wider context of compound meters.

From the very first exercise in quick $\frac{6}{8}$ meter, it is important that the tempo be steady and that the style be light and detached, with a slight stress on the beats. Clapping the exercise first, then singing/saying the rhythm (in the appropriate style) will assist with students’ understanding of the “feel” of the meter. As suggested above, listening/moving to music that is in $\frac{6}{8}$ meter is also an effective strategy (see Active Listening Component on p. 27 for more specific suggestions).



It is critical that adequate time and a variety of learning activities (including playing, singing, moving, writing, listening) be devoted to compound meter and $\frac{6}{8}$ meter at this point, so that students truly understand the concepts. Time spent reinforcing this learning will be worth its weight in gold in the future.

Depending on the method book that is being used and the selected repertoire, percussionists may need to learn the flam tap in $\frac{6}{8}$ meter, as well as the flamacue. When working on these rudiments in a heterogenous setting, involve wind students in “playing” the rhythms of the rudiment with their fingertips/palms on their thighs, using the correct right/left patterns.

Our Ideas

Note: This space is for the creative approaches that you and your students used for this unit.

When working with “**Washington Post**” (Sousa/Osterling), “**Semper Fidelis** (Sousa/Higgins), “**A French-Canadian Suite, Movement 1**” (arr. MacLaughlan) or another $\frac{6}{8}$ march, consider the following suggestions:

- Have students work on octave leaps in E-Flat concert to prepare for the leaps in “Washington Post”. Also, have them sing the “call and response” phrases in bars 26-30 to ensure that there is no “lag” between them.
- Talk together about what a march is. Often this will be a “revisiting”, but it is important to reinforce understanding.
- What is its basic purpose? What are all marches for?
- What does that tell us about how a march must be played (whether a funeral, processional, or parade march)?
- Build sections of the march from the bass line upwards. Do not hesitate to strengthen the bass and tenor lines by adding such instruments as bass and tenor mallet instruments, clarinets in the low register, etc. This is especially important when a countermelody in the tenor line must sing through. Involve students in listening for effective balance from the bottom to the top of the ensemble. If it is possible for students to work in small groups of four to six, this work can often assist students in being more conscious of “bass to soprano” balance in the full group.
- When working with the 1st movement of “A French-Canadian Suite”, the full ensemble could sing the bass line in bars 29-40, paying close attention to tuning of the D-flat. They could then listen for this bass line as the full arrangement is being played. In addition, ask students, during rehearsal, to sustain all detached quarter notes in bars 45-52, so that they can better hear the tuning of the chords.
- Have all students hum the melody or countermelody of the march to piano accompaniment, encouraging correct phrasing and style. (See *Shaping Sound Musicians*, p. 229)
- As sections of the full ensemble play the march, have the remainder of the students march, either standing on the spot or moving around the room. Talk together about whether the tempo is steady, whether it works for marching, whether the style is appropriate.
- Take time to record run-throughs of the full march or a section of it and together, analyse what is working and what needs to be improved, setting specific objectives for the next rehearsal.

NOTE: Active Listening suggestions on p. 27 provide additional ideas for understanding $\frac{6}{8}$ march style.

Tips for Teaching Success

The march style “do’s and don’ts” that are found in *Developing the Complete Band Program* (pp. 129-130) have been mentioned in previous modules and are a useful reference. Specific considerations for $\frac{6}{8}$ marches are provided. The diagram of March Form (p. 128) is also an excellent reference.

When working with “A French-Canadian Suite, Movement 2” (arr. MacLaughlan), consider the following suggestions:

- Talk together about what is at the “heart” of this song, the mood, and the choice of minor tonality. Ask whether there are students in the class who have a French-Canadian/Acadian heritage. Invite them to share family traditions, including music making in the home.
- Share with students the arranger’s comments that appear on the score and, together, make a list of two to three overall stylistic priorities that they will keep in mind as they work on it (e.g., very smooth, gentle, communicate sense of longing).
- Invite students to bring in recordings of other songs that communicate a sense of longing.
- Use the listening squad strategy when working on the “sighing” phrases. Can they really hear smooth *crescendos* and *diminuendos*? Are the quarter notes that precede the eighth rests being sustained for their full value?
- Consider having all players hum the melody as smoothly as possible, shaping the phrases carefully. Then have the tenor/bass drone played as the other students hum the melody. Notice the intervals of a major 2nd that occur. What is the musical effect of having this interval resolve to unison/octave?
- To assist with the inner lines where numerous added accidentals appear (e.g., 2nd trumpet in bars 20-22), have students say aloud the note names as they depress the correct keys. This might also be an excellent time to have all students sing the part and identify chromatic movement when it occurs.
- Spend some time having students play the final 10 bars of the 1st movement and then begin the 2nd movement, in the new tempo and style. Challenge them to hear the new tempo/style in their head before they begin playing.

NOTE: The Walkabout activity described in *NS Drama 10 and Drama 11* (p. 212) might be an excellent way to enhance learning about changes of mood/style, as it provides an opportunity for students to convey mood/feeling through movement.

Tips for Teaching Success

“I began the concept of $\frac{6}{8}$ with having my students move to a slow and fast piece of music in $\frac{6}{8}$.

(Interestingly, they noted that it was so much easier to skip than to walk). They first moved to the beat only and then I added more complex rhythmic movement.

The students completed rhythmic dictation as well as melodic dictation in $\frac{6}{8}$. They also composed rhythm duets for body percussion and eventually added melody and performed it on their instruments.

When it was time to begin “A French-Canadian Suite”, it seemed to come together quite quickly. They enjoyed playing the piece, both the fast and slow movements.”

Noelle Wadden, May 2010



Depending on resources in the local community, plan with students a French-Canadian/Acadian Heritage Day. Such a special event might include:

- Local musicians doing a noon-hour concert
- An Acadian step-dancing workshop
- Acadian songs performed by community members and/or a French class or school choir
- Traditional food and costumes
- Band students playing the “French-Canadian Suite” and/or other folk songs
- A display of heritage photographs that show traditional kitchen parties with instruments and dancers
- Acadian seniors in the community talking with students about the music with which they grew up

Tips for Teaching Success

The Music Director’s Cookbook (pp. 32-33) outlines a fun and creative method for changing seating in the ensemble, with a view to making students more aware of musical lines other than their own and of how the various parts fit into the whole. The “recipe” also provides an opportunity for a refreshing change of rehearsal pace.

WRITTEN THEORY COMPONENT

Be sure to include ample opportunity for students to work with writing and counting rhythm patterns in $\frac{3}{8}$ and $\frac{6}{8}$ meters (and perhaps $\frac{9}{8}$ and $\frac{12}{8}$). They could convert excerpts in $\frac{3}{4}$ meter to $\frac{3}{8}$ as well. In some cases, teachers may find it helpful to ask students to write out challenging rhythmic patterns that are found in their full ensemble literature, writing the counting underneath.

Have students rewrite melodic phrases that are in A-Flat concert, using added accidentals rather than a key signature. They should also become comfortable with writing the key signature in their own clef.

Once again referring to full ensemble literature, have students copy and name notes in problematic chromatic passages.



Using the diagram of march form mentioned above as a reference point, challenge students, working in groups of three to four, to map the form of the $\frac{6}{8}$ march that they are studying.

EAR TRAINING/IMPROVISATION COMPONENT

Have students play or sing 5-note melodies in A-Flat concert (both $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{4}{4}$ meters) that start on the tonic and that include an interval of a 3rd. As a special challenge, have students do melody playback using 2-bar $\frac{6}{8}$ melodies that begin on the tonic and that have only stepwise movement.

Keeping in mind the concepts that have been included in this unit, the following games from *Improvisation Games for Classical Musicians* (Agrell) are suggested:

- Accent Games (p. 65-66)
- Percussion Ostinato (p. 101)
- Accents 2 (p. 106)
- Accent Solo (p. 105)
- Oom Pah March (p. 155)
- Feelings (p. 184)
- Play the Face (p. 184)

Teachers might also like to ask students whether there are specific improvisation games from previous units/modules that they would like to repeat. Students might challenge to be the “leader” for the game that they have chosen.

Tips for Teaching Success

Some suggestions (including useful relevant web sites) for music education advocacy and public relations are found in *Developing the Complete Band Program* (Jagow, pp. 241-246). Teachers are encouraged to read Daniel Levitin’s *The World in Six Songs* and *The Musical Brain* for a fascinating look at music and the human brain.

COMPOSITION COMPONENT

Suggestions include:

- Invite students, working in pairs, to compose an 8-bar slow $\frac{6}{8}$ Celtic-style air that is played or sung over a drone. Their composition might include a 1st and 2nd ending and extend to 16 bars. They might well choose a minor key for their work, but not necessarily so. If the melody is to be sung, lyrics might be written (or borrowed from a known poem).
- When students have had an opportunity to listen to a few Acadian/Celtic jigs, challenge them to write a jig using only the first 5 notes of a major scale. Alternatively, have them write a jig or $\frac{6}{8}$ march that uses only extended playing techniques. This creative work might be done in groups of two to three and, when presented, include personal percussion, scat sounds, etc.
- Have students compose and present an unaccompanied Chromatic Fantasy (in, you guessed it, $\frac{6}{8}$ meter) that includes every note of the B-Flat or E-Flat chromatic scale.

ACTIVE LISTENING COMPONENT



Have students listen to two or three different recordings of the same Sousa march (if possible, the one that they are learning). Either working as a full group, or in small groups, challenge them to identify what aspects of each recording they thought were most effective. Talk together about what they learned that will make a positive difference to their own performance of the piece.

Invite an Acadian or Celtic fiddler (or flute or tin whistle player) to visit the class and play some examples of folk jigs. Encourage students to join in, using personal percussion or spoons (if available). Have students ask questions about the music they hear and about whether the guest learned it by reading notes or “by ear”. Often, these musicians can also do some step dancing. Invite them to teach a couple of basic steps to the students and play as the students dance.

With students, listen to an arrangement of Bach’s “Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring” ($\frac{3}{8}$ meter) Challenge them to identify the meter signature. Once this has been done, talk together about why Bach may have decided to use this meter. What “feel” does it have? What do they learn from this composition that they can transfer to their playing of the 2nd movement of the “French-Canadian Suite”?

Listen together to one or two songs that express longing (e.g., “Shenandoah”, “Down by the Salley Gardens”, “My Heart’s in the Highlands” by the Barra MacNeils, any slow air played by Buddy or Natalie McMaster).

- What do these have in common with “C’est la Belle Françoise”?
- Why is this music so effective in conveying the emotion of longing?
- Is it more powerful than words?



Before proceeding to the next unit, it might be very helpful (for both students and teachers) if they have an opportunity to write/draw/sketch/record everything that they now know about $\frac{6}{8}$ meter and include their entry in learning journals. This could certainly include a recording of their own playing. Any obvious “misconceptions” could be addressed in subsequent classes.

Tips for Teaching Success

Often during these Band Instruments modules, mention has been made of the importance of getting to the “heart” of the music that is being played. For the convenience of teachers, these excellent references in this regard are listed again here.

Shaping Sound Musicians (p. 18)

Developing the Complete Band Program (pp. 32, 117-122)

Unit 3: The Blues

(6 hours)

Introduction

As the title suggests, the focus for this unit is on The Blues. The intention is to provide opportunity for students to “immerse themselves” in The Blues. They will learn the B-Flat blues scale, investigate twelve-bar blues form through listening and playing/singing, improvise, sing and identify I-IV-V chord progressions, write and play notes in the I, IV, and V triads in B-Flat concert, compose a twelve-bar blues piece, and work further with syncopated rhythmic patterns and notes of the blues scale in a full ensemble piece. The natural and harmonic forms of the g minor scale are also included in this unit.

NOTE: It is understood that regular warm-up exercises and revisiting of previously learned concepts will occur naturally throughout the unit.

Key Concepts/Musical Building Blocks

- Consolidation of learning in Modules 1-5
- B-Flat Blues scale
- I, IV, V triads
- Twelve bar blues form
- Early blues
- Rhythm and blues/rock and roll
- Melodic intervals of 4th and 5th
- Syncopation
- g natural and harmonic minor scales
- Suggested full band repertoire: “Blues Machine” (Carl Strommen)

NOTE: Method book references are *Standard of Excellence*: pp. 16 and 19, *Essential Elements*: various, *Band Technique Step-by-Step* pp. 4-5(select exercises). It is suggested that teachers using *Band Technique Step-by-Step* choose the “basic” studies that correspond to keys/concepts introduced in each unit.

Tips for Teaching Success

Continue to include singing as part of the learning process, whether it be sight-singing, singing chorales as part of band warm-up and tuning, singing band repertoire parts, “call and response” ear training exercises, working with solfege, or using the voice as an instrument in composition and improvisation. In the present unit, students can sing the blues melodies (and lyrics) that they have composed as well. Teachers enthusiastically affirm the value of singing for improving intonation, sound quality, phrasing, etc. See *Developing the Complete Band Program* (Jagow, pp. 70, 72) for specific suggestions for singing and intonation/tuning.

Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Process

INTRODUCTION

This unit is intended to be done in an integrated, seamless way. Thus, various aspects of skills, ear training, listening, theory, etc. will unfold “naturally”, rather than within a time slot. For the purposes of organization, the usual components will be listed separately, but it is understood that they will probably not be addressed separately as the students embark on this “blues” adventure.

Tips for Teaching Success

As teachers are planning this unit, they may find that reference to the 12-Bar Blues Project in *Explore Music 7: Popular Music of the 50s and 60s* (Unit 1, Part C) provides ideas that can be used/adapted effectively.

In addition, www.pbs.org/theblues has a comprehensive unit titled Understanding the 12-Bar Blues that includes lesson plans, a viewing guide, teacher’s guide CD with listening clips, and a bibliography and resources. Also, the Kennedy Center (www.artsedge.3kenedy-center.org) outlines a 12-Bar Blues project that could be adapted for the composition component.

BASIC SKILLS COMPONENT

In addition to work with the B-Flat Blues scale and g natural and harmonic minor scales, teachers may wish to introduce playing of the B-Flat concert scale in thirds. This work on the interval of the third would reinforce the learning of intervals of a third in triads.



Teachers might choose to introduce the E-Flat Blues scale as well and to have students work with it during this unit.

Using rhythm flash cards and accompaniment (piano, guitar, etc.) have students play/sing syncopated rhythm patterns that are found in their repertoire. In addition, some students could provide beat, back beat, and division of the beat, using personal percussion, while others play the notated patterns. Use this opportunity to reinforce accenting and detaching of notes in syncopated patterns.

Be sure to return, from time to time, to concepts introduced in the first two units of this module (especially $\frac{6}{8}$ and $\frac{2}{2}$ meters). Both method book exercises and repertoire can be used effectively for this reinforcement of learning.

Play and sing (using scat syllables) short “call and response” patterns that use the B-Flat blues scale, beginning on the tonic. Encourage individual students to be the leader for this activity.

When working with “Blues Machine” (Carl Strommen), or another piece in a similar style, consider the following suggestions:

- Have all wind students play or sing (in their own range) the bass line while percussionists keep a steady eighth note pattern. This will assist them in knowing what the foundation is and listening for it as they play their own parts.
- Once they have played through the piece a few times, work with students to analyse the work (see *Shaping Sound Musicians*, pp. 16-17 for a sample analysis). Once the analysis is done, they might then make decisions about balance, dynamic levels, etc.
- Teachers may find that a somewhat slower tempo (e.g. M.M. quarter note=112) than the one that is suggested will work best for their students. With careful attention to articulation (two types of accents, *staccato*, *tenuto*) and note duration, the piece will still be musically satisfying.
- Challenge students to identify all the notes that they have that are found in the B-Flat blues scale.
- The percussion interlude (bars 36-58) could be revised, embellished, etc. The full ensemble could participate in reworking this section of the piece. This section would also provide an ideal opportunity for student soloists to take turns improvising a 4-bar phrase, using notes in the blues scale they have learned.
- In some cases, teachers might consider abridging the piece (e.g., omitting bars 82-92).

Tips for Teaching Success

As a sort of “refresher”, teachers may find it helpful to refer to Tips for Effective Rehearsal (*Developing the Complete Band Program*, pp. 33-39) and Ideas for Efficient Rehearsal (*Music Director’s Cookbook*, pp. 113-114). Both these articles provide very useful suggestions for making the most of available rehearsal time.

WRITTEN THEORY COMPONENT

Suggestions for this component include:

- Have students write, count, and play syncopated patterns such as those that are found in their method book exercises and repertoire. It might be particularly effective to have them write out the pattern(s) that they find the most challenging, placing each note above the correct counting syllable.
- Challenge students to write the notes in I, IV, and V triads in B-Flat concert scale, identifying them as the root, third, or fifth of the triad.
- Students could write the new scales in this unit, both without and with a key signature. This might provide a challenge when writing both the harmonic minor and the B-Flat Blues scale. They should be asked to identify the degrees of the scale that are altered by using accidentals.
- If students have learned to play the B-Flat scale in thirds, they might also write it.

EAR TRAINING/IMPROVISATION COMPONENT

Have students sing and identify melodic intervals of a 4th and 5th in each key.

To enhance their work with the basic chord progressions in 12-bar blues form, involve students in identifying chord changes when they are played, using I, IV, and V. Also, students could listen for the chord changes as a simple blues song is being played and perhaps be challenged to play or sing notes from the correct triad. For example, bass and tenor instruments could play the root of the triad, altos the third and sopranos the fifth.

Ideas for Blues improvisation that use Band-in-a-Box are found in *Teaching Music Through Performance in Beginning Band* (pp. 83-85).

The following games from *Improvisation Games for Classical Musicians* (Agrell) are suggested:

- Do the Rest (p. 47)
- Swing It (p. 54)
- Echo Blues Scale (p. 63)
- Blues (p. 138)
- Rhythm Chord (p. 151)
- Chord Melody (p. 150)
- Heart and Soul (p. 156)

NOTE: The NS *Drama 10* and *Drama 11* guide outlines many excellent improvisation activities, including Action Completion (p. 206) and Noisy Machine (p. 216), both of which emphasize a group “rhythmic groove” and focus.

COMPOSITION COMPONENT

The suggested focal point is a 12-Bar Blues project. Teachers may find it helpful to refer to the Kennedy Center website mentioned at the beginning of the unit. Alternatively, they may wish to design a composition project with their students that might include:

- Groups of three to four students working together
- Writing the basic chord structure in B-Flat concert
- Composing the melody using the B-Flat blues scale
- Writing the lyrics
- Making decisions about instrumentation (vocal and instrumental melody, bass line, percussion, supporting chords)
- Refining the composition

Another possibility would be for the class to write a 12-Bar Blues composition. In this instance students might:

- Work together to decide on the title and then work in small groups, having each group write one to two verses of lyrics
- Work in small groups to compose the basic melody and work as a class to select/refine, etc.
- Work together to refine lyrics so that they suit the melody line
- Decide who will play for the underlying bass line, harmony, etc. and have those players write out their parts
- Record their work and make decisions re revisions, additions

NOTE: Suggestions for assessment of this project are included at the end of the unit.

Tips for Teaching Success

Emotional intelligence is “a different way of being smart” (Jagow, p. 283). Thoughtful suggestions regarding nurturing your own emotional quotient and that of your ensemble are included in Jagow, pp. 282-287.

ACTIVE LISTENING COMPONENT



As often as possible, provide examples of blues and rhythm and blues songs for students to listen to. Teachers might also choose to present a “survey” of the Blues, including songs from early 20th century blues musicians such as Ma Rainey or through to contemporary blues musicians such as Jeff Beck or Garrett Mason. As they listen, students might consider questions such as:

- Is the underlying chord and phrase structure that of twelve-bar blues?
- Is the mood of the song effectively communicated?
- Are improvised passages included in the performance?
- What is the instrumentation?
- What ideas does this piece give you for your own Twelve-bar Blues project?
- Why have the Blues been so influential?



This unit provides a wonderful opportunity to invite a local blues or rhythm and blues musician to visit the class and play/sing for the students. As part of the visit the guest could talk about why they play the blues, what they like best about the blues, etc. In addition, students could ask questions relating to their 12-Bar Blues project or the guest could listen to some of their work and provide suggestions for refining their composition.

Alternatively, a local blues aficionado or radio show host could visit the class and share a few of their all-time favourite Blues recordings. In this case, the guest and

students could talk together about the aspects of each performance that are outstanding/memorable.

It might be possible to involve the whole school in a “Blues Day”. Students could wear blue clothing, “blues-berry muffins” could be served in the cafeteria, blues recordings could be played in the cafeteria/hallways, music students could present their blues combos, etc. in the foyer or band room, and a guest blues/rhythm and blues artist could perform for the student body. Also, language arts students might present “blues” poetry that they have written.

Culminating Event

A culminating “event” that provides ample opportunities for both demonstration and celebration of learning and a range of assessment strategies might work very well for this unit. Teachers are encouraged to shape the “event” with their students, so that it best reflects what they have accomplished together.

Together, teachers and students could plan the event. It might include:

- Presenting/ recording blues compositions and combos
- Displaying compositions
- Presenting/recording *Blues Machine* (or chosen full ensemble piece)
- Inviting guests (parents, local musicians)
- Having guest musician(s) perform
- Putting together a Podcast or uploading a page on the school web site



Learning/assessment strategies that could be included are:

- Journal reflection about “the blues” (what students found most memorable, what they learned, what aspect of the unit they found most engaging, what they were surprised by, most challenged by, what connections they found with music in their lives, etc.)
- A recording could be done of the final blues presentations and students could reflect individually about strengths and next steps required.
- Teachers and students could co-construct, at the outset of the unit, a form for self-, peer- and teacher evaluation. A sample rubric is included below for reference only. Note: It is understood that this sample would need to be adapted significantly modified depending on what teachers/students have worked on.

Self-, Peer-, Teacher Blues Evaluation

Aspects of Learning	Rarely	Often	Always	Comments
Self: My playing demonstrated convincing blues styling: ✓ Articulation ✓ Rhythm ✓ Phrasing/ “feel”				
Small Group: Our combo demonstrated convincing blues styling: ✓ Articulation ✓ Rhythm ✓ Balance/phrasing				
Full Group: Our Blues Machine demonstrated that we have learned: Various articulations Rhythm patterns Balance/phrasing/ “feel”				
What was/were I/we most successful with? (Do not forget about composition, improv, theory, listening!)				
What next steps do I/we need to take to increase my/us understanding of “the Blues”?				
What did this unit contribute to my own overall musicianship?				

Unit 4: Ancient and Contemporary Voices

(8 hours)

Introduction

The focus for this unit is a dual one. The intention is to provide opportunity for students to do integrated learning around *Ancient Voices* (Sweeney) or another composition of the teacher's choosing that is technically "under their fingers" but that uses contemporary techniques and evokes the mood of the distant past. Also, students will investigate the work of some contemporary composers (including those who work in Nova Scotia) and create a class composition that evokes moods of their own present day. In addition, they will learn the C concert scale and reinforce and extend prior learning re A-Flat concert, chromatics, dynamics, and tone quality.

Key Concepts/Musical Building Blocks

- Consolidation of learning in Modules 1-5
- C concert scale
- Interval of a major 2nd
- Chromatics (including alternate fingerings)
- Long tones
- Chorale
- A-Flat concert
- Graphic notation
- Alternative techniques
- "Found" sounds
- Chant
- Suggested full band repertoire: "Ancient Voices" (Michael Sweeney)

NOTE: Method book references are: *Standard of Excellence* (p. 18); *Essential Elements* (pp. 16, 27); *Band Technique Step-by-Step* (pp. 14-15, 22-23). It is suggested that teachers using *Band Technique Step-by-Step* choose the "basic" studies that correspond to keys/concepts introduced in each unit.

Tips for Teaching Success

When planning learning/assessment this unit, it may be very helpful to refer to *Developing the Complete Band Program* (Jagow, pp. 162-165) for an interesting range of possibilities for performance assessment. Also, *Shaping Sound Musicians* (pp. 77-81) outlines various suggestions for observation and performance assessment that might work well at this point.

Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Process

BASIC SKILLS COMPONENT

In addition to work with C concert, it will be important to reinforce learning from the previous unit re A-Flat concert. Students might be challenged to play a familiar, simple tune based on the first five notes of the scale, in each of the following keys: A-Flat concert; B-Flat concert; and C concert. Their comfort with solfege will play an important role in this activity.

Tips for Teaching Success

“For learning scales and internalizing the beat I use the disappearing scale. The director starts the chosen scale and then stops conducting. Players play up and down the scale in quarter notes repeatedly. Each time they play the scale they leave a note out (Bingo style) until they end by playing the root note followed by 13 beats of silence and then another root note. I got this idea from Denise Grant.”

Stephen Hartlen, May 2010

Try “roaming” through the method book to identify exercises that involve chromatic passages and plan on including at least one of them in each lesson. Encourage students to investigate special fingering charts in their book, ask questions about alternate fingerings, etc.

Though long tones and tone quality are always a part of day-to-day learning, it is suggested that attention be paid to them during this unit. *Developing the Complete Band Program* (Jagow, pp. 37-40) discusses the importance of addressing tone quality issues when they arise, rather than waiting until later. The author also stresses the importance of modelling and long tones, and outlines factors that affect tone.

An exercise that “diagnoses” tone quality at various dynamic levels (Jagow, p. 38) could be especially useful as students work to refine their ability to play at dynamic levels from *pp* to *ff*.

Tips for Teaching Success

To increase student success with long tones and tone quality at various dynamic levels, include exercises from *The Breathing Gym* (Pilafian and Sheridan) in each class or rehearsal. The accompanying DVD is very important for explaining these exercises. The Index Chart on pp. 30-31 recommends several that are especially appropriate for elementary and middle school learners. These exercises should also serve to enhance singing that is included in repertoire and composition.

Suggestions for working with “Ancient Voices” (Michael Sweeney) include:

When introducing this piece, share with students the thoughts provided by the composer re the intent of the work. Ask whether they can think of other examples of music that is meant to evoke the ancient past (e.g., movie scores). Encourage them to speculate about what musical techniques Sweeney might have used to accomplish his intended evocation of the moods and sounds of early civilizations. Also talk about how the “mysteriously” and “with intensity” instructions might be achieved.

NOTE: See *Teaching Music through Performance, Vol. 1* (pp. 70-73) for analysis and rehearsal suggestions for this piece.



Invite two or three students to be a “listening squad” to be sure that the blowing air, fingers on keys, and pitches of the sung sustained notes are easily heard. The same technique could be effectively used for checking on the full range of dynamic levels that are required.

When students have listened to examples of chant, challenge them to play/shape the chant-like melodies with the same seamless, flowing quality, being especially careful not to leave air spaces at the ends of measures. If recorders are not available, consider having students chant those lines, using an “ooo” syllable.

Have students play example(s) of hymns/Bach chorales. Together, identify the musical characteristics that are also found in the chorale-like passages for winds in the opening “mysteriously” section. (see also Active Listening).

Tips for Teaching Success

“What tips do I have re discipline? Focus is closely linked to discipline.

You must have the courage of your own convictions. You must be in charge and take the responsibility. The example that you set is what the kids are going to pick up. The rules are for everyone. We are working as one group. All one group. Ninety percent of the time you’ll get the principal’s and the parents’ support.”

Ron Mackay, Feb. 22, 2008

To achieve rhythmic accuracy and an intense, energetic style in bars 34-46, challenge students to “walk the beat” standing on the spot while they clap only the accented notes. They might also step out the beat, say the rhythm pattern as written and clap over their heads on the accents. This should really have the feel of an ancient dance. The percussion score from bars 46-69 could also be “danced”, with groups of students doing different movements to each percussion part. Students might wish to include some of this movement in their performance of the work.

Grouping students in twos, have them play/sing a harmonic major second (e.g., half could play B-Flat concert while the others played C concert). Challenge them to have each pitch sound with equal intensity. Then group them in threes, assigning B-Flat, C, and D concert pitches, to be played with perfect balance. When these intervals and tone clusters appear in the score, challenge students to listen to the players beside them and across the ensemble to ensure that each note of the tone clusters is heard equally. This might also be an ideal time to investigate how it is necessary to increase the volume when moving from unison to harmony, for the volume level to sound equal.

Have students, working in the full group or in groups of three to four, develop a storyboard for a silent movement sequence that might accompany this work. Encourage them to use their imaginations and picture movement sequences that might heighten the moods of the music. They will require some space to

experiment with possibilities, so it might be necessary to create an open space in the music room or to arrange to use the gym or stage.

NOTE: The Pictures activity in the Nova Scotia *Drama 10 and Drama 11* curriculum guide (p. 214) might be very helpful as it focuses on physically portraying moods.



This learning activity might be extended to include a creative dance component in the performance of the work. The Nova Scotia *Dance 11* curriculum guide has many wonderful suggestions for creative movement.

Tips for Teaching Success

See *Shaping Sound Musicians* (pp. 55-56) for a simple, creative, engaging rehearsal strategy called “Take Out the Piece. . .” that can add interest and increase learning.

WRITTEN THEORY COMPONENT

Have students write C concert scale, with and without key signatures, and review their knowledge of A-Flat concert. They might also write intervals of a major 2nd above each note of the scale.

As suggested in previous units, encourage students to write out rhythm patterns that appear in repertoire, adding articulation markings that appear in the score. Then have them write the appropriate counting syllables underneath the patterns.



Invite students to write chromatic passages that appear in their repertoire and then re-write them, using enharmonic equivalents where possible.

Students will already have a repertoire of graphic notation symbols. See *Band Instruments: Appendices* for sample graphic notation symbols suggested by Michael Colgrass. Engage students in inventing notation symbols for sounds that they “discover”. Challenge them to “test” whether the symbols convey the sound they intend by having other students interpret the symbols and refine, as necessary.

Tips for Teaching Success

A recipe for teaching creativity using graphic notation written by Michael Colgrass is in *The Music Director’s Cookbook* (pp. 26-28). Teachers might find it very helpful to use/adapt this recipe for the class composition project in this unit.

EAR TRAINING/IMPROVISATION COMPONENT

Ask individual students to write a 2-bar rhythm pattern from one of the pieces in their full ensemble on the chalkboard. Have the full class clap/say/play the pattern and identify which piece the pattern appears in.

Have students sing the harmonic interval of a major 2nd, beginning with the lower pitch and then adding the tone above. Ask them to choose one or two words to describe the quality of the interval. Challenge half of the students play B-Flat concert scale while the other half play C concert. For an added challenge, have A-Flat, B-Flat, and C concert scales played/sung simultaneously.



Do a “call and response” activity in C concert that focuses on legato phrases. Encourage students to sing/play with their most beautiful, lyrical sound. “Call and response” using three- or four-note chromatic phrases could also be used.

The following games from *Improvisation Games for Classical Musicians* (Agrell) are suggested:

- X-Tech Ostinati (p. 59)
- Floating Duet (p. 66)
- Universe Symphony (p. 67)
- Accents 5 (p. 107)
- Squiggle Quartet (p. 171)
- Non-traditional Score 1 (p. 172)
- Rainbow X-Tech (p. 193)
- Ambient Rainbow Soundscape (p. 193)
- Rainbow Accelerando (p. 194)

COMPOSITION COMPONENT

As mentioned in the introduction, a class composition that uses graphic notation and a variety of traditional and non-traditional sound sources is a key ingredient in this unit. The intent is that the work would evoke the moods/flavours/distinguishing characteristics or themes of the students’ own environment/lives/ location in time. Teachers and students working together will shape the project. The following ideas are provided only as “springboards” for the creative work.

NOTE: See *Band Instruments: Module 1* for a description of a class composition project that might be a very helpful reference for teachers.

- Students might like to imagine that their composition will be preserved in a time capsule for a future generation and that they therefore need to reflect the important aspects/qualities of their own time and local and global community.
- Talk together about what qualities/components might be included and make decisions about which of those are critical for their composition.

- If necessary, review with students the sample graphic notation symbols invented by Michael Colgrass (see *Band Instruments: Appendices*).
- Refer to improvisation games that students have done (see above) and invite them, working in small groups, to discover sounds (including traditional and non-traditional sound sources and traditional and alternative playing/vocal techniques) that might be used to evoke a particular aspect of their lives/community. Compile a repertoire of sounds for reference as the composition is developed. It might be effective to have each group work on possibilities for sounds for a specific aspect (e.g., one group could work on sounds that would evoke hectic schedules, another could focus on the sounds of computer games, while another discovered sounds to evoke isolation in the middle of crowds or the sadness of endangered species).
- Make decisions together about the working title, the length (probably not more than 1-2 minutes), the overall dynamic contour, etc. Also make preliminary decisions about such aspects as the basic shape and form, inclusion of both sound and silence, inclusion of standard notation symbols.
- Students might like to prepare the blank score in advance (with given dimensions), display it on the music room walls, and build their score spatially, dividing it into units of time.
- Refer to *Tools for Powerful Student Evaluation*, p. 87 for a Music Class/Group Work Reflection that might be very effective for this project.
- As the composition develops, take time to stop, listen, rethink, celebrate, think ahead. Listening to a recording of what has been created to date will play a key role in this aspect of the creative work.
- Revisit the working title and make decisions about whether to revise it.
- As preparations are made for the debut performance of the work, consider having students write the composers' statement for the program. Plan on displaying the final score and working notes, invite special guest(s) to the performance, consider having a student conductor(s).
- It might be very effective to have the ensemble present "Ancient Voices and then their own "contemporary voices" composition.



- After the debut, reflect together about the creative work. What were the major successes? What were they most proud about? What did they learn about composing? About one another? About sound?
- As students listen to a recording of their performance, have them reflect individually in their learning journals about what aspect of the project they found most meaningful and about the progress they have made as composers.



Art students (or band students themselves) might create work inspired by the chosen theme that could be displayed on site as the composition is played. Alternatively, they might create work in response to the composition itself. In addition, students in other music classes might write critical reviews of the performance.

Tips for Teaching Success

“The Graphic Notation composition project took up most of my winter/Spring. I had three classes of grade 8s (60 students) ...all decisions made by them along the way. To be true to this process it took a LONG time! In retrospect though it was worth it.

First, we just explored sounds. They were not comfortable with this. We played games out of the Agrell improvisation book to ease into it. I have recorded some of these.

We used large pieces of paper with possible themes...no limits...we had to vote. Their ideas spanned from sports to a day in my life to animals to places in the world to major world events to dinosaurs etc. We narrowed them down by process of elimination and everyone voting.

Assessment for the composition project came out of Susan Farrell book – group and individual. I saw students in very different ways. Leaders emerged who maybe were not the best players. Every student had a say. We went from small groups to large groups regularly. Groups were responsible for a part of the compositions. This was possible as all movements were programmatic. There were homework assignments with relation to creating sounds to try in class. They leaned towards keys that we had explored...minor keys!! They became comfortable with transposition on sight.

Students were engaged with this project in a way I had never experienced with music students in the past. They could work on this for hours! They became emotionally involved with the composing and performing of this. We have performed this three times and each time the audience reaction was overwhelming. I had emails from parents saying it brought them to tears. As a conductor I also had an emotional response to this composition that I have not experienced in the past. It was a very powerful project.

The most important part of this was the commitment to the process. At times it was frustrating to come to a consensus, but we stuck with it and came back to it.”

Dina Burt, May 2010

NOTE: See *Band Instruments: Appendices* for an excerpt from the score of this composition.

ACTIVE LISTENING COMPONENT



Suggestions for this component include:

- Have students listen to one or two examples of Gregorian (or other) chant and talk together about how the music informs their interpretation of the chant-like passages in *Ancient Voices*.
- Also, play a Bach chorale and relate it to the same work.
- With students, listen to a variety of pieces (or excerpts from them) by such contemporary composers as Stockhausen, R. Murray Schafer, Christos Hatzis, Frank Zappa, Stephen Chatman, Michael Colgrass, etc., to heighten students’

awareness of the richness of what is being written today and with a view to stimulating students' creativity as they approach their class composition. "Dinosaurs" by Daniel Bukvich is also an excellent example for listening.



Invite students to research "experimental" composers who are currently working in Nova Scotia (e.g., Derek Charke, Sandy V. A. Moore, Jerry Granelli, Don Palmer). Arrange for one of them (or a university composition student) to visit the class, in person or virtually. They could talk about how and why they compose and share a current work with the students. In addition, they might agree to provide suggestions /ideas for consideration for the student composition project. Alternatively, it might be possible to have members of a new music ensemble visit the class. There are rich opportunities here for community links and for validation of the students' creative work.

Tips for Teaching Success

Shaping Sound Musicians (O'Toole, Chapter 9) offers many suggestions for presenting "Concerts That Teach". Teachers may wish to peruse this chapter for ideas that may be adapted for innovative concert programming. One excellent example is the notion that prior to the concert, students will teach their parents about the music they will hear in the upcoming performance. With their teacher, students will prepare a "lesson plan" and listening guide to be presented to their parents at home. A link on the school's website could direct listeners to the music. Students may wish to develop a worksheet to be completed with their parents. Through this engaging and creative process, students will develop a deep understanding of the music they are performing, and parents will enjoy a rich listening experience during the concert while developing an increased appreciation for the learning opportunities their children encounter in music class.

CULMINATING ACTIVITY



Provide an opportunity for students to reflect together about the most significant things that they have learned during this unit and module. A "talking stick" circle would be ideal for this activity (See *NS Drama 10 and Drama 11*, p. 203). Challenge them to revisit their learning journals and portfolios and provide individually, in their journals, a statement about: the musical progress that they have made; the connections that they have made with the music and one another; and things that they would like to learn next.

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WEBSITES

[CBA National Voluntary Curriculum and Standards for Instrumental Music \(Band\) Fourth Edition](#)

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