

INCORPORATING IMPROVISATION AND COMPOSITION ACTIVITIES INTO A  
SIXTEEN-WEEK CURRICULUM FOR ADOLESCENT BEGINNER PIANO STUDENTS

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A CAPSTONE PROJECT PRESENTED TO THE COLLEGE OF THE ARTS  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF MUSIC IN MUSIC EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA  
2020

### Abstract

The purpose of this capstone project was to incorporate composition and improvisation activities into a pre-existing piano curriculum for adolescent piano beginners. Most piano method books are designed either for children or adults, but few piano method books are designed for adolescents. The goal in designing creative activities to be used in conjunction with a method book was to allow adolescent beginner piano students the opportunity to assert their musical identity while also reinforcing musical concepts they are learning in the method book. The Understanding by Design framework was used to guide the creation of the units and individual lessons.

*Keywords:* creativity, creative thinking, composition, improvisation, piano, piano teaching, adolescence, curriculum, Understanding by Design

### Acknowledgements:

I wish to express sincere gratitude to Dr. Manny Brand for agreeing to be my advisor, offering most helpful feedback, and guiding me through the writing process. I also wish to thank Dr. Keith Thompson for his guidance and support as a member of my committee.

I also thank the faculty of University of Florida's online Master of Music in Music Education program. Each of you has provided me with knowledge, insight, and inspiration that have forever changed who I am as a music educator.

I also thank my family, chiefly my mother and father, for supporting me and my dreams in too many ways to list.

Lastly, I wish to thank my husband, Kenneth, for his unwavering support and encouragement.

## **Introduction**

Very few piano method books are designed for the adolescent beginner, as most piano method books are designed either for children or adults. Adolescent beginner piano students often find method books for children too slow and childish, and these young adults may have little interest in the music found in adult method books, as it is often not the music they listen to in their daily lives (Teach Piano Today, 2013). Incorporating compositional and improvisational activities into an adult piano method curricula may allow adolescent beginners to explore and develop their musical creativity, and offer adolescent piano students the opportunity to create music that more closely aligns with their own listening preferences (Teach Piano Today, 2015).

## **Purpose of the Project**

Therefore, the purpose of this project is to incorporate compositional and improvisational activities into a curriculum using a pre-existing adult piano method book for use by adolescent beginner piano students. The incorporation of these activities is meant to allow the student to develop their musical creativity, afford the student musical independence, and reinforce concepts that are being taught in the method book. Ten lessons across the four units incorporate improvisational activities. The composition project is completed across eight lessons in unit three and unit four. The student is encouraged to incorporate improvisation as a regular part of their home practice routine, along with pieces and exercises being learned in lessons. The composition the student completes can be performed at an end-of-semester recital, or any other similarly suitable performance situation.

## Review of Literature

Existing literature was reviewed as part of the curriculum development process. First, existing piano method books were reviewed, particularly those which could be suitable for the adolescent beginner and the incorporation of improvisation and composition activities. Next, research literature on the musical preferences of adolescents was reviewed. Finally, literature on creative musical activities and processes was considered.

### Piano Method Books

Bober et al.'s (2010) *Piano for Busy Teens* is one of few piano method books designed for adolescents; however, it is not designed for adolescent beginners. Rather, it is designed for adolescent students working on intermediate repertoire. This particular method book contains twelve pieces with study guides, designed to be learned with limited practice time. These guides include facts about each piece, as well as a breakdown of a practice schedule for the given piece. This method book's key strength is the exercises it provides to accompany each piece to help students work on technique issues that may arise in a given piece. The main drawback of this method book is that it does not consider the different learning pace of the individual student. This method book gives a timeline for how quickly each piece should be learned, which may not be practical for every student.

*Alfred's Group Piano for Adults* (Lancaster and Renfrow, 2004) is unique in that it is designed for group instruction. Despite its design, it is still easily adaptable to private instruction. It is divided into 26 units which cover five-finger patterns, chords, scales, modes, accompaniment patterns, and repertoire pieces. Consisting of 360 pages, it is one of the largest and most comprehensive method books available. While this method book can easily be adapted for private instruction for adults, its fast pacing and steep cost may be daunting to adolescent

beginner students. This method books' strengths include the sheer number of keys it teaches, as well as its focus on teaching music theory concepts. However, the method book begins teaching students to read music without placing the notes on a staff. Instead, the notes move up and down according to pitch contour. This means that students are not equating pitches with lines and spaces as they are first seeing them on the page. The length and depth of this method book also mean that students are not likely finish working through it for possibly several years. This may discourage students who may become tired of using the same book for so long. The method book used in the present study is half the length of *Alfred's Group Piano for Adults* and begins placing notes on the staff in the very first piece of music.

Faber and Faber's (2002) *Adult Piano Adventures Level 1: All-in-One Piano Course* is the adult version of their popular *Piano Adventures* method series designed for children. This method book, designed for adults, incorporates the level one lesson, theory, and technique books of the *Adult Piano Adventures* series into a single volume. This method book does not begin with complete musical notation; rather, its first unit uses finger numbers, rhythms, and note names without a staff. Once the staff is introduced, the only two keys which are introduced in this book are C Major and G Major. While the pacing of this book is slower than many of its counterparts, there are a few drawbacks to its design. The first is that it goes through an entire unit before introducing music on a staff. Its use of only two keys in the entire book is also unfortunate. Both keys introduced are major keys, meaning students will have no experience playing in minor keys by the end of the book. Lastly, this method book starts both hands at middle C and has the students learning notes outward from there. This is contradictory to most other method books, which begin the right hand at middle C (C4) and the left hand an octave below at C3.

Alfred's *Adult All-in-One Course: Lesson, Theory, Technic* (Palmer, Manus, & Lethco, 1994) will serve as the basis for the units designed in this project. This method book combines the level one lesson, theory, and technique books of Alfred's Basic Adult Piano Course into a single volume. The book begins with five-finger patterns in C major in both hands, and then progresses through learning notes, chords, and pieces in the keys of C Major, G Major, F Major, A Minor, and D Minor. Given the year of publication, it is possible that some present-day adolescent students may find the musical content unrelatable. That some adolescent students may find the musical content unrelatable makes this method book fertile ground for the incorporation of improvisation and composition for students to explore their own musical preferences. One of the many strengths of this method book is that it begins with both hands in C position. This is opposed to some other method books, which begin both hands at middle C and then move them outwards.

### **Adolescent Musical Preferences**

Hargreaves and Lamont (2017) approach the issue of adolescent musical preferences through two psychological perspectives. The first perspective is social identity theory. They argue that adolescents categorize themselves into ingroups. One of the main ways members of these ingroups identify with one another is through their shared musical preferences. Peers with different tastes in music, style, etc. are considered to be part of outgroups, which are often discriminated against by members of the ingroup. These categorizations provide "a sense of self, or social identity, which serves to guide future behavior" (Hargreaves & Lamont, 2017, p. 129). The second perspective used by Hargreaves and Lamont (2017) is cultural psychology. Through this perspective, Hargreaves and Lamont argue the importance of studying pop music in

adolescence, stating that that pop music plays an essential role in the formation of identity in adolescence.

Philpott and Wright (2018) advocate for the importance of inclusion in music education. That is, they make the point that issues of music and identity formation in adolescence is one of the key areas that lead us to question how democratic music education currently is, among other issues such as gender bias and cultural relevance of curriculum to pupils from social minority groups. Their most striking argument is that, “If as educators we do not explicitly address issues of social injustice such as exclusion of groups of pupils from an aspect of their education such as music, important to their needs, we perpetuate the status quo” (Philpott & Wright, 2018, p. 234). According to Philpott and Wright (2018, adolescent music students do not feel their basic pedagogic democratic rights are being served by modern music education.

Allsup et al. (2018) note the lack of “authenticity” in current music education. They observe the disconnect between the music that is taught in secondary schools and the music with which most adolescents identify. While this issue of authenticity raised by the authors is being directed at secondary school music ensembles, the same argument can easily be applied to adolescent piano students. Allsup et al. (2018) suggest engaging adolescent students in discussion about their musical preferences and including them in decision-making about the repertoire they will learn. This will demonstrate to students that the educator cares about their needs and desires as music students.

Saunders (2010) points out the dual identity of the adolescent as a consumer of music and a student of music. The success of incorporating popular music into the curriculum is partially dependent on the musical background of the teacher. A teacher with a background solely in art music may not be best equipped to teach popular music if they are not used to teaching or



performing it. Essentially, teachers are often most comfortable teaching the music they know the best. Additionally, they also usually teach the way they were taught music, as well as the way they were taught how to teach music. These issues can make it a challenge to authentically integrate popular music into the curriculum.

The concept of social identity theory speaks to the need for music educators to understand the musical preferences of adolescents. By allowing students to create music that aligns with their own identity, they may be more willing to continue their musical education, as they will be creating music they enjoy. Allowing students to improvise and compose their own music is a way for educators to practice the concept of inclusion in their teaching practice, and may help alleviate issues of gender bias and make curriculum culturally relevant to students from minority groups. These creative activities may also help to remedy the ongoing issue of authenticity in music education. Instead of students solely playing “school music,” they are given the opportunity to create music that more closely reflects their musical preferences. These creative opportunities also help adolescents merge their dual identities as consumers and students of music.

### **Creative Musical Activities**

Sawyer (2012) provides two definitions of creativity. His first, the “individualist definition,” states that “creativity is a new mental combination that is expressed in the world.” When one thinks of creativity in the realm of music, they are likely thinking of the individualist definition. In this definition, thoughts or actions must be novel or original. These thoughts and actions combine previous thoughts and actions in a way that the individual has not previously combined them. Lastly, these new ideas must be expressed for the world to see. Without this final component, these creative ideas cannot be communicated to others.

Priest (2002) argues that, before the advent of method books, music students learned to play their instruments by improvising, composing, and playing by ear. Method books place so much emphasis on reading notes on a page that these creative and aural activities do not receive ample time to develop. Priest suggests allowing students to compose variations on music with which they are familiar as a starting place for developing musical composition skills. He also opines that call and response activities between the teacher and the student can be used to improvise and compose on brief musical ideas. He also believes that students and teachers alike need to develop compositional criteria, such as the use of certain pitches, rhythms, and structures to ensure a high compositional standard.

Composition and improvisation are the two most common creative musical activities in music. As Sovansky et al. (2016) noted, musicians are often perceived as being creative people; however, being a musician does not make a person creative in and of itself. Just because one learns to play clarinet in a school band does not mean one is developing the divergent thinking skills necessary to be creative. Sovansky et al. performed a study in which 60 participants, all of whom were undergraduate college students, were shown images of two music items, as well as two non-music items, and were asked to devise as many creative uses for the items as possible. Participants varied in level of musical background from no musical background, to those who had participated in music for most of their lives. The study found that musicians who participate in creative musical activities devised more creative uses for the music items than non-musicians and musicians who do not participate in creative music practices. It is worth noting the limited population of undergraduate college students used in this study. By limiting the population involved, the authors were not able to control for other variables such as educational background. This would make it difficult to generalize these results to other segments of the population. The

task used was also somewhat artificial. The participants in the study were not asked to produce a creative product that involved making actual music; instead, they were merely asked to come up with creative uses for musical and non-musical items.

Cooper (2005) offered the opinion that there are four ways one can engage elementary school-aged students through musical composition. The first is the use of sounds and sound combinations. In this approach, students explore different sounds through vocalization, and drawing icons which represent the sounds they have made. The second approach utilizes rhythmic icons. This approach is particularly well-suited for teaching rhythmic repetition, as students are required to repeat the rhythms they create in this process. The teacher helps the student to look and listen for patterns, and to choose which patterns they do or do not want to use. This process teaches students to make independent musical choices. The third approach makes use of melodic elements. Like the sounds and sound combination approach, this approach begins with vocalization. Students vocalize sounds, such as the hissing of a snake, which are then each transformed into a single pitch. These sounds are then turned into black circles, which are used as a bridge to understanding written musical notation. The final approach is to compose using staff notation. The three previous pre-notation compositional activities can be used as building blocks to lead to this approach. By composing staff notation, Cooper suggests that students are using mental imagery, and are making evaluative, independent musical decisions. Elementary-aged students may feel restricted by the limited choices that are presented to them at each stage of Cooper's process. These activities would not be transferable to adolescent students, as they may find the activities to be too childlike.

Creative musical practices are known to have an effect on human development.

Koutsoupidou and Hargreaves (2009) performed a quasi-experimental study in which two groups

of 6-year-old students were formed. The experimental group performed various improvisational activities over the course of six months, while the control group did not. The study used a pre-test/post-test model, in which Peter Webster's *Measure of Creative Thinking in Music* (1994) was administered to students before the trial and after the trial. The results were that students in the experimental group scored higher in musical flexibility, originality, and syntax than their counterparts in the control group. The results of this study are limited by the single age group used. These results would be strengthened by performing the same quasi-experimental study on students of other age groups.

It is important to consider age and grade level when designing creative activities for students. Kiehn (2003) examined the development of musical creativity in elementary school students of varying grade levels. He acknowledged the importance of compositional and improvisational activities as part of a comprehensive music program, in addition to the emphasis on performance that is so prevalent. Participants in Kiehn's 12-week study were elementary students in the second, fourth, and sixth grades. Students from three schools were randomly selected at each grade level. The students were administered the *Vaughan Test of Musical Creativity* (TMC) and the *Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking* (TTCT). The TMC measures improvisational creativity, while the TTCT measures figural creativity through pictorial drawing tasks. Two independent judges scored the students' responses. Kiehn's study found that students in the fourth and sixth grades scored significantly higher on these creativity measures than the second graders in the study. He also found that males scored higher than females. The results imply that developmental differences among the age groups in the study may have been the reason for the differences in scores. While these results have significance for future studies, they are also limited by the age range of the participants in the study. Had the author included older

middle school students as well as high school students, the conclusion that developmental differences played a role in the results would be much stronger, and may have also evened out the difference in scores between male and female participants.

The research of Peter Webster is foundational in the field of music creativity. His 1979 study observed the relationships between creativity and other variables in high school students. These variables included IQ, sex, age, and grade level, among others. The subjects in the study were high school students who had participated in school music ensembles, but had no training in creative musical practices. The study focused on three modes of creative musical behavior: composition, improvisation, and analysis. Webster used univariate and multivariate analyses of the data collected, and discovered that music achievement was the single best predictor of success in all three modes of creative musical behavior. The study also revealed that figural creativity correlates significantly with improvisation and analysis creativity. Verbal creativity was found to correlate significantly with analysis creativity; however, the correlation was not significant when it was paired with other variables. IQ and sex were also found to be significantly correlated with improvisation creativity. Webster noted that age, grade level, performance medium, and piano lesson background did not correlate significantly with the three modes of creative musical behavior. While Webster's study found that age and grade level were not significant variables in relation to creative musical practices among high school students, the results of Kiehn's study indicated that these were significant factors among elementary school students. This indicates that developmental differences are perhaps greater among elementary school students than high school students. This could mean that students who are improvising and composing for the first time in piano lessons as adolescents may not experience much difference in their ability to complete these tasks based on their age and grade level.

Mawang et al. (2019) investigated the relationship between self-concept and musical creativity among high school students. They wanted to determine the best predictors of musical creativity in relation to the students' reported self-concepts of musicality. In the study, 201 music students from 21 schools in Kenya participated. Information about the students' musical self-concepts was collected using the *Music Self-perception Inventory-Version 1* (MUSPI), while data about musical creativity was measured using the Consensual Musical Creativity Assessment Scale (CMCAS). The authors found a positive correlation between musical creativity and musical self-concept. Multiple regression found that a sense of rhythm and dancing self-concepts were the best predictors of musical creativity. Other predictors tested include instrument playing and music reading. Much like Kiehn's study, this study found that males scored significantly higher than females. However, neither study offers an explanation for the differing results between males and females. The difference could be due to one or more extraneous variables that were not considered by the authors. The use of self-reporting by the students could potentially color the results of the study. If the authors were able to either replace this self-reporting or supplement it with some sort of testing of musicality, they could have eliminated this possible source of bias.

In her master's thesis, Sundell (2012) analyzed the content of twelve beginner piano method books to determine the level of comprehensive musicianship being taught in each. She found that most beginner method books place more emphasis on aural skills and theory than they do on creative activities, such as composition or improvisation. Three method books included no composition activities, and four books contained no improvisational activities. This lack of creative activities in piano method books demonstrates the need for more creative activities to be developed for piano students.

Menard (2015) performed a multiple case study on two different high school music programs. The first program was an accelerated general music course for gifted students, while the second program was a traditional, performance-based band program. The director of the band program expressed that there are many challenges involved in implementing composition instruction in a class such as his. Both teachers identified several benefits to including composition as part of their curriculum. Students in both programs stated that time was a challenge when it came to composition, as well as a lack of the fundamental musical knowledge necessary to compose effectively. Incorporating composition and improvisation into piano lessons does not involve as many challenges, since the teacher is able to focus all of their energy on one student, instead of trying to help dozens of students compose and improvise during one class period.

Lastly, Strand (2006) surveyed music teachers in Indiana about their use of composition in the classroom. In the study, 5.9% of teachers said they used composition activities often, 39.8% used composition activities sometimes, 19.5% used them rarely, 23% used them very rarely, and 11.5% stated they have never used composition activities in their classrooms. The most common reason given for using composition in the classroom was that children learned more through composing music. Another common reason to use composition in the classroom was to satisfy the requirements of the national music standards. While piano teachers are not beholden to national music standards, incorporating composition into their lessons will likely help their students learn more about music, just as it has done for teachers surveyed in this study.

The literature regarding creative musical practice is often not written with the piano studio in mind. Cooper (2005), for example, described composition strategies for the elementary school general music classroom. However, the implications of this literature can be applied to the

development of a piano curriculum which involves creative musical practices from the ground up. Cooper's (2005) curricular strategies indicated that pre-notation piano students can complete composition activities before they are ever able to read musical notation. Koutsoupidou and Hargreaves (2009) indicated the important effects of improvisation on child development, which means that improvisatory activities in the piano studio could help boost the musical flexibility, originality, and syntax of piano students. The research of Sovansky et al. (2016) revealed that students who engage in creative musical practices are better at finding creative uses for musical items than those who do not; therefore, piano students who engage in creative musical practices will be able to as well. Kiehn's (2003) study showed the importance of age and grade level for the success of musically creative activities among elementary school students. This information can be used to devise developmentally sound creative activities in the piano studio for piano students at different age and grade levels. Webster's (1979) study of high schoolers demonstrated that musical achievement is the highest predictor of success with creative musical activities. This is useful information to bear in mind when teaching high school-aged piano students, as those with prior musical achievement may demonstrate more initial success with creative activities than their peers who do not have prior musical training. Mawang et al. (2019) found that high school students with high levels of musical self-concept also demonstrate high levels of musical creativity. Sundell (2012) plainly demonstrated the need for more creativity in the piano studio by showing how little of it shows up in most piano curricula. Creative musical activities are part of a comprehensive musical education, which students are not fully receiving if they are using one of the many piano method books which do not include composition or improvisation activities. Mendard's (2015) research, while dealing explicitly with high school music programs, demonstrated some of the different challenges for both teachers and students when it comes to



incorporating composition into the curriculum. Strand's (2006) research shed light on the number of teachers using composition as part of their high school curricula, and their motivations for doing so. While a wide variety of research on creative musical practices has been done, very little of it refers directly to piano students; however, the findings of these studies can easily be applied to the piano studio.

### **The Proposed Curriculum**

This curriculum is divided into four units, each consisting of four half hour private lessons. Improvisation is used in every unit, often with the dual purpose of allowing the student self-expression, and to teach new concepts to the student before they appear on the page in their lesson book. Improvisation activities are used in lessons one and four of the first unit, all four lessons in the second unit, lesson two in the third unit, and lessons one, two, and four in the fourth unit. Units three and four incorporate a thirty-two measure original composition project. Wiggins and McTighe's (2005) Understanding by Design framework is used to structure the units and individual lessons.

### **Teacher Feedback**

Throughout the curriculum, teacher feedback is a key part of the improvisation and composition activities. This feedback must go beyond mechanical matters of note durations, fingerings, and other parameters. These parameters, while important, serve as a guide to help the student structure their improvisations and compositions, and are not the end goal of these activities. Teacher feedback should focus on matters of musicality. While feedback on issues such as the aesthetic quality of an improvisation or composition are subjective by nature, the teacher's musical expertise does carry weight, as the teacher is the mentor in this relationship. With that in mind, it is important for the teacher to maintain a positive atmosphere while also providing constructive feedback for the student. The goal is for the student to continue improvising and composing; therefore, the teacher needs to maintain a dialogue with student wherein the student feels sufficiently comfortable with the teacher serving as their guide in developing and exploring their creativity and musicality so they will want to continue doing so.

### Curriculum Sequence

#### Unit 1:

Lesson	Skill	Concept	Repertoire	Improvisation	Composition
Lesson 1	Posture Hand position	Stepwise melodies Quarter, half, whole notes Piano keyboard layout		5-finger RH melodies	
Lesson 2	Reading from treble clef	Quarter, half notes	Ode to Joy		
Lesson 3	Reading from bass clef	Whole notes	Aura Lee		
Lesson 4	Reading from grand staff	Disjunct melodies	Rock Along, Mexican Hat Dance	5-finger LH melodies	

#### Unit 2:

Lesson	Skill	Concept	Repertoire	Improvisation	Composition
Lesson 1	Play melodic 2nds & 3rds	Dynamics Intervals	Au Clair De La Lune, Tisket, a Tasket	RH melodies with dynamics	
Lesson 2	Play harmonic 2nds & 3rds	Dynamics Intervals	Rockin' Intervals, Harmonica Rock	RH melodies over C & G7	
Lesson 3	Play harmonic & melodic 4ths & 5ths	Dynamics Intervals	Good King Wenceslas, My Fifth, Jingle Bells	RH melodies over syncopated C & G7	
Lesson 4	Play C and G7 chords in left hand	Chords B2 in bass clef	Merrily We Roll Along, Largo	RH melodies with harmonic intervals over syncopated C & G7	

## Unit 3:

Lesson	Skill	Concept	Repertoire	Improvisation	Composition
Lesson 1	Play C and G7 chords in right hand	Chords B3 in treble clef	Mary Ann		M. 1-8 melody
Lesson 2	Play in 3/4 meter Play legato	3/4 meter Dotted half notes	Rockets, What Can I Share?, Day Is Done	RH melodies over C, F, & G7 chords	M. 9-16 melody
Lesson 3	Play F Major chord in RH & LH	A3 in bass clef A4 in treble clef	When the Saints Go Marching In		M. 1-16 hands together
Lesson 4	G Major 5-finger patterns G Major disjunct melodies	B4, C5, & D5 in treble clef B5, C6, & D6 in bass clef Harmonic intervals in G	I'm Gonna Lay My Burden Down, Waltzing Chords, Love Somebody		M. 17-24 melody

## Unit 4:

Lesson 1	G Major disjunct melodies	Harmonic intervals in G	A Friend Like You	RH 5-finger melody in G over G & D7	M. 17-24 hands together
Lesson 2	G Major disjunct melodies	Sharp sign	Money Can't Buy Ev'rything, The Cuckoo	RH melody over G & D7 accompaniment pattern	M. 25-32 hands together
Lesson 3	Play G Major & D7 chords in LH Damper pedal	Chords Arpeggios	Harp Song, Liza Jane		M. 1-32 hands together final edits
Lesson 4	Transposition	Broken chords	Beautiful Brown Eyes	RH melody in C Major over C, F, & G chords using accompaniment patterns	M. 1-32 hands together

## Unit 1

### Stage 1: Identify Desired Results

#### **What essential questions will be considered?**

1. What role does creativity play in musical self-expression?
2. What are the different performance contexts in which the piano is used?
3. What are the fundamental elements of music?

#### **What understandings are desired?**

Students will understand...

- Music can be created through composition and improvisation as a mode of self-expression.
- The piano is used in a wide variety of performance contexts, including classical ensembles, as a solo instrument, in jazz groups, as an accompanying instrument, and more.
- Rhythm, melody, harmony, form, texture, timbre, and dynamics are the different elements of music.

#### **What key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result of this unit?**

Students will know...

- How treble clef and bass clef indicate notes on a staff
- Proper posture for sitting at the piano
- The layout of the piano keyboard
- The basics of reading musical notation and notes in the C major five-finger position in treble clef and bass clef

Students will be able to...

- Play simple pieces of music using C major five-finger patterns in both hands
- Improvise melodies over a given accompaniment
- Read basic musical notation

## **Stage 2: Determine Acceptable Evidence**

### **What evidence will show that students understand?**

Performance Tasks:

- Students will play the pieces of music they have learned from written notation in their lessons
- Students will improvise their own melodies utilizing given parameters of pitch and rhythm
- Students will complete workbook pages in their lesson book to reinforce curricular concepts

### **What other evidence needs to be collected in light of Stage 1 Desired Results?**

Teacher observations:

- Teacher will observe student progress and answer student inquiries

### **Student Self-Assessment and Reflection:**

Student will often be asked to reflect on their own performance in lessons on pieces from the lesson book, as well as music that is improvised by the student. In the case of improvisation, audio recordings of the student's improvisations will be used so the student can reflect on the experience after completing the improvisation.

## **Assessment Task Blueprint:**

### **What understandings or goals will be assessed through this task?**

- Students demonstrate ability to play music from written notation, utilizing basic musical elements
- Students utilize basic musical elements to improvise a melody as a method of self-expression

### **Through what authentic performance task will the student demonstrate understanding?**

- Playing music from written musical notation
- Improvising melodies using given melodic and rhythmic parameters
- Completing worksheet activities

### **What student products and performances will provide evidence of desired understandings?**

- Accurate performance interpretation of written musical notation
- Performing melodic improvisations using given melodic and rhythmic parameters

### **By what criteria will student products and performances be evaluated?**

Performance from written notation

- Pitch accuracy
- Rhythmic accuracy
- Tempo
- Fingering
- Dynamics
- Articulations

Melodic improvisations

- Melodic content
- Rhythmic content

### Stage 3: Plan Learning Experiences

What sequence of teaching and learning experience will equip students to engage with, develop, and demonstrate the desired understandings? Use the following sheet to list the key teaching and learning activities in sequence. Code entry with the appropriate initials of the WHERETO elements.

Lesson 1:

1. “Interview” students about their goals and motivations for piano study. Ask the student about musical listening preferences, and what pieces of music they would like to learn on the piano. **H,W, T**
2. Model proper posture for students, and then evaluate their own posture at the piano bench. **O**
3. Explain finger numbers to the student, and demonstrate proper hand position; then, the teacher evaluates the student's hand position. **T, O**
4. Layout of the piano keyboard is shown to the student. The student plays C's and F's in different octaves to discover they are “anchor tones” in relation to the layout of the black keys. **E, O**
5. Improvisation exercise: Students improvise a melody on the C, D, E, F, and G with their right hand using quarter notes, half notes, and whole notes while the teacher accompanies. This improvisation is recorded. **E1, T, O**
6. The student listens to the recording and is asked for their feedback on what they did and did not like about their improvisation. **R, E2, O**
7. Step 4 and step 5 are repeated, incorporating feedback that is discussed in step 5. **E1, T, O, R, E2**

Lesson 2:

1. Begin with a “name that tune” activity where the teacher plays the theme from Beethoven's Ode to Joy. The teacher will then give the student a brief explanation of the melody's use in Beethoven's ninth symphony. **W, H**

2. Show students how to read and count quarter notes and half notes. They will have experience playing these from the previous week's improvisation activity. **E1, O**
3. The student and teacher clap the rhythm exercise on page 13 as a way to discuss the function of bar lines. **E1, O**
4. Show student the basics of reading notes in the treble clef and how the notes C, D, E, F, and G correspond on the piano and on the treble clef staff. **E1, O**
5. The teacher demonstrates how to play the Right Hand Warm-Up on page 12, which makes use of the notes described in step 3. The student claps along to the quarter notes as the teacher plays. **E1, O**
6. The student plays the Right Hand Warm-Up and engages in a reflective dialogue with the teacher about what went well and what did not. This step is repeated based on the feedback that is discussed. **E1, R, E2, T, O**
7. The student claps the rhythms to Ode to Joy on page 13 as the teacher plays it on the piano. **E1**
8. The student then counts and plays the melody. Teacher feedback is given, and the student is asked to reflect on what went well and what could have gone better as they played it. **R, E2, T, O**
9. Step eight is repeated, taking teacher feedback and student reflection into account. **R, E2, T, O**
10. The student is assigned worksheet activities on pages 14 and 15 to complete for next week's lesson. **W, O**

### Lesson 3:

1. The teacher plays a recording of Elvis Presley's "Love Me Tender" at the beginning of the lesson, and discusses with the student how melodies can be borrowed by musicians who did not originally write it. Ask the student if they can think of examples of sampling from music with which they are familiar. If they cannot think of any, the teacher can research and provide some examples from current popular music. **W, H**
2. The student plays Ode to Joy from the previous lesson and is given final feedback from the teacher. The student verbally reflects on the strengths and weaknesses in playing this melody. **R, E2, T**
3. The teacher checks the student's worksheet activities from the previous week and discusses any corrections that need to be made with the student. **R, O**
4. Show the student the basics of reading notes in the bass clef and how the notes C, D, E, F, and G correspond on the piano and on the bass clef staff. **E1, O**
5. Student plays and counts the Left Hand Warm-Up on page 16. **E1**
6. Review counting quarter notes and half notes and demonstrate to the student the counting of whole notes. They will have experience with whole notes from the improvisation exercise in lesson one. **E1, R, O**



7. Teacher and student clap the rhythm exercise on page 17 as a way to review quarter notes, half notes, whole notes, and bar lines. **E1, R, O**
8. The student claps the rhythms to Aura Lee on page 17 as the teacher plays it on the piano. **E1**
9. The student then counts and plays the melody. Teacher feedback is given, and the student is asked to reflect on what went well and what could have gone better as they played it. **R, E2, T, O**
10. Step nine is repeated, taking teacher feedback and student reflection into account. **R, E2, T, O**
11. The student is assigned worksheet activities on pages 18 and 19 to complete for next week's lesson. **W, O**

#### Lesson 4:

1. Improvisation exercise: Students improvise a melody on the C, D, E, F, and G with their left hand using quarter notes, half notes, and whole notes while the teacher accompanies. This improvisation is recorded. **H, E1, T, O**
2. The student listens to the recording and is asked for their feedback on what they did and did not like about their improvisation. **R, E2, O**
3. Step 1 and step 2 are repeated, incorporating feedback that is discussed in step 2. **E1, T, O, R, E2**
4. The student plays Aura Lee from the previous lesson and is given final feedback from the teacher. The student verbally reflects on the strengths and weaknesses in playing this melody. **R, E2, T**
5. The teacher checks the student's worksheet activities from the previous week and discusses any corrections that need to be made with the student. **R, O**
6. The teacher shows the student how a brace connects the treble clef and bass clef staves to create a grand staff, where music in both clefs is read simultaneously. **O**
7. The student plays Playing on the Grand Staff on page 20. **E1, O**
8. The student plays Rock-Along on page 21. The teacher notes the prevalence of skipping motion in the melody. **E2, O**
9. The teacher provides feedback on the playing of Rock-Along, and the student verbally reflects on their initial attempt to play a piece of music with disjunct motion. **R, E2, O**
10. The teacher briefly explains the concept of quarter rests. The student and teacher clap the rhythm to Mexican Hat Dance on page 21, making note of quarter rests throughout. **E1, O**
11. The teacher plays Mexican Hat Dance as the student claps along. **E1, O**
12. The student then plays Mexican Hat Dance. Teacher feedback is given and the student plays the piece again. The student then verbally reflects on what improvements were made after taking teacher feedback into account. **E1, R, E2, O**

13. The student is assigned the worksheet activities on page 22 to complete for the next week's lesson. **W, O**

## Lesson 1

### Mastery Objectives:

- Identify student goals and motivations for studying the piano
- Proper posture and hand position
- Understand finger numbers as they relate to piano playing
- Understand the layout of the piano keyboard
- Improvise a melody using given pitches and rhythms

### Materials:

- Piano and piano bench
- *Alfred's Adult All-in-One Piano Course: Level 1*
- Smartphone or other audio recording device

### Procedures:

- The teacher has an introductory discussion with the student about their musical background and asks the student to identify why they wish to learn to play the piano.
- The teacher models proper posture at the piano bench, which the student then replicates.
- The teacher explains to the student the finger numbers that are used in piano playing.
- The teacher demonstrates to the student how to make a proper hand shape for the piano playing, which the student then replicates.
- The teacher asks the student to study piano and discern the pattern of repeating black and white keys. The teacher then explains that C is the white note before each set of two black keys, and F is the white note before each set of three black keys.
- The teacher demonstrates how to find middle C, and identifies where C, D, E, F, and G are located in that position.
- The teacher demonstrates how to place the right hand in the C position, where each of the five above-listed notes each has its own finger in place to play it.
- The teacher demonstrates the feeling of pulse to the student by having the student tap their foot as the teacher plays a quarter note melody on the piano.
- The student is asked to play C for one beat, then two beats, then four beats.
- The student improvises an eight measure melody using quarter notes, half notes, and whole notes, and using C, D, E, F, and G as the pitches. The teacher accompanies this melody using C, F, and G major chords underneath the improvisation. The teacher records this activity.
- The student and teacher listen back to the audio recording of the improvisation. The teacher asks the student to verbalize what they did and did not like about their improvisation. The improvisation exercise is then repeated, so the student can attempt to incorporate changes to their improvisation. This time, the exercise lasts for sixteen

measures. The teacher also records this improvisation so the student can further reflect upon their performance.

**Assessment:**

- Teacher observation of posture and hand position
- Improvisation
  - The student used the pitches C, D, E, F, and G
  - The student used quarter notes, half notes, and whole notes
  - The student attempted to improve their performance after listening to a recording of their initial performance

## Lesson 2

### Mastery Objectives:

- Student recognizes and successfully plays quarter notes and half notes from musical notation
- Student recognizes and successfully plays C, D, E, F, and G in the treble clef
- Student plays Ode to Joy, incorporating rhythms and pitches learned in the lesson

### Materials:

- Piano and piano bench
- *Alfred's Adult All-in-One Piano Course: Level 1*

### Procedures:

- Student is asked to “name that tune” as the teacher plays Beethoven’s Ode to Joy on the piano.
- The teacher gives a brief explanation of the melody’s use in Beethoven’s ninth symphony.
- On page 13, show the student how quarter notes and half notes are written, and for what duration each note is held.
  - These will be familiar to students, as they played quarter notes and half notes in their improvisations the previous week before knowing what they are called.
- Clap the rhythm exercise on page 13 to demonstrate these rhythms, and also to demonstrate how bar lines divide the music into measures.
- On page 12, show student how the treble clef organizes notes on the staff, and how to identify C, D, E, F, and G in the treble clef.
- On page 12, the teacher demonstrates how to play Right Hand Warm-Up. The student claps along to the quarter note rhythm as the teacher plays.
- The student plays the Right Hand Warm-Up. Afterwards, the student and teacher discuss what went well and what could use improvement. Based on this, the student plays the exercise again.
- On page 13, the student claps the rhythm to Ode to Joy as the teacher plays it on the piano.
- The student then counts and plays the piece. Teacher feedback is given, and the student is asked to reflect on what went well and what could have gone better as they played it.
- The student plays the piece again, incorporating the teacher feedback and the student’s own reflection
- The student is assigned to practice Ode to Joy for next week, and to complete the worksheet activities on page 14 and page 15.

**Assessment:**

- Teacher observation of student playing
- Student self-reflection of their own playing
- Right Hand Warm-Up and Ode to Joy
  - Pitch accuracy
  - Rhythmic accuracy
  - Steady tempo
  - Fingering

### Lesson 3

#### Mastery Objectives:

- Student is able to articulate how musical elements such as melodies can be borrowed and used by other musicians
- Student recognizes and successfully plays C, D, E, F, and G in the bass clef
- Student recognizes and successfully plays quarter notes, half notes, and whole notes
- Student plays Aura Lee, incorporating pitches and rhythms learned in the unit

#### Materials:

- Smartphone or other device capable of playing audio recordings
- Piano and piano bench
- *Alfred's Adult All-in-One Piano Course: Level 1*

#### Procedures:

- The teacher plays a recording of Elvis Presley's "Love Me Tender." The teacher then explains that Elvis borrowed the melody Aura Lee, which the student will learn to play in this lesson.
- The teacher asks the student to think of examples of songs they know which have sample melodies and other musical elements from other songs.
  - If the student cannot identify any, the teacher can research examples and demonstrate them to the student.
- The student plays Ode to Joy from the previous lesson and is given final feedback from the teacher. The student verbally reflects on what went well in their playing and what needed improvement. If there are improvements to be made, the teacher helps the student make them.
- The teacher checks the student's worksheet activities from the previous week and helps the student make any necessary corrections.
- The teacher shows the student the basics of reading bass clef and where C, D, E, F, and G are located on the bass clef and on the piano.
- The student plays and counts the Left Hand Warm-Up on page 16.
- Review counting quarter notes and half notes, and demonstrate the counting of whole notes on page 17.
- Teacher and student clap the rhythm exercise on page 17 to reinforce the concepts of quarter notes, half notes, and bar lines, and to learn the concept of the whole note.
- The student claps the rhythms to Aura Lee on page 17 as the teacher plays it on the piano.
- The student then counts and plays the piece. Teacher feedback is given, and the student is asked to reflect on what went well and what could improve in their playing. This process is repeated, as the student continues to improve their performance based on teacher feedback and self-reflection.

- The student is assigned to practice Aura Lee for next week's lesson, and to complete the worksheet activities on page 18 and page 19.

**Assessment:**

- Teacher evaluates and corrects worksheet activities on page 14 and page 15
- Teacher observation of student playing
- Student self-reflection of their own playing
- Ode to Joy, Left Hand Warm-Up, and Aura Lee
  - Pitch accuracy
  - Rhythmic accuracy
  - Steady tempo
  - Fingering



## Lesson 4

### Mastery Objectives:

- Improvise a melody using given pitches and rhythms
- Student recognizes and successfully plays C, D, E, F, and G in the treble clef and the bass clef
- Student recognizes and successfully plays quarter notes, half notes, and whole notes
- Student plays Rock-Along and Mexican Hat Dance, incorporating pitches and rhythms learned in the unit

### Materials:

- Piano and piano bench
- *Alfred's Adult All-in-One Piano Course: Level 1*
- Smartphone or other audio recording device

### Procedures:

- The student improvises an eight measure melody with the left hand using quarter notes, half notes, and whole notes, and using C, D, E, F, and G as the pitches. The teacher accompanies this melody using C, F, and G major chords underneath the improvisation. The teacher records this activity.
- The student and teacher listen back to the audio recording of the improvisation. The teacher asks the student to verbalize what they did and did not like about their improvisation. The improvisation exercise is then repeated, so the student can attempt to incorporate changes to their improvisation. This time, the exercise lasts for sixteen measures. The teacher also records this improvisation so the student can further reflect upon their performance.
- The student plays Aura Lee from the previous lesson and is given final feedback from the teacher. The student verbally reflects on what went well in their playing and what needed improvement. If there are improvements to be made, the teacher helps the student make them.
- The teacher checks the student's worksheet activities from the previous week and helps the student make any necessary corrections.
- On page 20, the teacher shows the student how a brace connects the treble clef and the bass clef staves to create a grand staff, where music in both clefs is read simultaneously.
- The student plays Playing on the Grand Staff on page 20.
- The student plays Rock-Along on page 21. The teacher makes the student aware of the prevalence of skips in this melody.
- The teacher provides feedback on the playing of Rock-Along, and the student verbally reflects on their initial attempt to play a piece of music with disjunct motion.

- The teacher briefly explains the concept of quarter rests. On page 21, the student and teacher clap the rhythm of Mexican Hat Dance, making note of the quarter rests throughout.
- On page 21, the teacher plays Mexican Hat Dance as the student claps along.
- The student plays Mexican Hat Dance. Teacher feedback is given and the student plays the piece again. The student then verbally reflects on what improvements were made after taking teacher feedback into account.
- The student is assigned to practice Rock-Along and Mexican Hat Dance on page 21, and to complete the worksheet activities on page 22 for next week's lesson.

**Assessment:**

- Improvisation
  - The student used the pitches C, D, E, F, and G
  - The student used quarter notes, half notes, and whole notes
  - The student attempted to improve their performance after listening to a recording of their initial performance
- Teacher evaluates and corrects worksheet activities on page 18 and page 19
- Teacher observation of student playing
- Student self-reflection of their own playing
- Aura Lee, Playing on the Grand Staff, Rock-Along, and Mexican Hat Dance
  - Pitch accuracy
  - Rhythmic accuracy
  - Steady tempo
  - Fingering

## Unit 2

### Stage 1: Identify Desired Results

#### **What essential questions will be considered?**

1. How do performers interpret musical works?
2. How does changing certain musical elements affect the character of the music?

#### **What understandings are desired?**

Students will understand...

- Performers interpret musical works based on indications in the sheet music, the style of the music, and personal preferences
- Altering musical elements such as harmonies and dynamics can alter the mood of the piece

#### **What key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result of this unit?**

Students will know...

- How 2nds, 3rds, 4ths, and 5ths sound melodically and harmonically
- How 2nds, 3rds, 4ths, and 5ths look on the treble and bass clef staves
- How to construct and play C Major chords in the treble and bass clef, and G7 chords in the bass clef
- How to identify and play dynamics as indicated in the music

Students will be able to...

- Play melodic and harmonic 2nds, 3rds, 4ths, and 5ths
- Improvise melodies over a chordal accompaniment
- Play C Major and G7 chords in the left hand to accompany right hand melodies

### Stage 2: Determine Acceptable Evidence

#### **What evidence will show that students understand?**

Performance Tasks:

- Students will play the pieces of music they have learned from written notation in their lessons
- Students will improvise their own melodies utilizing given parameters of pitch and rhythm
- Students will complete workbook pages in their lesson book to reinforce curricular concepts

#### **What other evidence needs to be collected in light of Stage 1 Desired Results?**

Teacher observations:

- Teacher will observe student progress and answer student inquiries

#### **Student Self-Assessment and Reflection:**

The student will often be asked to reflect on their own performance in lessons on pieces from the lesson book, as well as music that is improvised by the student. In the case of improvisation, audio recordings of the student's improvisations will be used so the student can reflect on the experience after completing the improvisation.

### **Assessment Task Blueprint:**

#### **What understandings or goals will be assessed through this task?**

- Students demonstrate ability to play music from written notation, utilizing basic musical elements
- Students utilize basic musical elements to improvise music as a method of self-expression

#### **Through what authentic performance task will the student demonstrate understanding?**

- Playing music from written musical notation
- Improvisation using given melodic, harmonic and rhythmic parameters
- Completing worksheet activities

#### **What student products and performances will provide evidence of desired understandings?**

- Accurate performance interpretation of written musical notation
- Performing melodic improvisations using given melodic and rhythmic parameters

#### **By what criteria will student products and performances be evaluated?**

Performance from written notation

- Pitch accuracy

- Rhythmic accuracy
- Tempo
- Fingering
- Dynamics
- Articulations

Melodic improvisations

- Melodic content
- Harmonic content
- Rhythmic content

### Stage 3: Plan Learning Experiences

What sequence of teaching and learning experience will equip students to engage with, develop, and demonstrate the desired understandings? Use the following sheet to list the key teaching and learning activities in sequence. Code entry with the appropriate initials of the WHERETO elements.

Lesson 1:

1. Improvisation exercise: student will improvise a melody in the right hand making use of 3rds. This exercise is done twice. Instruct the student to play loudly the first time, and softly the second time. Ask the student how changing the volume level changed the mood and character of their improvisation. **H, E1, O**
2. The student plays Rock Along and Mexican Hat Dance from the previous lesson and is given final feedback from the teacher. The student verbally reflects on the strengths and weaknesses in playing these. **R, E2, T**
3. The teacher checks the student's worksheet activities from the previous week and discusses any corrections that need to be made with the student. **R, O**
4. Review the concept of bar lines and instruct students to add bar lines to Lightly Row and Aunt Rhody. **E1, R, E2**
5. Student plays through Lightly Row and Aunt Rhody. Teacher feedback is given, and the student is asked to reflect on their sight reading. **E1, R, E2**
6. Demonstrate for the student how melodic 2nds and 3rds look and sound on the piano. **W, O**
7. Define melodic intervals for the student, and instruct the student to play the melodic interval exercise on page 24. **E2, O**
8. Instruct the student to play through Au Claire De La Lune, making note of the dynamic sign piano, and its definition. **E1, O**
9. The student reflects on their performance and teacher feedback is given. Steps eight and nine are repeated. **R, E2, O**

10. The student plays Tisket, a Tasket, making note of the mezzo forte dynamic sign and its definition. **E1, O**
11. The student reflects on their performance and teacher feedback is given. Steps ten and eleven are repeated. **R, E2, O**
12. The student is assigned to practice Au Clair De La Lune and Tisket, a Tasket, as well as to complete the worksheet activities on page 25. **W, O**

## Lesson 2:

1. Improvisation Exercise: Demonstrate to the student how to play C Major and G7 chords in the left hand. Then, instruct the student to improvise an eight measure melody in the right hand over top of these chords, alternating between G7 and C Major whole notes for one measure each. The student reflects verbally on their performance and does the improvisation exercise a second time. **W, H, E1, R, E2**
2. The student plays Au Clair De La Lune and Tisket, a Tasket from the previous lesson and is given final feedback from the teacher. The student verbally reflects on the strengths and weaknesses in playing these. **R, E2, T**
3. The teacher checks the student's worksheet activities from the previous week and discusses any corrections that need to be made with the student. **R, O**
4. The teacher demonstrates how harmonic 2nds and 3rds look and sound on the piano. The student plays through the harmonic 2nds and 3rds exercises on page 26 and 27. **W, E2, O**
5. The student plays Rockin' Intervals, making note of the forte dynamic sign and its definition. **E1, O**
6. The student reflects on their performance and teacher feedback is given. Steps five and six are repeated, with the teacher playing along with the teacher duet part. **R, E2, O**
7. The student writes the name of the intervals in their designated boxes for Harmonica Rock. The student then plays through Harmonica Rock. **E1, O**
8. The student reflects on their performance and teacher feedback is given. Steps seven and eight are repeated. **R, E2, O**
9. The student is assigned to practice Rockin' Intervals and Harmonica Rock for the following lesson. They are also assigned to practice improvising over G7 and C chords in the same style as today's lesson, as well as to complete the brief worksheet activity on page 27. **W, O**

## Lesson 3:

1. Improvisation Exercise: The student plays the same improvisation exercise as last week. The student then plays the exercise a second time, this time with the following syncopated left hand chord rhythm. **W, H, E1, R, E2**



2. The student plays Rockin' Intervals and Harmonica Rock from the previous lesson and is given final feedback from the teacher. The student verbally reflects on the strengths and weaknesses in playing these. **R, E2, T**
3. The teacher checks the student's worksheet activity from the previous week and discusses any corrections that need to be made with the student. **R, O**
4. The teacher demonstrates how melodic and harmonic fourths and fifths sound on the piano and appear in sheet music. The teacher instructs the student to play the melodic fourths and fifths exercise on page 28, and the harmonic fourths and fifths exercises on pages 30 and 31. **W, E1, E2, O**
5. The student plays through Good King Wenceslas, identifying the use of the melodic fourth throughout. Teacher feedback is given and the student plays it again. **E1, R, E2**
6. The student identifies the melodic fifths and dynamic changes in My Fifth. The student plays through the piece. **E1, O**
7. Teacher feedback is given and the student gives verbal self-reflection. Steps six and seven are repeated. **R, E2, O**
8. The student identifies all of the melodic fourths and fifths, as well as harmonic fourths and fifths, in Jingle Bells. **E1**
9. The student plays through Jingle Bells hands separately. **E1, O**
10. The teacher provides feedback and the student verbalizes their self-reflection. Steps nine and ten are repeated. **E1, R, E2**
11. The student is assigned to practice Good King Wenceslas and My Fifth for the following week. They are also instructed to practice Jingle Bells hands separately, and to complete the worksheet activities on pages 29 and 31. **W, O**

#### Lesson 4:

1. Improvisation exercise: the student uses the same left hand chords and chord rhythm from last week's exercise. The student makes use of harmonic seconds, thirds, fourths, and fifths in the right hand. Teacher feedback is given and the student reflects on their performance. This activity is then repeated. **W, H, E1, R, E2**
2. The student plays Good King Wenceslas and My Fifth from the previous lesson and is given final feedback from the teacher. The student verbally reflects on the strengths and weaknesses in playing these. **R, E2, T**
3. The teacher checks the student's worksheet activities from the previous week and discusses any corrections that need to be made with the student. **R, O**
4. The student identifies all of the harmonic intervals used in Dueling Harmonics, and makes note of the dynamic changes. **E1, O**
5. The student plays through Dueling Harmonics. Teacher feedback is given and the student verbally reflects on their performance. This step is repeated as necessary. **E1, R, E2, T**
6. The student plays through the C Major chord exercises on page 32. The teacher shows the student how the C Major chord looks in bass clef and treble clef. **E1, O**

7. The student plays through Brother John hands separately, making note of the dynamic changes and the half rests, which are new to the student.
8. Once comfortable hands separate, the student plays through Brother John hands together, and reflects verbally on their performance. Teacher feedback is given. **E1, R, E2, T**
9. The student plays through Here's A Happy Song. The student reflects verbally on their performance, and teacher feedback is given. **E1, R, E2, T**
10. The student plays through the C Major and G7 left hand exercises on page 34. The teacher shows the student where B2 appears on the bass clef staff, and how G7 is formed on the bass clef staff.
11. The student plays through Merrily We Roll Along, observing the dynamic differences between the hands. The teacher demonstrates to the student how to count the tied whole notes in the left hand. The student reflects on their performance and teacher feedback is given. This process is repeated. **E1, R, E2, T**
12. The student plays through Largo, noting the dynamic differences between the hands. The student reflects verbally on their performance and teacher feedback is given. This process is repeated. **E1, R, E2, T**
13. The student is assigned to practice Dueling Harmonics, Here's a Happy Song, Merrily We Roll Along, and Largo for their next lesson. **W, O**



## Lesson 1

### Mastery Objectives:

- Improvise a melody using given pitches, rhythms, intervals, and dynamics
- Student is able to add bar lines to a piece of music in its indicated meter
- Student recognizes and plays melodic 2nds and 3rds
- Student recognizes and plays piano and mezzo forte dynamics
- Student plays Au Clair De La Lune and Tisket, a Tasket, making use of intervals and dynamics learned in this lesson

### Materials:

- Piano and piano bench
- *Alfred's Adult All-in-One Piano Course: Level 1*

### Procedures:

- The student improvises a melody in the right hand using 3rds, and C, D, E, F, and G as the pitches. The teacher accompanies, using C, F, and G chords. This exercise is done twice. The first time, the student is instructed to play loudly. The second time, the student is instructed to play softly. The teacher then provokes a discussion about how different dynamic levels invoke different moods and character in the improvisation.
- The student plays Rock Along and Mexican Hat Dance from the previous lesson and is given final feedback from the teacher. The student verbally reflects on what went well in their playing and what needed improvement. If there are improvements to be made, the teacher helps the student make them.
- The teacher checks the student's worksheet activities from the previous week and helps the student make any necessary corrections.
- The teacher reviews the concept of bar lines, and instructs the student to add bar lines to Lightly Row and Aunt Rhody.
- The student plays through Lightly Row as a sightreading activity. Teacher feedback is given, and the student is asked to verbally reflect on their sightreading.
- The student plays through Aunt Rhody as a sightreading activity. Teacher feedback is given, and the student is asked to verbally reflect on their sightreading.
- The teacher demonstrates for the student how melodic 2nds and 3rds sound on the piano, and then asks the student to play what the teacher just played. The teacher then shows the student how melodic 2nds and 3rds appear in the treble clef and bass clef.
- The teacher defines melodic intervals for the student, and instructs the student to play through the melodic 2nds and 3rds exercise on page 24.
- Instruct the student to play through Au Claire De La Lune, making note of the dynamic sign piano, and its definition. The student reflects on their performance and teacher feedback is given. This process is repeated as necessary.

- Instruct the student to play through Tisket, a Tasket, making note of the mezzo forte dynamic sign and its definition. The student reflects on their performance and teacher feedback is given. The process is repeated as necessary.
- The student is assigned to practice Au Clair De La Lune and Tisket, a Tasket, as well as to complete the worksheet activities on page 25.

**Assessment:**

- Improvisation
  - The student used the pitches C, D, E, F, and G
  - The student used quarter notes, half notes, and whole notes
  - The student uses melodic seconds and thirds
  - The student uses forte and piano dynamic levels
- Teacher evaluates and corrects worksheet activities on page 22
- Teacher observation of student playing
- Student self-reflection of their own playing
- Rock Along, Mexican Hat Dance, Au Clair De La Lune, and Tisket, a Tasket
  - Pitch accuracy
  - Rhythmic accuracy
  - Steady tempo
  - Fingering
  - Dynamics (Au Clair De La Lune, Tisket, a Tasket)

## Lesson 2

### Mastery Objectives:

- Improvise a melody over C Major and G7 chords
- Student recognizes and plays harmonic 2nds and 3rds
- Student recognizes and plays piano, mezzo forte, and forte dynamics
- Student plays Rockin' Intervals and Harmonica Rock, using dynamics and harmonic intervals used in this lesson

### Materials:

- Piano and piano bench
- *Alfred's Adult All-in-One Piano Course: Level 1*

### Procedures:

- The teacher demonstrates to the student how to play C Major and G7 chords in the left hand. Then, instruct the student to improvise an eight measure melody in the right hand over top of these chords, alternating between G7 and C Major whole notes for one measure each. The student reflects verbally on their performance and does the improvisation exercise a second time.
- The student plays Au Clair De La Lune and Tisket, a Tasket from the previous lesson and is given final feedback from the teacher. The student verbally reflects on what went well in their playing and what needed improvement. If there are improvements to be made, the teacher helps the student make them.
- The teacher checks the student's worksheet activities from the previous week and helps the student make any necessary corrections.
- The teacher demonstrates how harmonic 2nds and 3rds look and sound on the piano. The student plays through the harmonic 2nds and 3rds exercises on page 26 and 27.
- The student plays Rockin' Intervals, making note of the forte dynamic sign and its definition. The student reflects on their performance and teacher feedback is given. This process is repeated as necessary.
- The student writes the name of the intervals in their designated boxes for Harmonica Rock. The student then plays through Harmonica Rock. The student reflects on their performance and teacher feedback is given. This process is repeated as necessary.
- The student is assigned to practice Rockin' Intervals and Harmonica Rock for the following lesson. They are also assigned to practice improvising over G7 and C chords in the same style as today's lesson, as well as to complete the brief worksheet activity on page 27.

### Assessment:

- Improvisation

- The student used the pitches C, D, E, F, and G
- The student used quarter notes, half notes, and whole notes
- The student alternates between C Major and G7 chords in the left hand
- Teacher evaluates and corrects worksheet activities on page 25
- Teacher observation of student playing
- Student self-reflection of their own playing
- Au Clair De La Lune, and Tisket, a Tasket, Rockin' Intervals, Harmonica Rock
  - Pitch accuracy
  - Rhythmic accuracy
  - Steady tempo
  - Fingering
  - Dynamics

### Lesson 3

#### Mastery Objectives:

- Improvise a melody over syncopated C Major and G7 chords
- Student recognizes and plays melodic fourths and fifths
- Student recognizes and plays harmonic fourths and fifths
- Student recognizes and plays dynamic changes in a single piece of music
- Student plays Jingle Bells, Good King Wenceslas, and My Fifth, using intervals and dynamic changes used in this lesson

#### Materials:

- Piano and piano bench
- *Alfred's Adult All-in-One Piano Course: Level 1*

#### Procedures:

- The student plays the same improvisation exercise as last week. The student then plays the exercise a second time, this time with the following syncopated left hand chord rhythm:



- The student plays Rockin' Intervals and Harmonica Rock from the previous lesson and is given final feedback from the teacher. The student verbally reflects on the strengths and weaknesses in playing these.
- The teacher checks the student's worksheet activities from the previous week and helps the student make any necessary corrections.
- The teacher demonstrates how melodic and harmonic fourths and fifths sound on the piano and appear in sheet music. The teacher instructs the student to play the melodic fourths and fifths exercise on page 28, and the harmonic fourths and fifths exercises on pages 30 and 31.
- The student plays through Good King Wenceslas, identifying the use of the melodic fourth throughout. Teacher feedback is given and the student plays it again.
- The student identifies the melodic fifths and dynamic changes in My Fifth. The student plays through the piece. The student reflects on their playing and teacher feedback is given. This process is repeated as necessary.
- The student identifies all of the melodic fourths and fifths, as well as harmonic fourths and fifths, in Jingle Bells. The student then plays through Jingle Bells hands separately. Teacher feedback is given and the student reflects on their performance.

- The student is assigned to practice Good King Wenceslas and My Fifth for the following week. They are also instructed to practice Jingle Bells hands separately, and to complete the worksheet activities on pages 29 and 31.

**Assessment:**

- Improvisation
  - The student used the pitches C, D, E, F, and G
  - The student used quarter notes, half notes, and whole notes
  - The student alternates between syncopated C Major and G7 chords in the left hand
- Teacher evaluates and corrects worksheet activities on page 27
- Teacher observation of student playing
- Student self-reflection of their own playing
- Rockin' Intervals, Harmonica Rock, Good King Wenceslas, My Fifth, Jingle Bells
  - Pitch accuracy
  - Rhythmic accuracy
  - Steady tempo
  - Fingering
  - Dynamics

## Lesson 4

### Mastery Objectives:

- Improvise a melody using harmonic seconds, thirds, fourths, and fifths in the right hand, over syncopated C Major and G7 chords in the left hand.
- Student recognizes and plays B2 in the bass clef
- Student recognizes and plays C Major and G7 chords in the bass clef
- Student sight reads Dueling Harmonics, using harmonic seconds, thirds, fourths, fifths, and contrasting dynamics
- Student plays Merrily We Roll Along and Largo, using chords and dynamic contrasts used in this lesson

### Materials:

- Piano and piano bench
- *Alfred's Adult All-in-One Piano Course: Level 1*

### Procedures:

- The student uses the same left hand chords and chord rhythm from last week's exercise. The student makes use of harmonic seconds, thirds, fourths, and fifths in the right hand. Teacher feedback is given and the student reflects on their performance. This activity is then repeated.
- The student plays Good King Wenceslas and My Fifth from the previous lesson and is given final feedback from the teacher. The student verbally reflects on the strengths and weaknesses in playing these.
- The teacher checks the student's worksheet activities from the previous week and helps the student make any necessary corrections.
- The student plays through Jingle Bells hands separately from the previous lesson.
- The student plays Jingle Bells hands together. Teacher feedback is given and the student reflects on their playing. This process is repeated as necessary.
- The student identifies all of the harmonic intervals used in Dueling Harmonics, and makes note of the dynamic changes.
- The student sight reads Dueling Harmonics. Teacher feedback is given and the student verbally reflects on their sight reading.
- The student plays through the C Major chord exercises on page 32. The teacher shows the student how the C Major chord looks in bass clef and treble clef.
- The student plays through Brother John hands separately, making note of the dynamic changes and the half rests, which are new to the student.
- Once comfortable hands separate, the student plays through Brother John hands together, and reflects verbally on their performance. Teacher feedback is given. This process is repeated as necessary.

- The student plays through the C Major and G7 left hand exercises on page 34. The teacher shows the student where B2 appears on the bass clef staff, and how G7 is formed on the bass clef staff.
- The student plays through Merrily We Roll Along, observing the dynamic differences between the hands. The teacher demonstrates to the student how to count the tied whole notes in the left hand. The student reflects on their performance and teacher feedback is given. This process is repeated as necessary.
- The student plays through Largo, noting the dynamic differences between the hands. The student reflects verbally on their performance and teacher feedback is given. This process is repeated as necessary.
- The student is assigned to practice Jingle Bells, Merrily We Roll Along, and Largo for their next lesson.

**Assessment:**

- Improvisation
  - The student used the pitches C, D, E, F, and G in the right hand
  - The student uses harmonic 2nds, 3rds, 4ths, and 5ths in the right hand
  - The student used quarter notes, half notes, and whole notes
  - The student alternates between syncopated C Major and G7 chords in the left hand
- Teacher evaluates and corrects worksheet activities on page 29 and page 31
- Teacher observation of student playing
- Student self-reflection of their own playing
- Good King Wenceslas, My Fifth, Jingle Bells, Merrily We Roll Along, Largo
  - Pitch accuracy
  - Rhythmic accuracy
  - Steady tempo
  - Fingering
  - Dynamics



## Unit 3

### Stage 1: Identify Desired Results

#### **What essential questions will be considered?**

1. How do harmonies interact with other musical elements to create a piece of music?
2. How are melodies created?
3. How are chord progressions created?

#### **What understandings are desired?**

Students will understand...

- Harmonies progress through a phrase in relation to other elements such as melody and rhythm
- Melodies are created using steps and leaps, and are supported by harmonic progressions
- Chord progressions are created by using chords in a certain order to achieve a desired musical affect

#### **What key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result of this unit?**

Students will know...

- How to construct C Major and G7 chords, and how to read them in treble clef and bass clef
- How to read music in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time
- How to read simple music in G position

Students will be able to...

- Play pieces of music in C Major using tonic, subdominant, and dominant harmonies
- Improvise melodies over chordal accompaniment
- Create an original composition using pitches, rhythms, and harmonies learned throughout the semester
- Play pieces of music in triple meter
- Play pieces of music in G position

### Stage 2: Determine Acceptable Evidence

#### **What evidence will show that students understand?**

##### Performance Tasks:

- Students will play the pieces of music they have learned from written notation in their lessons
- Students will improvise their own melodies utilizing given parameters of pitch and rhythm
- Students will begin to create their own original composition using concepts learned throughout the semester
- Students will complete workbook pages in their lesson book to reinforce curricular concepts

#### **What other evidence needs to be collected in light of Stage 1 Desired Results?**

##### Teacher observations:

- Teacher will observe student progress and answer student inquiries

#### **Student Self-Assessment and Reflection:**

Students will often be asked to reflect on their own performance in lessons on pieces from the lesson book, as well as music that is improvised and composed by the student.

### **Assessment Task Blueprint:**

#### **What understandings or goals will be assessed through this task?**

- Students demonstrate ability to play music from written notation, utilizing basic musical elements
- Students utilize basic musical elements and harmonies to improvise a melody as a method of self-expression
- Students demonstrate their understanding of the relationship between musical elements by creating an original composition

#### **Through what authentic performance task will the student demonstrate understanding?**

- Playing music from written musical notation
- Improvising melodies using given melodic and rhythmic parameters
- Creating an original composition
- Completing worksheet activities

#### **What student products and performances will provide evidence of desired understandings?**

- Accurate performance interpretation of written musical notation
- Performing improvisations using given melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic parameters

- Creation of original composition

**By what criteria will student products and performances be evaluated?**

Performance from written notation

- Pitch accuracy
- Rhythmic accuracy
- Tempo
- Fingering
- Dynamics
- Articulations

Improvisations

- Melodic content
- Harmonic content
- Rhythmic content

Composition:

- Melodic content
- Harmonic content
- Rhythmic content

**Stage 3: Plan Learning Experiences**

What sequence of teaching and learning experience will equip students to engage with, develop, and demonstrate the desired understandings? Use the following sheet to list the key teaching and learning activities in sequence. Code entry with the appropriate initials of the WHERE TO elements.

Lesson 1:

1. Student begins work on an original musical composition. **H, R, E2, T**
2. Student plays Jingle Bells, Merrily We Roll Along, and Largo from the previous lesson. Teacher provides feedback and the student reflects on their playing. **E1, R**
3. The student plays through exercises teaching them to read B3 in the bass clef, and C Major and G7 chords in the bass clef. **W, E1, O**
4. The student plays through Mary Ann hands separately, then hands together. **E1, O**
5. The student writes in pop chord symbols over chords. **E1, O**
6. The student plays exercises reviewing C Major and G7 chords in both hands. **E1, O**

Lesson 2:

1. The student plays the right hand of the first eight measures of their composition for their teacher. The teacher provides feedback. **H, R, E2, T**
2. The teacher demonstrates how to play an F Major chord in the left hand. **W, O**

3. The student improvises a melody in the right hand over C Major, F Major, and G7 chords in the left hand. **W, E2, R, O**
4. The student plays Mary Ann from the previous lesson. The student reflects on their playing and teacher feedback is given. **E1, R**
5. The teacher explains  $\frac{3}{4}$  meter and dotted half notes to the student, and shows the student how these concepts appear in the music. **W, O**
6. The student claps and counts aloud a rhythm exercise. **W, E1, O**
7. The student plays through Rockets, observing the dynamic changes throughout. Teacher feedback is given and the student reflects on their playing. **E1, O**
8. The teacher demonstrates the concept of slurs to the student by playing five-finger patterns in each hand in legato style. The student then plays five-finger patterns in each hand in legato style. **W, O**
9. The teacher shows the students how slur markings appear in the music. **W, O**
10. The student plays through What Can I Share? hands separately, then hands together. **E1, O**
11. The student draws a slur line over the right hand melody in the second line of Day Is Done. **W, E1, O**
12. The student writes in the chord symbols for the chords used in Day Is Done. **W, E1, O**
13. The student plays through Day Is Done hands together. **E1, O**
14. The student completes worksheet activities for the following lesson. **E1, R**

### Lesson 3:

1. The student plays the right hand melody of the first sixteen measures of their composition for their teacher. The teacher provides feedback. **H, R, E2, T**
2. The student plays through Rockets, What Can I Share? and Day Is Done from the previous lesson. **E1, R**
3. The teacher checks the student's worksheet activities from the previous week and helps the student make any necessary corrections. **R, T**
4. The student plays through the brief exercise on page 44, which introduces the note A4 in the left hand. **W, E1, O**
5. The teacher shows the student how the F Major chord appears in the bass clef, and the student then plays the brief chord exercises on page 44 and page 45. **W, E1, O**
6. The student plays through two different versions of When the Saints Go Marching In hands separate, then hands together. **E1, O**
7. The student plays through the brief exercise on page 46, which introduces the note A5 in the right hand. **W, E1, O**
8. The teacher shows the student how the F Major chord appears in the treble clef, and the student then plays the brief chord exercises on page 46 and page 47. **W, E1, O**

## Lesson 4:

1. The student plays through the first sixteen measures of their composition hands together. The teacher provides feedback. **H, R, E2, T**
2. The student plays through both versions of When the Saints Go Marching In from the previous lesson. **E1, R**
3. The student writes in the chord symbols for I'm Gonna Lay My Burden Down. **W, E1, O**
4. The student plays through I'm Gonna Lay My Burden Down. **E1, O**
5. The student writes in the chord symbols for Waltzing Chords. **W, E1, O**
6. The student plays through Waltzing Chords. **E1, O**
7. The teacher demonstrates how to play five-finger patterns in each hand in G position. The student then plays five-finger patterns in G position in each hand. **W, E1, O**
8. The teacher shows the student how B4, C5, and D5 appear in the bass clef, and how B5, C6, and D6 appear in the right hand. **W, E1, O**
9. The student slowly plays through the G Major melodic interval exercise and the G Major harmonic interval exercise on page 50. **W, E1, O**
10. The student plays through Love Somebody hands separately, then hands together. **E1, O**
11. The student is assigned worksheet activities to complete for their next lesson. **E1, R**

## Lesson 1

### Mastery Objectives:

- The student begins to compose their own original melody
- The student is able to identify and play C Major and G7 chords in the right hand
- The student is able to identify and play B3 in the treble clef
- The student is able to identify chords at sight and label them with pop chord symbols
- The student plays Mary Ann, using right hand chords used in this lesson

### Materials:

- Piano and piano bench
- *Alfred's Adult All-in-One Piano Course: Level 1*
- Pencil
- Staff paper

### Procedures:

- The student will begin work on a 32-measure original composition for the piano in 4/4 time. If the student desires, they may write words to accompany the melody. In this lesson, they will begin to compose the first four measures.
- The student plays Jingle Bells, Merrily We Roll Along, and Largo from the previous lesson and is given final feedback from the teacher. The student verbally reflects on the strengths and weaknesses in playing these.
- The student plays through the brief exercise on page 36, which introduces the note B3 in the right hand.
- The teacher shows the student how C Major and G7 chords sound in the right hand, and how they appear in the treble clef. The student plays the brief right hand chord exercise on page 36.
- The student plays through the left hand melody of Mary Ann, while the teacher accompanies using the chords in the right hand part.
- The teacher and student play through Mary Ann again, this time switching hands.
- The student plays through Mary Ann hands together. Teacher feedback is given and the student reflects on their playing. This process is repeated as necessary.
- The student writes in the chord symbols for the chord exercises on page 38 and page 39.
- The student plays through the chord exercises on page 38 and 39, reviewing C Major and G7 chords in the left hand and right hand.
- The student is assigned to practice Mary Ann for their next lesson, as well as to compose the melody for the first eight measures of their original composition.

**Assessment:**

- Teacher observation of student playing
- Student self-reflection of their own playing
- Jingle Bells, Merrily We Roll Along, Largo, and Mary Ann
  - Pitch accuracy
  - Rhythmic accuracy
  - Steady tempo
  - Fingering
  - Dynamics

## Lesson 2

### Mastery Objectives:

- The student incorporates feedback into the composition of an original melody
- The student is able to improvise a right hand melody while using C Major, F Major, and G7 chords in the left hand
- The student recognizes  $\frac{3}{4}$  meter and dotted half notes
- The student recognizes slurs and can play in legato style
- The student plays Rockets, What Can I Share?, and Day Is Done, using meters, rhythms, and articulations learned in this lesson

### Materials:

- Piano and piano bench
- *Alfred's Adult All-in-One Piano Course: Level 1*
- Pencil
- Staff paper

### Procedures:

- The student plays the melody of the first eight measures of their original composition for the teacher. The teacher offers suggestions for improvement.
- The teacher demonstrates how to play an F Major chord in the left hand. The student then improvises an eight-measure melody in the right hand while playing F Major, G7, and C Major block chords in the left hand. The student reflects on their improvisation and teacher feedback is given. The student then does the improvisation exercise a second time.
- The student plays through Mary Ann from the previous lesson. The student reflects on their performance and teacher feedback is given.
- The teacher explains the concept of  $\frac{3}{4}$  meter and dotted half notes to the student. The student then claps and counts aloud the  $\frac{3}{4}$  rhythm exercise on page 40.
- The student plays through Rockets, observing the dynamic changes throughout. Teacher feedback is given and the student reflects on their playing. This process is repeated as necessary.
- The teacher demonstrates the concept of slurs to the student by playing five-finger patterns in each hand in legato style. The student then plays five-finger patterns in each hand in legato style.
- The teacher shows the students how slur markings appear in the music.
- The student plays through the left hand melody of What Can I Share? While doing so, the teacher plays through the right hand chordal accompaniment.
- The student and teacher again play What Can I Share? This time, they switch hands.



- The teacher plays through What Can I Share? hands together. The student reflects on their playing and teacher feedback is given. This process is repeated as necessary.
- The student draws a slur line over the right hand melody in the second line of Day is Done.
- The student writes in the chord symbols for the chords used in Day Is Done.
- The student plays through Day Is Done hands together. Teacher feedback is given and the student reflects on their performance. This process is repeated as necessary.
- The student is assigned to compose the next eight measures of the melody of their original composition. They are also assigned to practice Rockets, What Can I Share? and Day Is Done, as well as to complete the worksheet activities on page 41 and page 43.

**Assessment:**

- Composition
  - The student has completed eight measures of right hand melody
  - The melody uses pitches and rhythms that have been learned so far
- Improvisation
  - The student used the pitches B, C, D, E, F, and G in the right hand
  - The student used quarter notes, half notes, and whole notes
  - The student accompanies their melody with C Major, F Major, and G7 chords in the left hand
- Teacher observation of student playing
- Student self-reflection of their own playing
- Mary Ann, Rockets, What Can I Share?, Day Is Done
  - Pitch accuracy
  - Rhythmic accuracy
  - Steady tempo
  - Fingering
  - Dynamics

### Lesson 3

#### Mastery Objectives:

- The student incorporates teacher feedback into the creation of an original composition
- The student recognizes and plays A4 in the bass clef
- The student recognizes and plays A5 in the treble clef
- The student recognizes and plays the F Major chord in the left hand
- The student recognizes and plays the F Major chord in the right hand
- The student plays *When the Saints Go Marching In*, using pitches and chords used in this lesson

#### Materials:

- Piano and piano bench
- *Alfred's Adult All-in-One Piano Course: Level 1*
- Pencil
- Staff paper

#### Procedures:

- The student plays the melody of the first sixteen measures of their original composition for the teacher. The teacher offers suggestions for improvement.
- The student plays through *Rockets*, *What Can I Share?* and *Day Is Done* from the previous lesson. The student reflects on their performance and teacher feedback is given.
- The teacher checks the student's worksheet activities from the previous week and helps the student make any necessary corrections.
- The student plays through the brief exercise on page 44, which introduces the note A4 in the left hand.
- The teacher shows the student how the F Major chord appears in the bass clef, and the student then plays the brief chord exercises on page 44 and page 45.
- The student plays through the right hand melody part of *When the Saints Go Marching In* on page 45, observing the use of a pickup measure at the beginning. The teacher plays the left hand part while the student plays the right hand part.
- The teacher and student play the piece again, this time switching hands.
- The student plays through *When the Saints Go Marching In* on page 45 hands together. Teacher feedback is given and the student reflects on their performance. This process is repeated as necessary.
- The student plays through the brief exercise on page 46, which introduces the note A5 in the right hand.
- The teacher shows the student how the F Major chord appears in the treble clef, and the student then plays the brief chord exercises on page 46 and page 47.

- The student plays through the left hand melody part of When the Saints Go Marching In on page 47, observing the use of a pickup measure at the beginning. The teacher plays the right hand part while the student plays the left hand part.
- The teacher and student play the piece again, this time switching hands.
- The student plays through When the Saints Go Marching In on page 47 hands together. Teacher feedback is given and the student reflects on their performance. This process is repeated as necessary.
- The student is assigned to add chords to the first sixteen measures of their original composition. The student is also assigned to practice both versions of When the Saints Go Marching In for their next lesson.

**Assessment:**

- Composition
  - The student has completed sixteen measures of right hand melody
  - The melody uses pitches and rhythms that have been learned so far
- Teacher evaluates and corrects worksheet activities on page 41 and page 43
- Teacher observation of student playing
- Student self-reflection of their own playing
- Rockets, What Can I Share? Day Is Done, When the Saints Go Marching In
  - Pitch accuracy
  - Rhythmic accuracy
  - Steady tempo
  - Fingering
  - Dynamics

### Lesson 4:

#### Mastery Objectives:

- The student incorporates teacher feedback into the creation of an original composition
- The student recognizes B4, C5, and D5 in the bass clef
- The student recognizes B5, C6, and D6 in the treble clef
- The student is able to play G position five-finger patterns in each hand
- The student plays I'm Gonna Lay My Burden Down, Waltzing Chords, and Love Somebody, using pitches found in this lesson

#### Materials:

- Piano and piano bench
- *Alfred's Adult All-in-One Piano Course: Level 1*
- Pencil
- Staff paper

#### Procedures:

- The student plays the first sixteen measures of their original composition hands together for the teacher. The teacher offers suggestions for improvement.
- The student plays through both versions of *When the Saints Go Marching In* from the previous lesson. The student reflects on their performance and teacher feedback is given.
- The student writes in the chord symbols for *I'm Gonna Lay My Burden Down*.
- The student plays through *I'm Gonna Lay My Burden Down*. The student reflects on their playing and teacher feedback is given. This process is repeated as necessary.
- The student writes in the chord symbols for *Waltzing Chords*.
- The student plays through *Waltzing Chords*. Teacher feedback is given and the student reflects on their playing. This process is repeated as necessary.
- The teacher demonstrates how to play five-finger patterns in each hand in G position. The student then plays five-finger patterns in G position in each hand.
- The teacher shows the student how B4, C5, and D5 appear in the bass clef, and how B5, C6, and D6 appear in the right hand.
- The student slowly plays through the G Major melodic interval exercise and the G Major harmonic interval exercise on page 50.
- The student plays through the right hand melody of *Love Somebody*, while the teacher plays along with the left hand part.
- The student and teacher play through the piece again, this time switching hands.
- The student plays through *Love Somebody* hands together. The teacher provides feedback and the student reflects on their performance. This process is repeated as necessary.

- The student is assigned to complete the melody for the next eight measures of their original composition. The student is also assigned to practice I'm Gonna Lay My Burden Down, Waltzing Chords, and Love Somebody for their next lesson. They are also assigned to complete the worksheet activities on page 48 and page 49.

**Assessment:**

- Composition
  - The student has completed sixteen measures of right hand melody and left hand chords
  - The composition uses pitches, rhythms, and chords that have been learned so far
- Teacher observation of student playing
- Student self-reflection of their own playing
- When the Saints Go Marching In, I'm Gonna Lay My Burden Down, Waltzing Chords, and Love Somebody
  - Pitch accuracy
  - Rhythmic accuracy
  - Steady tempo
  - Fingering
  - Dynamics

## Unit 4

### Stage 1: Identify Desired Results

#### **What essential questions will be considered?**

1. How do rhythms and rhythm patterns affect the style and character of a piece of music?
2. How do musical elements come together to create the structure of a piece of music?
3. In what ways does transposing a piece of music make the music different, and yet also remain the same?

#### **What understandings are desired?**

Students will understand...

- Rhythms and rhythm patterns can be used to give a piece of music a rock or pop feel
- Harmonies, melodies, and rhythms help break the music into different sections
- Transposing a melody changes the literal pitches used, but maintains the same musical shape

#### **What key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result of this unit?**

Students will know...

- How to construct G Major and D7 chords, and how to read them in treble clef and bass clef
- How to transpose melodies in C position to G position
- How to read music in G position

Students will be able to...

- Play pieces of music in G Major using tonic and dominant harmonies
- Improvise melodies over chordal accompaniment
- Create an original composition using pitches, rhythms, and harmonies learned throughout the semester
- Play pieces of music in G position
- Transpose pieces of music from C position to G position

## **Stage 2: Determine Acceptable Evidence**

### **What evidence will show that students understand?**

#### Performance Tasks:

- Students will play the pieces of music they have learned from written notation in their lessons
- Students will improvise their own melodies utilizing given parameters of pitch and rhythm
- Students will finish creating their own original composition using concepts learned throughout the semester
- Students will complete workbook pages in their lesson book to reinforce curricular concepts

### **What other evidence needs to be collected in light of Stage 1 Desired Results?**

#### Teacher observations:

- Teacher will observe student progress and answer student inquiries

### **Student Self-Assessment and Reflection:**

Students will often be asked to reflect on their own performance in lessons on pieces from the lesson book, as well as music that is improvised and composed by the student.

## **Assessment Task Blueprint:**

### **What understandings or goals will be assessed through this task?**

- Students demonstrate ability to play music from written notation, utilizing basic musical elements
- Students utilize basic musical elements and harmonies to improvise a melody as a method of self-expression
- Students demonstrate their understanding of the relationship between musical elements by creating an original composition

### **Through what authentic performance task will the student demonstrate understanding?**

- Playing music from written musical notation
- Improvising melodies using given melodic and rhythmic parameters
- Creating an original composition
- Completing worksheet activities

### **What student products and performances will provide evidence of desired understandings?**

- Accurate performance interpretation of written musical notation
- Performing improvisations using given melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic parameters

- Creation of original composition

**By what criteria will student products and performances be evaluated?**

Performance from written notation

- Pitch accuracy
- Rhythmic accuracy
- Tempo
- Fingering
- Dynamics
- Articulations
- Pedaling

Improvisations

- Melodic content
- Harmonic content
- Rhythmic content

Composition:

- Melodic content
- Harmonic content
- Rhythmic content

**Stage 3: Plan Learning Experiences**

What sequence of teaching and learning experience will equip students to engage with, develop, and demonstrate the desired understandings? Use the following sheet to list the key teaching and learning activities in sequence. Code entry with the appropriate initials of the WHERETO elements.

Lesson 1:

1. The teacher demonstrates G and D7 chords in the left hand. **W, E1, O**
2. The student improvises a sixteen measure melody in G position over G and D7 block chords in the left hand. Teacher feedback is given and the student reflects on their improvisation. The student repeats the improvisation exercise. **W, E2, R, O**
3. The student plays the next eight measures of melody from their composition for the teacher. The teacher offers suggestions for improvement. **H, R, E2, T**
4. The student plays through I'm Gonna Lay My Burden Down, Waltzing Chords, and Love Somebody from the previous lesson. The student reflects on their performance and teacher feedback is given. **E1, R**
5. The teacher checks the student's worksheet activities from the previous week and helps the student make any necessary corrections. **R, T**



6. The student plays through A Friend Like You hands separately, then hands together. **E1, O**
7. The student sight reads the Band Leader. The student reflects on their sight reading, and the teacher provides feedback. **E1, R E2**
8. The student is assigned worksheet activities to complete for the next lesson. **E1, R**

#### Lesson 2:

1. The student repeats the improvisation exercise from the previous week, this time using a rhythm pattern demonstrated by the teacher to play the G Major and D7 chords. The student reflects on their improvisation and the teacher provides feedback. The student repeats the improvisation exercise. **W, E2, R, O**
2. The student plays the first twenty-four measures of their composition for the teacher. The teacher offers suggestions for improvement. **H, R, E2, T**
3. The student plays through A Friend Like You from the previous lesson. The student reflects on their performance and teacher feedback is given. **E1, R**
4. The teacher checks the student's worksheet activities from the previous week and helps the student make any necessary corrections. **R, T**
5. The teacher shows the students how sharp signs appear in music, and how they correlate to the black keys on the piano. **W, E1, O**
6. The student plays through Money Can't Buy Ev'rything hands separately, then hands together. **E1, O**
7. The teacher shows the student how G Major and D7 chords appear in the bass clef. The student plays through the chord exercises on page 58. **W, E1, O**
8. The student plays through The Cuckoo hands separately, then hands together. **E1, O**
9. The student is assigned worksheet activities to complete for the next lesson. **E1, R**

#### Lesson 3:

1. The student plays through their completed composition for the teacher. The teacher offers final suggestions for the student to tweak the composition for the next lesson. **W, E2, R, O**
2. The student plays through Money Can't Buy Ev'rything and The Cuckoo from the previous lesson. The student reflects on their performance and teacher feedback is given. **E1, R**
3. The teacher checks the student's worksheet activities from the previous week and helps the student make any necessary corrections. **R, T**
4. The teacher shows the student how G Major and D7 chords appear in the treble clef. The teacher also demonstrates how to arpeggiate chords. The student plays through the chord exercises on page 60. **W, E1, O**
5. The teacher demonstrates how to use the damper pedal. The student repeats the chord exercises on page 60, making use of the damper pedal. **W, E1, O**

6. The student plays through Harp Song without the damper pedal to ensure note accuracy. Then, the student plays through Harp Song with the damper pedal. **E1, O**
7. The student labels the chords used in Liza Jane with pop chord symbols. **W, E1**
8. The student plays through Liza Jane. **E1, O**
9. The student is assigned worksheet activities to complete for the next lesson. **E1, R**

Lesson 4:

1. The student plays through their final composition for the teacher. The student reflects on their playing and teacher feedback is given. **H, R, E2, T**
2. The student plays through Harp Song and Liza Jane from the previous lesson. The student reflects on their performance and teacher feedback is given. **E1, R**
3. The teacher checks the student's worksheet activities from the previous week and helps the student make any necessary corrections. **R, T**
4. The teacher demonstrates the inversion of C Major in the bass clef found on page 64. The student plays through the chord exercises on page 64 and page 65. **W, E1, O**
5. The student plays through Beautiful Brown Eyes hands separately, then hands together, first without the damper pedal, then with the damper pedal. **E1, O**
6. The student completes the bass clef note reading activities on page 66. **E1, R**
7. The student plays through Ode to Joy from Unit 1, this time transposing it to G Major. The student reflects on their playing and the teacher provides feedback. **E1, R**
8. The student plays through Mexican Hat Dance from Unit 1, this time transposing it to G Major. The student reflects on their playing and the teacher provides feedback. **E1, R**
9. The student does a 32 measure improvisation in C position, using chords and rhythm patterns used in improvisations from throughout the semester. The student reflects on their improvisation and teacher feedback is given. The student does the improvisation activity a second time. **W, E2, R, O**

### Lesson 1:

#### Mastery Objectives:

- Improvise a melody in G position of G Major and D7 chords
- Incorporate teacher feedback into the creation of an original composition
- The student plays A Friend Like You

#### Materials:

- Piano and piano bench
- *Alfred's Adult All-in-One Piano Course: Level 1*
- Pencil
- Staff paper

#### Procedures:

- The teacher demonstrates G and D7 chords in the left hand.
- The student improvises a sixteen measure melody in G position over G and D7 block chords in the left hand. Teacher feedback is given and the student reflects on their improvisation. The student repeats the improvisation exercise.
- The student plays the next eight measures of melody from their composition for the teacher. The teacher offers suggestions for improvement.
- The student plays through I'm Gonna Lay My Burden Down, Waltzing Chords, and Love Somebody from the previous lesson. The student reflects on their performance and teacher feedback is given.
- The teacher checks the student's worksheet activities from the previous week and helps the student make any necessary corrections.
- The student plays through the right hand melody of A Friend Like You, while the teacher plays the left hand part.
- The student and teacher play the piece again, this time switching hands.
- The student plays A Friend Like You hands together. Teacher feedback is given and the student reflects on their performance. This process is repeated as necessary.
- The student sight reads the band leader. The student reflects on their sight reading, and the teacher provides feedback.
- The student is assigned to practice A Friend Like You for their next lesson. They are also assigned to add chords to their eight measures of melody, to practice improvising in G position over G and D7 chords in the left hand, and to complete the worksheet activities found on page 52 and page 53.

**Assessment:**

- Improvisation
  - The student used the pitches G, A, B, C, and D in the right hand
  - The student used quarter notes, half notes, and whole notes
  - The student accompanies their melody with G Major and D7 chords in the left hand
- Composition
  - The student has completed eight more measures of right hand melody
  - The composition uses pitches and rhythms that have been learned so far
- Teacher evaluates and corrects worksheet activities on page 48 and page 49
- Teacher observation of student playing
- Student self-reflection of their own playing
- I'm Gonna Lay My Burden Down, Waltzing Chords, Love Somebody, and A Friend Like You
  - Pitch accuracy
  - Rhythmic accuracy
  - Steady tempo
  - Fingering
  - Dynamics

## Lesson 2:

### Mastery Objectives:

- Improvise a melody over G Major and D7 chords using a predetermined rhythmic pattern for the chords
- Incorporate teacher feedback into the creation of an original composition
- Understand how sharps raise a pitch a half step
- Understand how sharp signs correlate to black keys
- Understand how G and D7 chords appear in the bass clef
- The student plays Money Can't Buy Ev'rything and The Cuckoo

### Materials:

- Piano and piano bench
- *Alfred's Adult All-in-One Piano Course: Level 1*
- Pencil
- Staff paper

### Procedures:

- The student repeats the improvisation exercise from the previous week, this time using the rhythm pattern below to play the G Major and D7 chords. The student reflects on their improvisation and the teacher provides feedback. The student repeats the improvisation exercise.



- The student plays the first twenty-four measures of their composition for the teacher. The teacher offers suggestions for improvement.
- The student plays through A Friend Like You from the previous lesson. The student reflects on their performance and teacher feedback is given.
- The teacher checks the student's worksheet activities from the previous week and helps the student make any necessary corrections.
- The teacher shows the students how sharp signs appear in music, and how they correlate to the black keys on the piano.
- The student plays through the right hand of Money Can't Buy Ev'rything while the teacher plays the left hand.
- The student and teacher play the piece again, this time switching hands.
- The student plays through Money Can't Buy Ev'rything hands together. The student reflects on their playing and the teacher offers feedback. This process is repeated as necessary.

- The teacher shows the student how G Major and D7 chords appear in the bass clef. The student plays through the chord exercises on page 58.
- The student plays the right hand of The Cuckoo while the teacher plays the left hand.
- The student and teacher play through the piece again, this time switching hands.
- The student plays through The Cuckoo hands together. The student reflects on their playing and the teacher provides feedback. This process is repeated as necessary.
- The student is assigned to practice Money Can't Buy Ev'rything and The Cuckoo for their next lesson. They are also assigned to complete the melody and chords for the last eight measures of their composition, as well as to complete the worksheet activities on page 55.

**Assessment:**

- Improvisation
  - The student used the pitches G, A, B, C, and D in the right hand
  - The student used quarter notes, half notes, and whole notes
  - The student accompanies their melody with G Major and D7 chords in the left hand, using the predetermined rhythm pattern
- Composition
  - The student has added chords to the most recent eight measures of melody
  - The composition uses pitches, rhythms, and chords that have been learned so far
- Teacher evaluates and corrects worksheet activities on page 52 and page 53
- Teacher observation of student playing
- Student self-reflection of their own playing
- A Friend Like You, Money Can't Buy Ev'rything, and The Cuckoo
  - Pitch accuracy
  - Rhythmic accuracy
  - Steady tempo
  - Fingering
  - Dynamics

### Lesson 3:

#### Mastery Objectives:

- Incorporates teacher feedback into the creation of an original composition
- Understands how G Major and D7 chords appear in the treble clef
- Understands how to use the damper pedal
- The student plays Harp Song and Liza Jane

#### Materials:

- Piano and piano bench
- *Alfred's Adult All-in-One Piano Course: Level 1*
- Pencil
- Staff paper

#### Procedures:

- The student plays through their completed composition for the teacher. The teacher offers final suggestions for the student to tweak the composition for the next lesson.
- The student plays through Money Can't Buy Ev'rything and The Cuckoo from the previous lesson. The student reflects on their performance and teacher feedback is given.
- The teacher checks the student's worksheet activities from the previous week and helps the student make any necessary corrections.
- The teacher shows the student how G Major and D7 chords appear in the treble clef. The teacher also demonstrates how to arpeggiate chords. The student plays through the chord exercises on page 60.
- The teacher demonstrates how to use the damper pedal. The student repeats the chord exercises on page 60, making use of the damper pedal.
- The student plays through Harp Song without the damper pedal to ensure note accuracy. Then, the student plays through Harp Song with the damper pedal. The student reflects on their playing and teacher feedback is given. This process is repeated as necessary.
- The student labels the chords used in Liza Jane with pop chord symbols.
- The student plays through Liza Jane. The student reflects on their playing and teacher feedback is given. This process is repeated as necessary.
- The student is assigned to practice Harp Song and Liza Jane for their next lesson. The student is also assigned to make their final changes to their composition, and to complete the worksheet activities on page 63.

**Assessment:**

- Composition
  - The student has completed all 32 measures of their composition
  - The composition uses pitches, rhythms, and chords that have been learned so far
- Teacher evaluates and corrects worksheet activities on page 55
- Teacher observation of student playing
- Student self-reflection of their own playing
- A Friend Like You, Money Can't Buy Ev'rything, and The Cuckoo
  - Pitch accuracy
  - Rhythmic accuracy
  - Steady tempo
  - Fingering
  - Dynamics
  - Pedal (Harp Song)



### Lesson 4:

#### Mastery Objectives:

- Student performs their completed original composition for the teacher
- Student understands the inversion of the C Major chord in G position
- The student transposes simple melodies for each hand from C position to G position
- The student improvises in C position using left hand rhythm accompaniments and chords learned throughout the semester
- The student plays Beautiful Brown Eyes

#### Materials:

- Piano and piano bench
- *Alfred's Adult All-in-One Piano Course: Level 1*
- Pencil
- Staff paper

#### Procedures:

- The student plays through their final composition for the teacher. The student reflects on their playing and teacher feedback is given.
- The student plays through Harp Song and Liza Jane from the previous lesson. The student reflects on their performance and teacher feedback is given.
- The teacher checks the student's worksheet activities from the previous week and helps the student make any necessary corrections.
- The teacher demonstrates the inversion of C Major in the bass clef found on page 64. The student plays through the chord exercises on page 64 and page 65.
- The student plays the right hand of Beautiful Brown Eyes while the teacher plays the left hand.
- The student and teacher play the piece again, this time switching hands.
- The student plays through Beautiful Brown Eyes hands together, without the damper pedal.
- Teacher feedback is given, and the student plays through Beautiful Brown Eyes again, this time adding the damper pedal. The student reflects on their playing, and teacher feedback is given. This process is repeated as necessary.
- The student completes the bass clef note reading activities on page 66.
- The student plays through Ode to Joy from Unit 1, this time transposing it to G Major. The student reflects on their playing and the teacher provides feedback.
- The student plays through Mexican Hat Dance from Unit 1, this time transposing it to G Major. The student reflects on their playing and the teacher provides feedback.
- The student does a 32 measure improvisation in C position, using chords and rhythm patterns used in improvisations from throughout the semester. The student reflects on

their improvisation and teacher feedback is given. The student does the improvisation activity a second time.

**Assessment:**

- Improvisation
  - The student used the pitches B, C, D, E, F, G, and A in the right hand
  - The student used quarter notes, half notes, and whole notes
  - The student accompanies their melody with C Major, F Major, and G7 chords in the left hand, using rhythm patterns learned throughout the semester
- Composition
  - The student performs a completed 32 measure composition
- Teacher evaluates and corrects worksheet activities on page 63
- Teacher observation of student playing
- Student self-reflection of their own playing
- Harp Song, Liza Jane, Beautiful Brown Eyes
  - Pitch accuracy
  - Rhythmic accuracy
  - Steady tempo
  - Fingering
  - Dynamics
  - Pedal (Harp Song, Beautiful Brown Eyes)

### Reflections

By completing this project, I have gained insight into how to reach my adolescent beginner piano students in new ways. The creative activities incorporated into the curriculum allow the student to explore their own musical preferences and identity. It is my hope that I will be able to better maintain the interest of my adolescent beginner piano students through these activities.

The improvisation exercises used in this curriculum not only allow the student room for personal expression, but also seek to help the teacher teach new concepts to the student. Often, the improvisation exercises incorporate material the student has not yet learned in the method book. This allows the student to become familiar with new concepts before encountering them on the written page. It is my hope that this will help to demystify concepts without the student worrying about the dual focus of how they sound on the piano and how they appear on the page.

The composition project allows the student to apply knowledge they have learned throughout the semester to an original work of their own creation. Rhythms, pitches, chords, dynamics, and more are reinforced throughout the completion of this eight-week project. It is my hope that this project will help to strengthen the student's understanding of curricular concepts learned throughout the semester and understand how they can apply these concepts to their own creative process.

Lastly, it is my hope that this endeavor will be useful to other teachers and their students. If nothing else, I hope other piano teachers will be able to use this curricular project as inspiration for incorporating similar activities into their own curricula. After all, creative activities such as improvisation and composition should be part of the music education of students at any age level, not just adolescence.

### **Recommendations**

Improvisation and composition should remain integral parts of the adolescent's musical studies well past their first semester of study. It is recommended that activities similar to those incorporated in this curriculum be developed to match the advancing skills of the student. This could mean longer improvisations, including improvisations in different styles such as blues, jazz, and more. This could also mean longer and more complex compositions which explore various forms and styles.

It is recommended that teachers who use this curriculum be attentive to the musical needs and desires of the student. Every student is different and will necessarily demonstrate this individuality in the improvisations and compositions they produce. The role of the teacher is to foster this individuality while also using their own musical expertise to further the student's musicianship. Therefore, it is paramount that the teacher engenders a spirit of praise and positivity while also providing constructive criticism of the student's creative products.

Finally, it is recommended that this curriculum project be followed by a case study. A case study, or perhaps a multiple case study, could be used to monitor the progress of students using this curriculum. Such a study could analyze changes in the student's improvisation and composition skills, as well as other musical abilities such as musical literacy. The results of such a study could serve either to amend the current curriculum, or perhaps serve as a step toward a larger project, such as the development of a method book series designed specifically for the adolescent piano beginner.

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