



A COMMON  
APPROACH

# Contemporary Guitar



The contemporary guitar curriculum is designed to accommodate plectrum and finger styles on electric and/or acoustic guitars.

Each Programme of Study has its contents grouped under the following Areas:

- A** Listening and internalising
- B** Making and controlling musical sounds
- C** Creating and developing musical ideas
- D** Playing music
- E** Playing music with others
- F** Performing and communicating

# Programme of Study 1

## A Listening and internalising

### P1 - A1

## Listen and respond to music in and out of lessons, enjoying their experiences and building on them

Introduce learners to a wide variety of music during lessons.



Listening should be an enjoyable, active experience. As well as enhancing musical learning, it supports the development of lifelong skills of enjoying and appreciating music as a listener/audience member.

Encourage and plan for a range of responses when listening to music: movement, actions, discussion, writing, drawing, etc.

Encourage learners to share and talk about music that they enjoy listening to.



This helps to develop an inclusive lesson culture where learners feel that their music is valued and respected.

Encourage learners to develop their verbal responses through structured activities that include questions to focus their listening, e.g. how would you describe the character of this melody/rhythm?

Ask learners to listen and respond to different pieces of music in their own time and then describe them in the lesson, including aspects of dynamics, instrumentation, character, etc.



Learners should be encouraged to listen to music from a wide variety of styles and cultures.

### P1 - A2

## Have some aural perception of the music to be played

Perform a piece to be learnt. Ask learners to describe its character using appropriate questions to unlock their creative response, e.g. Before listening to the music: 'How do you feel right now?' And afterwards: 'Did listening to the music change your mood at all?'



It is important that listening is approached in a relaxed and enjoyable way.

**P1 - A3**

## **Recognise and discriminate between the musical elements of pulse, pitch, rhythm, tempo, dynamics and texture**

Encourage learners to mark the pulse of music played by the teacher or other learners by clapping, tapping different parts of the body, walking around the room etc.



Listening games can be linked to all the pieces being learnt in the early stages.

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Ask learners to respond physically to music being played, i.e. moving in time or beating time to music with a regular pulse. Repeat at different tempi.



Ensure that learners understand the difference between tempo, pulse and rhythm. There are many online tools for exploring these elements, such as Chrome Music Lab (Rhythm and Song Maker).

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Go through the piece again with learners, using gestures or actions to indicate rests.

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Help learners to sing/play short, simple rhythmic/melodic phrases by ear.

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Ask learners simple questions about pulse, pitch, rhythm, dynamics, etc.



Further ideas in developing aural acuity can be found in the approaches of Kodaly and Dalcroze (Eurhythmics).

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Ask learners to sing songs they know well, singing some phrases in their heads at a given signal from the teacher. When learners sing aloud again, they should be singing at the correct pitch and pulse.



The main aim is to internalise the sound before relating it to a symbol.

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Ask learners to sing the final note to complete a melodic phrase played/sung by the teacher.



In the first instance, it helps if the penultimate note is either the leading note or the supertonic.

**P1 - A4**

## **Recognise and convey in their playing simple melodic patterns, e.g. repetition of main tune**

Ask learners how many phrases there are in a short piece. Where do they start and finish?



Encourage learners to match physical movements to the structure when listening to the piece, e.g. tap the pulse on their knees for the first phrase, their heads for the second phrase, etc.

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Listen to other short pieces and ask learners to indicate when the main tune is repeated: count the number of times it is repeated and describe what happens in between.



There are many opportunities to use a wide range of musical styles from around the world.

**P1 - A5**

## **Using appropriate notation, make links between sounds and symbols, e.g. shape of the melody, repetition**

Encourage learners to create graphic scores of music they listen to.



Instead of using paper, this activity can also be done on an interactive whiteboard or tablet, either using a drawing app or a specific graphic score app.

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Display two or more rhythms. Perform one and ask learners to identify which they heard.



In group or whole-class lessons, learners can lead this activity. Notation can also be dragged into position to create different rhythms on an interactive whiteboard or tablet, using a presentation program such as PowerPoint or Google Slides. Learners can then create their own rhythms to work with.

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Using notation, ask learners to clap/play/sing/say short phrases of a piece and count silent bars in their heads, e.g. bars 1–2 clapped/ played/sung/said, bars 3–4 counted and bars 5–6 clapped/played/sung said.

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Using notation, ask learners to describe the main features of a piece before playing/singing it – e.g. shape of melody and obvious repetitions.

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Play a familiar piece incorrectly. Ask learners to spot the mistakes.



Notation must be appropriate and take into consideration the learner, the instrument and the genre. Notations may include staff notation, rhythm grids, dot notation, tablature, chord symbols and graphic scores.



Music from all parts of the world is appropriate for these activities.

# Programme of Study 1

## B Making and controlling musical sounds

### P1 - B1

## Posture and freedom of movement

- Develop an appropriate relaxed posture and hand position when sitting:
  - supporting and balancing the instrument comfortably (without the hands)
  - ensuring that both hands can move freely

Demonstrate an appropriate sitting and standing posture. With guidance, ask learners to imitate, experiment and adjust their posture.



Reinforce the importance of always taking a moment to ensure that posture is correct before starting to play, whether in the lesson or in individual practice.



Creating effective exercises and drills to enable learners to adopt appropriate posture is invaluable in large-group and whole-class teaching. It promotes independence, giving learners the necessary skills to recreate the desired posture in their individual practice.

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Encourage learners to explore holding the guitar in different ways in an effort to find the most comfortable and practical posture. Take into account the need for the left arm and right forearm to move freely while the instrument remains secure.



Try chairs of different heights in order to find the most comfortable one. (N.B. Chairs with arms are inappropriate.)



Finding the right size of guitar is very important, e.g. half, three-quarter or full size.



Be aware of learners' individual physical characteristics and make adaptations as appropriate.

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Encourage learners to use a mirror to help evaluate their posture.



Video-recording could also be used for this purpose, but it is vital to check the policy of the school or other organisation you are working in with regards to any form of recording. Children must never be videoed without parental consent and all policies regarding use and storage of recordings must be adhered to.

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Invite learners to play a few notes or a short phrase individually. Ask other learners to observe and comment on the player's posture, suggesting how improvements can be made.



Encouraging positive observations and constructive suggestions help to build confidence.

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If learners have photographic permission, encourage them to take photos of themselves and annotate them to identify elements of good posture. This can be done with a photo editing app or presentation programs such as PowerPoint or Google Slides.

## P1 - B2

### Tuning the instrument

- Understand the procedure for tuning the instrument, e.g. turning the machine heads

Set up a tuning game, where learners are asked to identify which string is out of tune.



Large differences in pitch can be gradually reduced as learners' aural awareness develops.

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Demonstrate to learners how to tune the strings of the guitar and the amount of turning required on the machine heads to provide a significant change in pitch. Ask them to experiment by gently tightening and loosening the machine heads.



This activity aims to develop an awareness of the mechanics of the tuning process. It is important to mention that over-tightening of the machine heads can damage the instrument.

## Right hand

- Develop a satisfying, clear sound at two or more dynamic levels:
  - plucking strings with free right-hand and arm movements, using downstrokes
  - using the plectrum as appropriate
  - strumming patterns using downstrokes over three or more strings

Ask learners to listen to a clear tone, either produced by the teacher or recorded. Encourage them to imitate and discuss what affects tone quality.

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Ask learners to play single-string bass notes at a regular pulse while the teacher plays simple chord progressions.



D/Em/G/A, as in 'Love Is All Around', or A/D/E/D, as in 'Wild Thing', are useful simple chord progressions.

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Demonstrate to learners how to achieve a rest by stopping the string with either the left or right hand. Encourage them to experiment using open strings, and to comment on the musical effect created by a rest.

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Teach learners to play a 12-bar blues progression in A or D on single open strings, using either downstrokes/upstrokes with the plectrum, or alternate right-hand fingers, while the teacher provides a variety of blues-oriented accompaniments.



This type of activity often stimulates learners to start exploring chord progressions for themselves.

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Teach learners some simple strumming patterns, beginning with just three strings. Demonstrate how to strum these using downstrokes.



## P1 - B4

### Left hand

- Develop an appropriate free left-hand shape which facilitates accurate placement of the fingers:
  - developing strength of finger action
  - playing in a single position

Ask learners to listen to a clear tone, either produced by the teacher or recorded. Encourage them to imitate and discuss what affects tone quality.

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Show learners how to establish a free left-hand shape that facilitates accurate placement of the fingers. Help them to find an appropriate and comfortable left-hand position.



Be aware of learners' individual physical characteristics and make adaptations as appropriate.

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Demonstrate how to fret a note cleanly. Ask learners to copy.



Learners should be made aware of the degree of pressure that is required when the left hand is operating correctly.

## P1 - B5

### Articulation and coordination

- Coordinate the right and left hands at a regular pulse:
  - beginning to develop some clarity and fluency
  - using simple rhythmic patterns

Teach learners to play short, simple phrases to a regular pulse using three notes E/F/G on the first string.



A backing track can make this exercise more interesting and musical, and also act as a metronome.

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Demonstrate to learners ways of minimising the movement of left-hand fingers. Ask them to imitate and to discuss the advantages.

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Ask learners to experiment with playing short, simple phrases using different dynamics. Discuss how the different dynamics are achieved.

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Demonstrate different kinds of articulation, using some simple phrases. Ask learners to imitate them. Discuss how the different sounds are produced, and their musical effects.

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Teach simple exercises and tunes that use rests and staccato. Show learners how to make rests and staccato effects by touching the string with the right-hand thumb or appropriate finger, or a combination of both.

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Ask learners to make up some simple variations by using different rhythmic patterns on each note.

# Programme of Study 1

## C Creating and developing musical ideas

### P1 - C1

## Improvise by exploring different sounds and creating repeated musical patterns or phrases

Ask learners to explore different ways of making musical sounds on the instrument in response to an imaginative or pictorial idea.



The teacher can promote learners' confidence by:

- demonstrating how to experiment with musical ideas
- providing step-by-step assistance with models, patterns and procedures
- emphasising the open-ended nature of the activity – all outcomes are valued and enjoyed

Help learners to make up short and simple rhythmic/melodic patterns from suggested musical starting points, e.g. two or three selected notes, ostinati. Abstract or pictorial ideas could also be used.



Rather than starting with complete scales, it may be more appropriate to choose two notes from a scale, increasing the number of notes gradually.

Repeat the process, selecting and discarding ideas and aiming for musical coherence.

Lead learners in a discussion about the musical effect of their improvisations.

Play 'Follow my Leader': one player plays three or four notes, then the next player plays three or four more, starting on the last note of the first player, and so on.

### P1 - C2

## Make use of instrumental skills when beginning to compose

Ask learners to compose short pieces from a given starting point, e.g. a story, poem, theme, picture, or one of the musical techniques suggested in C1. Discuss the outcomes. Initially, this could consist of asking

learners to write down their improvisations as an aid to memory, perhaps using their own forms of shorthand as a precursor to staff notation.



Through composing, learners are able to explore the music from the inside. Composing is valid in its own right, but it can also be used to develop performing skills, knowledge and understanding. Productive links with general classroom work should be made wherever possible. It may be necessary to score learners' ideas for them since their creative imagination may run ahead of their ability to write down their ideas, at least where staff notation is concerned.



Many genres of music are traditionally learnt exclusively by ear. Where it would support learning, you may wish to create notation systems that are appropriate to your teaching context, e.g. word rhythms, symbols, numbers, or vocal sounds. However, this may not be necessary or desirable for all musics. Music passed on orally/aurally naturally evolves as it spreads and being fixed in notation can hinder this.

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Provide opportunities for learners to perform their compositions to others.

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Encourage learners to use their instruments in creative activities in the classroom, applying technical skills already acquired.

# Programme of Study 1

## D Playing music

### P1 - D1

## Work out by ear how to play short, easy phrases or patterns from well-known tunes

Choosing appropriate starting notes, play short, simple tunes with a limited range of notes, e.g. television jingles, folk-tunes, nursery rhymes. Ask learners to select one and explore it away from the instrument by:

- singing the melody
- drawing the melodic contour in the air
- clapping the rhythm

Next, ask learners to work out separate phrases by ear on their instrument, gradually building up the complete tune.

Ask learners to play the complete tune expressively to others.

As an extension activity, ask learners to teach the tune to other learners.



Many learners experiment with tunes they know before starting formal instrumental lessons. If tunes exceed learners' note range, teach a simple accompaniment or bass line by ear instead and play or sing the tune with them.

### P1 - D2

## Repeat short, easy rhythmic and melodic patterns by playing back from memory

Perform a piece and ask learners to respond to the music by clapping, tapping or moving with a regular pulse and at a variety of tempi.

Repeat, with learners substituting a different sound, gesture or action to indicate rests.



There is always scope to design new musical games in order to develop learners' short-term memory. These can often be invented together as the activity proceeds, building on prior learning.

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Engage learners in ‘copycat’ exercises, either with or without notation, maintaining a secure pulse and rhythm. Incorporate different musical effects, such as contrasts of dynamics and articulation.

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Ask learners to sing easy intervals and match them to notes on their instruments where appropriate.



At first, limit the phrase to be copied to possibly two bars of 2/4 or equivalent, using only two notes.

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Demonstrate some simple chord progressions and ask learners to repeat them.



Simple three-note chord voicing is most appropriate at this stage.

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## P1 - D3

### Play short, easy pieces from appropriate notation/ symbols



Many genres of music are traditionally learnt exclusively by ear. Where it would support learning, you may wish to create notation systems that are appropriate to your teaching context, e.g. word rhythms, symbols, numbers, or vocal sounds. However, this may not be necessary or desirable for all musics. Music passed on orally/aurally naturally evolves as it spreads and being fixed in notation can hinder this.

Ask learners to strum some chord rhythms from a chord chart, maintaining a regular pulse.

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Select pieces for learners from a range of different times and places, and in a variety of styles. Take into account:

- the musical and technical skills that will be needed
  - opportunities to develop musical ideas
  - learners' prior experience
  - their personal response to the music
  - their general musical interests
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Show learners how to practise their pieces and make improvements.



Adopt the holistic approach to teaching and learning.

P1 - D4

## Memorise with accuracy selected short, simple pieces from their repertoire

Help learners to memorise selected pieces from their repertoire by:

- building up short sections at a time
- identifying and remembering rhythmic patterns and the shape of the melody
- noting where repetitions and contrasts occur
- focusing on expressive details

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From time to time, teach a short piece away from the music, only referring to the notation once it is learnt.

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Encourage learners to play from memory to other learners.



Promote confidence by making memorisation of whole pieces a natural part of the learning process. Bear in mind that they are unlikely to be memorised properly until the performance is technically fluent. Some objectives are:

- to strengthen learners' confidence
- to focus on the expressive qualities of the music
- to enable learners to communicate more freely without having the constraints of notation

P1 - D5

## Read and play at sight short, simple phrases at a regular pulse; begin to make links between sound and symbol



Many genres of music are traditionally learnt exclusively by ear. Where it would support learning, you may wish to create notation systems that are appropriate to your teaching context, e.g. word rhythms, symbols, numbers, or vocal sounds. However, this may not be necessary or desirable for all musics. Music passed on orally/aurally naturally evolves as it spreads and being fixed in notation can hinder this.

Play short, simple rhythmic/melodic patterns and ask learners to copy them.

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Using flash cards, help learners to:

- recognise different note values and their rests
- clap, sing and play simple rhythmic/melodic patterns, maintaining a regular pulse, perhaps at different tempi
- name notes and find them on the instrument (note recognition)
- read and play simple dynamics
- read and play staccato and legato



Presentation programs such as PowerPoint or Google Slides can be used to make flash cards to display on a tablet or interactive whiteboard. These have the advantage of being easily editable, so new rhythms and melodic patterns can be created as required by either the teacher or the learners.



The maxim 'sound before symbol' is as important now as ever. Reading notation is a means to making music, not an end in itself. Different forms of notation can be used, e.g. staff, graphic, tablature, chord charts, as an aid to learning. Consider carefully whether notation is a help or hindrance in learning music from aural/oral traditions.



The overall aim is to help learners to develop instant recall of notes and rhythms, thus heightening musical memory. Help learners to gain enthusiasm for learning pieces, using notation when appropriate. Ensure that its use is encouraging rather than discouraging.

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Devise a variety of games to explain staff notation to young beginners, e.g.:

- use a large stave with movable notes (in the shape of small, furry toys)
- space permitting, play 'note jumping': mark out five lines on the floor with masking tape and ask learners to step or jump between them, calling out the note names and perhaps singing them as well
- play the 'musical alphabet' game: a learner says/sings a note name, the next learner says/sings the next one, and so on, up and down. Do the same missing out a note – G/B/D, etc.



Being familiar with the correct pitch names, rather than relying on finger numbers, is important for learners to develop independence and fluency in reading notation.



## **Begin to interpret music with some expression and with a sense of its intended effect; talk about its mood and how it is sung or played and suggest improvements to convey the character of the music**

Show learners how to experiment with different ways of playing pieces, perhaps in relation to dynamics, tempi and articulation. Ask them to listen and decide which way of playing is most appropriate to the character of the music.

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Involving all learners in the group, discuss ways of improving the interpretation, particularly in pieces that have few expressive indications.



Interpretation is the creative dimension of performing. At the earliest stage, learners should be encouraged to make expressive musical decisions, either intuitively or by evaluating their work. The teacher can help by being an informed listener, giving feedback and encouragement.

# Programme of Study 1

## E Playing music with others

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### P1 - E1

## Play with the teacher and/or other learners, demonstrating some basic ensemble skills by listening, watching and keeping in time with the group

Create opportunities for learners to:

- play with an accompaniment, provided either by the teacher or by recorded means
- play in a small ensemble



In addition to their lessons, all learners should be provided with opportunities for participation in ensembles. By playing with others, they are likely to:

- increase their motivation and interest
- quicken their rate of progress
- widen their performing skills
- improve their personal and social skills



With carefully differentiated parts, even those at the earliest stages of learning can enjoy the sense of achievement of playing as part of an ensemble.

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Ask learners to follow someone beating time.



This can be a fun activity, with the teacher or learners beating time at a variety of tempi.

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### P1 - E2

## Explore and discuss the character of the music and the expressive possibilities

Discuss the mood of the music and how it can be conveyed.

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With learners, assess their ensemble playing, identifying strengths and areas for further development. Make a recording for this purpose, if appropriate.

# Programme of Study 1

## F Performing and communicating

### P1 - F1

## Perform music to others, e.g. parents/carers, teachers, fellow learners and friends, demonstrating an awareness of the mood of the music

Organise opportunities for informal performances in lessons and for parents/carers, relatives and friends at home.



Performance is a key skill that should be a natural part of the learning process from the earliest lessons. Simulated performances in instrumental lessons are particularly beneficial, helping learners gain confidence. For young learners, performing to teddy bears can be an excellent first step to build confidence.

Ask learners to revise pieces already learnt and to perform them with expression.



Allow plenty of time so that the music is thoroughly prepared. Learners should be well prepared for every performance so that it is a positive experience for everyone.

Encourage learners to perform from memory where this will enhance confidence, musical awareness and communication.



Pieces need to be chosen with care so that they are well within learners' capabilities.

Demonstrate to learners where and how to stand or sit, and help them to practise walking on and off stage. If notation is used, ensure that stands are appropriately placed and at the correct height.



References to nerves can be counter-productive. If learners are thoroughly prepared, however, nerves can be viewed as an aid to concentration. Encourage learners to have a sense of anticipation and enjoyment about performing.

## Discuss the quality of their playing and, with guidance, learn from their performance

Help learners to evaluate each performance and suggest ways of making improvements and building up confidence. Promote self-evaluation as much as possible.



Ensure feedback is balanced, with an expectation that positives will be found. It can be very effective to sometimes focus only on what went well.

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Where appropriate, use technology to make audio or video recordings during lessons so that learners can listen/watch back and evaluate their performance.



It is vital to check the policy of the school or other organisation you are working in with regards to any form of recording. Children must never be videoed without parental consent and all policies regarding use and storage of recordings must be adhered to.

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Encourage learners to develop their own library of pieces that can be repeated in future.

# Programme of Study 2

## A Listening and internalising

### P2 - A1

#### **Listen to music with concentration and understanding in and out of lessons, enjoying their experiences and building on them**

Engage learners in a wide variety of structured listening activities during lessons, continuing to encourage a range of responses as in Programme of Study 1 (e.g. physical, verbal, written or pictorial).

Ask learners to listen with concentration to different pieces of music in their own time and then describe them in the lesson, including aspects of dynamics, instrumentation, character, etc.



Support learners in their own listening by modelling questioning and other exploratory activities during lessons.

Continue to ask learners to share music that they enjoy with other learners.



Encourage learners to discuss their feelings about music they have chosen through questioning, e.g. 'Why are you drawn to this music?' 'Why is this music meaningful to you?'

Referring to the musical elements, ask learners to describe what they liked and disliked about the music they have listened to.

### P2 - A2

#### **Have some aural perception of the music to be played, including some feeling of the expressive characteristics**

Perform pieces to be learnt and ask learners to discuss appropriate features, e.g. tempo, rhythm, range of melody, dynamics, in relation to the character of the music.



When teaching musical vocabulary it is important that the focus is on understanding the concept rather than simply recalling a word. Musical understanding must be developed for the terminology to be meaningful.

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Perform pieces in different ways, e.g. with different tempi, dynamics and articulation. Ask learners to discuss the effect on the mood and character.



Playing to learners provides an immediate way of modelling, i.e. demonstrating musical ideas and techniques, as well as developing aural skills. Learners can also experiment with the effect that tempo has on the mood and character of music by using a tempo changing app, either using pre-recorded music or making their own recording for this purpose.

**P2 - A3**

## **Recognise and discriminate between the musical elements, including aspects of articulation, phrasing and quality of tone**

Play short rhythmic phrases from pieces to be learnt and ask learners to clap back the pulse and/or rhythm.



Other body percussion sounds can be substituted for clapping for variety. These activities also work well on instruments, e.g. performing the rhythm on one note.

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Ask learners to identify note lengths aurally, e.g. crotchets and minims or quavers and crotchets.

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In groups or whole classes, ask some learners to tap the pulse of simple phrases while others tap the rhythm. Different body percussion sounds can be used, e.g. stamping, tapping knees, clapping etc.

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Help learners to sing/play short melodic phrases of pieces by ear, and to identify the differences either between half steps and whole steps or between different types of larger intervals.



A virtual keyboard can be a useful tool for exploring pitch and intervals with all instrumental and vocal learners. Some allow multiple learners to collaborate, such as the Shared Piano on Chrome Music Lab.

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Perform pieces to learners and ask simple questions about the musical elements, including articulation, phrasing and quality of tone.

## P2 - A4

# Recognise and convey simple structures in their playing, e.g. repetition of rhythmic and melodic phrases

Ask learners questions on the phrasing and structure of pieces.



Recording instruments live using a digital audio workstation such as Audacity provides a way of splitting up and re-ordering phrases to further explore structure.

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Improvise some rhythmic patterns with learners, perhaps related to the pieces being learnt.

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Contrast long and short notes and link to a mood, occasion or story.



All musical activities, including improvisation, are interrelated and can therefore be taught simultaneously.

## P2 - A5

# Hear some elements of the music internally when using notation/symbol, e.g. tempo, pitch, rhythm, dynamics

Using notation, ask learners to work out the rhythm of phrases in their heads, then clap it.

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Using notation, help learners to trace the contour of phrases, then compare it with the actual sound when played.

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Ask learners to clap/hum/sing/say simple phrases at sight.



Music examples for all these activities can easily be created with online notation tools, such as Flat or Noteflight.

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Using notation, perform pieces with some deliberate mistakes or deviations inserted. Ask learners to identify the differences.





This activity can be adapted to an aural one only, by asking learners to memorise the main melody and then asking them to identify any deviations.



Music from all parts of the world is appropriate for these activities.

# Programme of Study 2

## B Making and controlling musical sounds

### P2 - B1

#### Posture and freedom of movement

- Develop an appropriate relaxed posture and hand position, both sitting and standing (adjusting the strap appropriately):
  - supporting and balancing the instrument comfortably (without the hands)
  - ensuring that both hands can move freely

Help learners continue to develop a relaxed posture through the length of the fingerboard, using a chromatic scale on the G string.

Ask learners to observe each other's posture and suggest how improvements can be made.

Discuss the reasons for good posture with learners.



This can be done both sitting and standing, experimenting with the length of the strap or the height of the chair.

### P2 - B2

#### Tuning the instrument

- Tune each string separately with guidance, using an external sound source or electronic tuner

Ask learners to experiment with tuning. Encourage them to listen carefully, ensuring that their open strings match the notes of a keyboard, backing track or other external source.



Learners develop this skill at different stages and therefore it is not an expectation that all learners will be able to do this by Programme of Study 2. Encourage collaboration between learners when leading this exercise with groups.

Ask learners to play a simple tune, bending the string on one or two notes to hear the effect on intonation. Discuss the musical outcome.



Pay particular attention to pitch rather than tone.

## P2 - B3

### Right hand

- Play with a satisfying, clear sound more consistently at two or more dynamic levels:
  - plucking strings with free right-hand and arm movements
  - using the plectrum as appropriate
  - developing the use of palm-mute
  - strumming patterns using downstrokes and upstrokes

Devise arpeggio exercises for learners, involving plucking strings with the thumb and fingers, using bigger jumps.



By using these exercises over open chords, the accuracy of the left hand can also be developed.

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Show learners how to use different gauges of plectrum thickness when strumming simple chord progressions. Ask them to listen to the percussive sound that is produced by each plectrum and explain the reasons for using different gauges/sizes of plectrum.



Particular attention should be given to left-hand chord technique, hearing the effect of accidentally bending a string within a chord shape.

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Show learners how to use the palm mute in some power-chord exercises. Ask them to imitate.



Learners should develop this technique to a point where they can quickly change back to a clean sound. A well-known example is 'Foot Tapper' by The Shadows.

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Teach learners simple open-chord songs, using only three or four chords with simple down/up strumming patterns. Encourage learners to make up a variety of rhythmic patterns.

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Help learners to make audio recordings of their playing as a tool for evaluating their tone, using an audio recording app.

## P2 - B4

### Left hand

- Maintain an appropriate free left-hand shape which facilitates accurate placement of the fingers:
  - developing speed, strength and flexibility of finger action
  - playing in a single position and developing awareness of other positions

Ask learners to play a range of notes in an appropriate position, other than the first position, naming each note as it is sounded. Also ask them to find and play individual notes in a specific position and on a specific string.

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Playing the 'invisible guitar' can help develop spatial awareness, i.e. ask learners to put the guitar down and move the left arm up and down the right forearm as if from first to third position, second to fifth, etc., always letting the arm instigate the shift. When changing position on the guitar, the thumb should release its grip and stay opposite the second finger during the shift.

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Show learners how to practise different types of shifts on one string, e.g. those that move from one finger to the same finger and from one finger to a different finger (in both cases with and without the open string in between).

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Set learners the task of making up vamps, asking them to use root/fifth or power chords in order to play vamps from A to A6, E to E6, D to D6, in various rhythms. Evaluate the musical effect.



A 12-bar blues using open chords is perfect for this exercise.

## Articulation and coordination

- Coordinate the right and left hands at a regular pulse:
  - playing with more clarity and fluency
  - using simple rhythmic patterns

Ask learners to play short, simple pieces, using different dynamics. Invite them to comment on the musical effect.

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Play simple songs with learners that require left-hand muting techniques for the chordal accompaniment. Discuss the various ways in which this can be done.



'Stand by Me' (John Lennon version) provides an example of this:  
G/ Em/C/D7.

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Using a familiar tune, demonstrate left-hand staccato. Ask learners to play the tune using staccato and legato articulation for alternate phrases.



Draw attention to the relevant markings for staccato and legato when using notation.

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Ask learners to improvise some simple variations on a familiar tune, illustrating staccato and legato articulation.

# Programme of Study 2

## C Creating and developing musical ideas

### P2 - C1

## Improvise rhythmic and melodic phrases freely or within given structures, individually or as part of a group

Ask learners to improvise musical sounds and phrases freely in response to a picture or story.

Introduce learners to improvising melodic phrases by selecting patterns and phrases over diatonic harmony and common chord schemes:

- demonstrating the idea to learners
- selecting a range of notes that will fit a simple chord scheme
- playing the chord scheme on the guitar, piano or using an appropriate backing track
- helping learners to select notes that fit each chord
- asking learners to play one of the appropriate notes as each new chord is sounded, trying different options when the chord comes round again
- continuing by adding passing notes that lead through the bar from one chord change to the next
- exploring the effect of moving in step and by larger intervals

Some simple chord patterns in a major key are:

- I III IV V
- I VI II V
- 12-bar blues

There are many backing tracks freely available online, as well as apps that will generate a backing track if you enter a sequence of chords, such as iReal Pro.

As the ear develops, learners will realise that a 'wrong' note is never more than one scale degree away from the 'right' one; moving quickly to a higher note therefore turns a 'mistake' into an accented passing note!

Encourage learners to build up melodies from pentatonic patterns to blues and other scales by:

- experimenting with patterns

- shaping improvisations within a developing simple structure
- discussing the results
- performing to each other

As an extension activity, learners can create their own patterns or build on melodic and rhythmic patterns taken from pieces being learnt.

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Ask learners to improvise modal/blues melodies using call and response, with increasing expectation of accuracy in terms of rhythm, dynamics and articulation.

**P2 - C2**

## **Compose by developing musical ideas within simple given structures and applying instrumental skills**

Show learners how to build on ideas from pieces and improvisations and develop individual or group compositions. Starting points can be musical devices, structures found in repertoire, e.g. ostinati/riffs, ABA patterns, pieces listened to, or literary or visual stimuli.



Whilst instrumental lessons are not a substitute for curriculum music, they do provide opportunities for learners to extend ideas that originate from classroom lessons. Instrumental teachers have particular expertise that helps learners to explore the technical and expressive potential of the instrument.

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Ask learners to explore musical ideas using their instruments, jotting down the main points.

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Encourage learners to evaluate their work during their lessons. Give specific feedback about musical details and help them to overcome particular problems.

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Help learners to refine and notate their compositions, possibly using technology if appropriate.



Notation programs and digital audio workstations are useful tools to support the recording and refining process. Structural coherence and balance are more important than how many notes or bars a piece contains. What matters most, however, is that musical creativity becomes a habit – and one that learners enjoy.

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Promote opportunities for learners' compositions to be performed alongside other pieces that they are

learning.

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Set activities over a number of weeks. These can be undertaken as part of learners' practice and reviewed in each lesson.



# Programme of Study 2

## D Playing music

### P2 - D1

#### **Work out by ear how to play short, easy well-known tunes or accompaniments using a limited range of notes**

Show learners how to work out the notes and rhythms of simple, well-known pieces by ear and ask them to play them to others.

Ask learners to work out straightforward scale patterns and arpeggios by ear, giving them a suitable starting note.

### P2 - D2

#### **Repeat short, easy rhythmic and melodic phrases by playing back from memory**

Play a simple piece and ask learners to recall the melody by humming or singing it. At this stage, melodies can include simple leaps, e.g. the notes of a tonic triad, but aim to keep the overall range within an octave.

Engage learners in more extended 'copycat' exercises, i.e. more notes, longer phrases, greater expressive detail.

### P2 - D3

#### **Play a variety of short, easy pieces from notation/ symbols**



Many genres of music are traditionally learnt exclusively by ear. Where it would support learning, you may wish to create notation systems that are appropriate to your teaching context, e.g. word rhythms, symbols, numbers, or vocal sounds. However, this may not be necessary or desirable for all musics. Music passed on orally/aurally naturally evolves as it spreads and being fixed in notation can hinder this.

Building on the musical skills, knowledge and understanding acquired in Programme of Study 1, extend the range of pieces to be taught, ensuring that the chosen repertoire relates to the full range of learning

objectives.

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Encourage learners to apply their own creative ideas, e.g. using ideas in the piece to generate their own improvisations or compositions.

---

Show learners how to practise their pieces and make improvements.



Continue to use the holistic approach to teaching and learning.



Choose a wide range of repertoire that:

- consolidates knowledge of the first position
- uses simple key signatures
- possibly includes compound time, e.g. dotted crotchets and beamed quavers, so as to accommodate the pim-ami arpeggio pattern.
- includes a larger variety of rhythmic groupings

**P2 - D4**

## **Play from memory, and to others, selected contrasting pieces from their repertoire**

Help learners to learn selected pieces from memory, showing them ways to remember the music, e.g. by identifying patterns, identifying the form, noting how passages are similar, or how they change, and devising mnemonics to remember sections such as endings.



Build up memorisation skills regularly and systematically so that learners gain confidence and are able to perform to others from memory.

**P2 - D5**

## **Read and play at sight short, easy pieces at a regular pulse, beginning to hear some of the elements internally and attending to expressive details, including articulation and dynamics**



Many genres of music are traditionally learnt exclusively by ear. Where it would support learning, you may wish to create notation systems that are appropriate to your teaching context, e.g. word rhythms, symbols, numbers, or vocal sounds. However, this may not be necessary or desirable for all musics. Music passed on orally/aurally naturally evolves as it spreads and being fixed in notation can hinder this.

Encourage learners to read short, simple passages/pieces at sight, using chord symbols, tablature or standard notation, making sure that they are well within their technical range.

Before playing through passages/pieces for the first time, help learners to hear in their heads the overall sound of the music by asking them to:

- identify important notational features of the music, e.g. time signature, key signature, accidentals, dynamics
- clap or tap rhythmic patterns
- tap the pulse while other learners tap the rhythm, and vice versa
- note the shape of the melody and the melodic range
- identify, from the notation, intervals larger than a second
- sing/hum the larger intervals, having given them one of the two pitches



There are many online tools for practising interval recognition, such as Teoria.

Emphasise the importance of steady, fluent reading, i.e. maintaining a regular pulse, and of allowing mistakes to pass without hesitating.

Ask learners to sight-read in small groups (in unison) or in parts, perhaps with simplified filler lines.



Point out to learners that when first playing a piece of music from notation, they are always 'sight-reading' it. Sight-reading, therefore, should not be regarded as a separate activity, but rather as an integral part of learning new music.

**P2 - D6**

**Interpret music by making choices in relation to tempo, dynamics, phrasing, articulation, colour, etc. in order to achieve an intended effect and convey the expressive characteristics; describe and evaluate the music using appropriate musical vocabulary**

When learning new pieces, encourage learners to make independent decisions about expressive features, such as dynamics, tempi, phrasing, articulation, and tone quality.

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Ask learners to experiment with reverb and distortion from an amplifier and evaluate its effect. Similarly, listen to a recording that demonstrates the tremolo sound, e.g. Hank Marvin from the Shadows.

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Show learners how to apply their listening skills and respond to the musical features of the music.

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Tease out learners' understanding in questions about the music.

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Encourage learners to perform the music intuitively and to explore different interpretations, even at a simple level.

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Demonstrate alternatives for learners to discuss and evaluate.



Some learners interpret music intuitively, with little intervention from the teacher. Others need a more structured approach. All learners should be encouraged to analyse how they make their musical decisions.

# Programme of Study 2

## E Playing music with others

### P2 - E1

#### **Play with others, helping to maintain a separate part and showing awareness of their role within the ensemble**

Ask learners to play a variety of ensemble pieces together, maintaining a regular pulse and listening to the other players.

Remind learners to sit/stand so that they can clearly watch the leader or conductor.

Ask learners to play different parts of a piece (with differentiated levels of difficulty) in turn, discovering which part is the most significant in any particular passage and noting how the parts fit together.

Encourage different learners to take a lead, perhaps by counting in, selecting the tempi or suggesting expressive contrasts.

Encourage learners to participate in an appropriate ensemble, playing in unison with others initially, later maintaining a separate part.

Regular ensemble experiences provide a focus for making music. Taking part in a group promotes quicker progression and increased motivation and helps learners to develop social and personal skills.

### P2 - E2

#### **Explore, discuss and convey the character of the music**

Ask learners to discuss the character of the music and how this influences the choice of tempi, dynamics, etc.

Discuss with learners how further improvements can be made to their playing.

# Programme of Study 2

## F Performing and communicating

### P2 - F1

#### **Perform to others with a sense of occasion, e.g. in a concert, school assembly, examination, projecting the character of the music and acknowledging audience applause**

Organise opportunities for performances with others of a similar standard in lessons, and occasionally for parents/carers, relatives and friends.



Performance enables learners to convey their music to others, building on a range of acquired skills, knowledge and understanding. Simulated performances in lessons help to develop these skills before playing to larger audiences.

Using their growing library of pieces, prepare learners so that they are able to perform with fluency and expression.



Allow plenty of time so that the music is thoroughly prepared. Learners should be well prepared for every performance so that it is a positive, enjoyable experience for everyone – performer(s) and audience.

Encourage learners to perform from memory where this will enhance confidence, musical awareness and communication.

Fluency is key to developing confidence in performing. Pieces therefore need to be chosen with care to ensure that they are well within learners' capabilities.

Remind learners where and how to stand or sit to perform. If notation is used, ensure that stands are appropriately placed and at the correct height.

Show learners how to respond to applause and walk on and off stage.

Refine pieces through simulated performances during instrumental lessons.



Aim to give understanding and meaning to the music. Stimulate creative thinking in preparing for performance. Learners should consider different ways of communicating the character of the music.



It should be remembered that people respond differently to the idea of performing. It is important to look out for signs of performance anxiety and support learners in developing strategies to address this. Learners should be encouraged to have a sense of anticipation and enjoyment about performing.

## P2 - F2

# Evaluate the quality of their performance in relation to the character of the music, suggesting improvements and commenting on how the intentions were achieved

Lead learners in reflecting on and evaluating each performance. Help them to build confidence and make further improvements.

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Discuss strategies for overcoming nerves and solving problems.

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Discuss strategies for overcoming nerves and solving problems.



References to nerves can be counter-productive. If learners are thoroughly prepared, however, nerves can be viewed as an aid to concentration. Encourage a sense of anticipation and enjoyment about performing.

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Encourage learners to revise pieces from their repertoire.

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Continue to use technology where appropriate to make audio or video recordings so that learners can listen/watch back and evaluate their performance.



It is vital to check the policy of the school or other organisation you are working in with regards to any form of recording. Children must never be videoed without parental consent and all policies regarding use and storage of recordings must be adhered to.

# Programme of Study 3

## A Listening and internalising

### P3 - A1

#### **Listen with attention to detail, responding to the expressive character of music, using their experiences to inform their playing**

Ask learners to listen to music in a variety of styles and then describe the expressive character of the music with reference to the musical elements.

Ask learners to listen to music that is similar in period, genre, etc. to pieces they are learning. Ask them to point out similarities and differences.

### P3 - A2

#### **Develop their aural perception of the music to be played, including some feeling and understanding of the expressive characteristics**

Perform pieces to be learnt. Ask learners to describe the overall character using appropriate vocabulary.

Ask learners to compare and contrast new pieces with pieces already known.

Perform pieces in different ways. Ask learners to describe how changes to the dynamics, articulation, phrasing, tone quality, etc. affect the expressive character of the music.



As their knowledge increases, learners are able to use a larger musical vocabulary.



### P3 - A3

## Recognise and discriminate between the musical elements, including more refined aspects of articulation, phrasing, quality/variety of tone

Play appropriate rhythms from pieces. Ask learners to clap them back and identify the note values.

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In groups or whole classes ask some learners to tap the pulse of phrases while others tap the rhythm. As an extension, ask learners to tap the pulse with one hand and the rhythm with the other, or the pulse with the feet and the rhythm with the hands.

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Help learners to sing/play by ear short phrases from pieces to be learnt. Ask them to analyse some of the melodic intervals.



There are many online tools for practising interval recognition, such as Teoria.

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Play phrases in major and minor keys, ending on the tonic, dominant or submediant. Ask learners to identify the mode of the music and the finishing note.

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Perform pieces to learners and ask questions about the musical elements, including more detailed focus on articulation, phrasing and quality of tone.

### P3 - A4

## Recognise and convey structural features and compositional devices in their playing, e.g. A A B A, sequence

Ask learners to identify the main sections of more extended pieces. Ask further questions on rhythmic/melodic features, use of sequence, tonality, modulations, etc.

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Ask learners to prepare short pieces using various compositional techniques as appropriate, e.g. glissandi, suitable scales or modes such as pentatonic or whole-tone, and describe their effect.

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Encourage learners to improvise short pieces using similar techniques.

**P3 - A5**

## **Hear simple music internally when using notation/symbols, including repetitions, contrasts, changes to melodic and rhythmic patterns**

Using notation, ask learners to work out in their heads:

- the rhythm of phrases
- the sound of melodies, e.g. hum/sing simple phrases and then compare with the actual sound when played

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Using notation, ask learners to describe the main characteristics of pieces to be learnt: refer to musical elements, articulation, phrasing, use of sequence, tonality, structure, expressive features, etc.

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Ask learners to clap/hum/sing/say appropriate phrases at sight.

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Using notation, perform pieces with a range of deliberate mistakes, e.g. rhythmic, melodic, dynamic. Ask learners to identify the differences.



Music from all parts of the world is appropriate for these activities.

# Programme of Study 3

## B Making and controlling musical sounds

### P3 - B1

#### Posture and freedom of movement

- Develop an appropriate relaxed posture and hand position, both sitting and standing:
  - supporting and balancing the instrument with more ease
  - ensuring that both hands can move freely

Continue to ensure that learners adopt an appropriate posture in both standing and sitting positions.

Ensure that learners' shoulders are level and relaxed by asking them to hunch them up and let them fall two or three times.

Teach learners to play various forms of barré chords. Draw attention to where the pressure is needed from the barré finger.



The left-hand position of the thumb needs to be secure so as to produce a clean sound from the instrument.

### P3 - B2

#### Tuning the instrument

- Tune the instrument to itself with some independence, using an external sound source or electronic tuner

Show learners how to tune up to pitch, if necessary detuning and then retuning up to the correct pitch. Ask them to experiment, offering guidance as necessary.



An electronic tuner or tuning app is useful for this exercise.

Use familiar tunes to help learners learn the intervals by which strings are tuned.

### P3 - B3

## Right hand

- Play with a satisfying, clear sound more consistently, across a range of dynamics:
  - plucking strings with free right-hand and arm movements, using downstrokes and upstrokes
  - using the plectrum as appropriate, including hybrid plucking

Show learners how to play right hand arpeggio patterns across the strings, using both upstrokes and downstrokes and incorporating larger intervals.

Show learners how to pluck strings with a plectrum and one or more fingers simultaneously.

### P3 - B4

## Left hand

- Maintaining an appropriate free left-hand shape which facilitates accurate placement of the fingers
  - recognising and playing with secure intonation
  - developing speed, strength and flexibility of finger action
  - beginning elementary position work, including simple shifts
  - beginning to develop various tone colours through hammer-ons and pull-offs on open strings, slides and string bends

Teach learners to play exercises, scales and arpeggios that include left-hand positional changes.

By ear, and from notation, teach learners some pieces that incorporate positional changes.

Demonstrate how a tune can be played using several positions.

Teach some hammer-on and pull-off exercises for the left hand on open strings. Ask learners to experiment with these techniques in familiar tunes, aiming for a steady rhythm and a clear tone.

Show learners how to add slides to a well-known tune so as to embellish the melodic line.

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Demonstrate a three-octave pentatonic scale incorporating slides. Ask learners to copy the scale and then use it to improvise over a relevant chord progression.



This is an effective way of achieving position changes fluently and accurately.

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Listen to some two- and three-note slides. Devise some exercises that incorporate them. Ask learners to play them, emphasising the need for smoothness and rhythmic accuracy.



An example of a two-note slide occurs in 50's rock-n-roll 'Johnny B. Goode'; an example of a three-note slide occurs in 'So Far Away' by Dire Straits.

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Help learners to learn some riffs that include string bends.



Learners should pay attention to the string gauge during this activity. The G string may need to be lightened to achieve the full tone bend. A '16' is recommended, especially for younger learners, otherwise intonation may be a problem.

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## P3 - B5

### Articulation and coordination

- Coordinate the right and left hands at a regular pulse:
  - playing with more clarity and fluency at a variety of tempi
  - using a variety of articulations and rhythmic patterns
  - using a larger range of notes, incorporating simple shifts

Demonstrate how a tune can be played using different articulations. Ask learners to copy and to discuss the musical outcomes.

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Using familiar tunes, ask learners to play them using different dynamics and positions. Ask them to comment on the musical effect.

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Ask learners to make up some simple rhythmic variations on a well-known tune, combining different articulations with positional changes.

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Ask learners to suggest appropriate fingering for some of their pieces.

# Programme of Study 3

## C Creating and developing musical ideas

### P3 - C1

## Improvise in a variety of genres and styles, sustaining and developing musical ideas and achieving different intended musical effects with the instrument

Regularly ask learners to make up improvisations:

- in particular styles, e.g. rock, rags, reggae, garage; draw on relevant musical devices from pieces being learnt, where appropriate
- by varying a theme, exploring contrasts of elements, e.g. pitch, rhythm, tonality, dynamics
- using a free theme based on the mood or character of a piece, e.g. sense of autumn, clouds, jollity, sadness, open space, speed, night time



Improvisation provides opportunities for learners to extend their own musical ideas within the context of what they have learned. As instrumental skills and knowledge develop, so should fluency in improvisation. Improvisation enables musicians to gain a deeper insight into musical styles as well as encouraging them to express their own feelings. It should, above all, be an enjoyable activity, undertaken in a relaxed and supportive atmosphere, with the teacher joining in.

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Accompany learners as they develop more fluency and confidence with the 12-bar blues and improvisations over given diatonic chord patterns (see Programme of Study 2 C1).

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Discuss the results of the improvisations with learners, perhaps considering the appropriateness of style, development of ideas, use of musical elements, structure and overall outcome.

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Suggest and demonstrate further ways of developing and refining ideas, whilst building up learners' confidence.

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Make a recording, if possible.

## Apply knowledge and understanding of the instrument in order to compose with an understanding of musical idiom

Ask learners to compose short pieces of music for their instrument (and perhaps other instruments), developing the work in Programme of Study 2.



Notation is likely to be used as a memory aid, first in shorthand (or graphic form) and then for performance. Some learners may be composing for GCSE/Nationals/BTEC/RSL or other qualifications. There are many natural ways in which instrumental teachers can liaise with classroom colleagues for mutual support.

Ask learners to create a multi-layered piece by using technology to create a beat then adding an instrumental part over the top.



Song Maker on Chrome Music Lab would work well for this.

Encourage learners to use a range of musical devices appropriate to their technical and musical understanding, e.g. repetition, sequence, contrast.

Literary, visual or emotional starting points can be used, but the process of composing should focus on how effectively the musical ideas are developed within the genre.

Help learners to refine their pieces within the chosen style, discussing their progress and suggesting ideas for improvement and development.



Some programs allow learners to share their compositions digitally with other learners, with the facility for learners to comment on each other's work. Ensure that you adhere to your organisation's safeguarding policy with regards to the use of online platforms.

Provide opportunities for learners to perform their compositions, perhaps involving other musicians.



# Programme of Study 3

## D Playing music

### P3 - D1

## Work out by ear how to play tunes or accompaniments in straightforward keys or modes

Ask learners to work out by ear familiar tunes that are more challenging, e.g. longer, larger range, perhaps including some chromatic notes.

Playing by ear, introduce learners to different modes, scales, blues patterns, etc. Ask them to experiment with various starting notes and to work out the key, structure, etc.



Sustain opportunities for playing by ear – it brings together many skills.

### P3 - D2

## Repeat moderately short musical phrases (melodic and rhythmic) from memory

Ask learners to repeat moderately short phrases, of appropriate difficulty, performed by the teacher or other learners. Include music with a variety of time signatures, including compound time, and tunes with a wider range.

Ask learners to clap/tap the pulse while the phrases are being played and possibly identify some musical features.

Play scales in canon, e.g. the teacher or a learner starts, other learners begin two notes later – playing in consecutive thirds.

Extend a call-and-response sequence, repeating phrases or improvising new ones, always aiming for a musical performance.

### P3 - D3

## Play a variety of moderately easy pieces from different styles and traditions



Many genres of music are traditionally learnt exclusively by ear. Where it would support learning, you may wish to create notation systems that are appropriate to your teaching context, e.g. word rhythms, symbols, numbers, or vocal sounds. However, this may not be necessary or desirable for all musics. Music passed on orally/aurally naturally evolves as it spreads and being fixed in notation can hinder this.

Approach new pieces from different angles – perhaps aurally, or through improvisation, listening, notation, etc.

Ask learners to identify challenging passages and to make suggestions for solving problems.

Building on their own suggestions (if appropriate), show learners how to practise challenging passages and make improvements.

Make the process as creative as possible, always aiming to prompt learners' imagination and curiosity.



Continue to use the holistic approach, aiming for simultaneous learning through interrelated activities and processes.



Choose as wide a range of repertoire as possible. In particular, it should aim to:

- explore the first five positions
- include semiquavers, semiquaver rests and dotted-quaver semiquaver groupings
- expand learners' knowledge of key signatures
- make fuller use of compound time signatures

### P3 - D4

## Memorise a variety of pieces from their repertoire of increasing length and complexity

Building on strategies suggested in Programme of Study 2, help learners to commit selected pieces to memory.

Once pieces are memorised, encourage learners to try them out in front of others.

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Discuss problems and possible solutions in respect of playing from memory.

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Provide opportunities for learners to play from memory in a group. Note any new perspectives that this brings, e.g. the opportunity to listen more acutely and to pick up visual cues more easily.



Aim to develop musical memory in a number of ways, e.g. automatic, aural, visual, cognitive, kinaesthetic.



Remind learners that a performance is secure when it is learnt thoroughly from memory, but they should guard against it becoming mechanical.



Beware of the tendency to increase the speed of the beat as pieces become more familiar.

### P3 - D5

## Read and play at sight a variety of short, straightforward pieces at a regular pulse, using an increasing rhythmic, melodic and tonal range



Many genres of music are traditionally learnt exclusively by ear. Where it would support learning, you may wish to create notation systems that are appropriate to your teaching context, e.g. word rhythms, symbols, numbers, or vocal sounds. However, this may not be necessary or desirable for all musics. Music passed on orally/aurally naturally evolves as it spreads and being fixed in notation can hinder this.

Develop sight-reading skills by regularly asking learners to play at sight music (in tablature, chord symbols or standard notation) that is well within their technical range and in familiar keys or modes.

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Extend the structured approach outlined in Programme of Study 2. Thus, before playing through pieces for the first time, help learners to hear in their heads the overall sound of the music by asking them to:

- identify important notational features of the music, e.g. tempo, time signature, key signature, accidentals
- note articulation, phrasing and dynamics
- clap or tap rhythmic patterns, perhaps including syncopated patterns
- tap the pulse while other learners tap the rhythm, and vice versa (and extend by challenging learners to tap the pulse with one hand and the rhythm with the other)

- notice the shape of the melody and the melodic range
- identify, from the notation, a range of intervals
- sing/hum a variety of intervals taken from the melodic line
- sing/hum the melodic line of appropriate phrases



There are many online tools for practising interval recognition, such as Teoria.

Ask learners to sight-read in small groups, each learner maintaining a separate part individually (the parts possibly having differentiated levels of difficulty). Emphasise the importance of keeping going and maintaining a regular pulse.



Sight-reading can always be connected to learning repertoire because the skills are applied when reading pieces for the first time. Promote enjoyment and confidence by using metaphors to describe phrases and discussing the character of the music and the intended effect.

**P3 - D6**

**Interpret music with an understanding of the musical style, structure and idiom; communicate the character of the music and the intentions of the composer, making improvements to their work in the light of their knowledge about the music**

Discuss interpretative ideas with learners as pieces are being learned. Build on an intuitive response to the music.

Encourage learners to think about the nature of performance and how they can communicate musical ideas to others. Particular strategies may include:

- listening to different interpretations of music being learnt and discussing the effects, e.g. by the teacher demonstrating and/or the use of recordings
- analysing the structure of music being learnt and the implications for communicating this in performance
- discussing mood, meaning and emotions
- making links between technique and interpretation, e.g. the effects of various types of articulation
- emphasising expressive features



Interpretation is not a separate activity. Learners should be encouraged to make interpretative decisions in all their playing, even when learning the notes. Considerations of interpretation often inform the way passages are learnt, e.g. in relation to phrasing, fingering, articulation, tempo.

# Programme of Study 3

## E Playing music with others

### P3 - E1

#### **Play with others, independently maintaining an individual part, demonstrating awareness of their role within the ensemble and leading the ensemble where appropriate**

Increase the frequency and range of ensemble experiences. These could include both instruments and voices.

Ask learners to consider the best layout for particular ensembles, ensuring that all participants can clearly watch the leader or conductor.

Ask learners to maintain a separate part individually.



Help learners to learn their parts for new ensemble pieces by providing time in lessons.

Encourage learners to develop their listening skills, e.g. awareness of ensemble, balance, tuning, when playing with others.



Aim to extend and develop the necessary listening skills for playing with others.

Encourage learners to lead the ensemble, e.g. by counting in.

### P3 - E2

#### **Contribute to collective decisions, e.g. tempo, ensemble, tuning, balance, conveying the character of the music**

Promote more musical independence by encouraging learners to take the lead and make decisions relating

to the character of the music.

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Ask learners to reflect on and evaluate their progress and discuss ways of making further improvements.



Adopt a creative, problem-solving approach which gives learners the responsibility for overcoming the challenges of playing with others.

# Programme of Study 3

## F Performing and communicating

### P3 - F1

## Perform to others with increasing awareness and assurance, communicating the character of the music and their musical intentions to the audience

Organise opportunities for performance with others of a similar standard at various occasions and venues.



To promote self-confidence, help learners to develop their own library of repertoire pieces, i.e. pieces which once learned and performed can be repeated.

Ask learners to perform, over time, pieces from a variety of styles.



Ensure that learners perform music from different styles and genres so that confidence and experience can be developed across a range of repertoire.

Prepare learners so that they are able to perform with fluency, expression and understanding.

Encourage learners to perform some or all of their pieces from memory where this will enhance confidence, musical awareness and communication.



Encourage learners to retain pieces that they can perform at short notice, i.e. to build up an internalised music library.

Make sure that learners know where and how to stand or sit to perform. If notation is used, check the position and height of stands.

Ensure that learners know how to respond to applause and walk on and off stage.

Refine pieces through simulated performances in lessons, during performances at school and as part of concerts to the wider community.





Aim to stimulate creative thinking when preparing for performance. Encourage learners to consider different ways of communicating the character of the music.



It should be remembered that people respond differently to the idea of performing. It is important to look out for signs of performance anxiety and support learners in developing strategies to address this. Learners should be encouraged to have a sense of anticipation and enjoyment about performing.

### **P3 - F2**

## **Evaluate with perception and some independence the quality of their performance and respond to ideas from others**

Ask learners to reflect on and evaluate each performance in order to make further improvements and build up confidence.

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Organise opportunities for learners to join and perform with directed groups, e.g. bands, orchestras, choirs, large ensembles, ensuring that their musical needs and stage of development are sensitively taken into account.

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Continue to use technology where appropriate to make audio or video recordings so that learners can listen/watch back and evaluate their performance.



It is vital to check the policy of the school or other organisation you are working in with regards to any form of recording. Children must never be videoed without parental consent and all policies regarding use and storage of recordings must be adhered to.

# Programme of Study 4

## A Listening and internalising

### P4 - A1

#### Use their listening skills and experiences of a variety of musical styles and traditions to inform their interpretations, e.g. use of rubato, shaping of phrases, variety of tone

Ask learners to listen to a variety of music from different styles and traditions, using more extended and complex structures. Ask them to describe the expressive character of the music, referring to the musical elements, phrasing, etc. and noting how composers and performers use repetition and contrast.



Apps such as GarageBand, Soundtrap and BandLab provide lots of opportunity to learn about structure by exploring sections, repetition and looping.

Ask learners to listen to music that is similar in period, genre, etc. to pieces they are learning. Ask them to compare pieces using appropriate vocabulary.



Use a framework of open and closed questions that lead learners step by step.



These activities may link with GCSE/Nationals/BTEC Level 2/RSL Level 2 or other qualifications.

### P4 - A2

#### Further develop their aural perception of the music to be played, including some feeling and understanding of the expressive and stylistic characteristics

Perform pieces to be learnt. Ask learners to describe the overall character and style of the music, referring to the musical elements, phrasing, articulation, tonality, etc.

With learners, compare performances of the same piece, looking at shaping of phrases, articulation, use of

rubato, quality/variety of tone, etc.

#### P4 - A3

### Identify and incorporate subtle changes to the musical elements in their playing, e.g. tempo, articulation, phrasing

Help learners to sing/play by ear appropriate phrases from pieces to be learnt, e.g. irregular phrases, melodies containing chromatic notes/embellishments.

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Enable learners to discuss and explore the harmonic context of melodies that they play.

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When playing with others, ask learners to note the differences between homophonic and contrapuntal passages.



Whenever possible, use ensemble opportunities to explore different textures.

---

Encourage learners to think about and experiment with alternatives in tempi, articulation, phrasing, dynamics, etc., listening to the effect and deciding which approach meets the musical intentions most successfully.



The emphasis is on intuition, imagination and curiosity.

#### P4 - A4

### Recognise and convey more extended structures and techniques in pieces being studied, e.g. rondo, raga, dance forms, simple modulations

Discuss new repertoire with learners, listening to structure, compositional devices, tonality and melodic lines in order to promote better aural perception.

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Discuss the roles of solo and accompaniment in pieces being learnt.

---

Use an element of a piece as the starting point for a short improvisation.



When appropriate, ensure that learners are thoroughly familiar with accompaniments. If these are instrumental reductions, take the opportunity to listen to the full version.

**P4 - A5**

## **Hear simple music internally with increasing accuracy and fluency when using notation/symbols**

Using notation, ask learners to work out in their heads the sound of phrases, then compare with the actual sound when played.

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Using notation, ask learners to describe the overall character of pieces, referring to style, structure, phrasing, dynamic range, texture, etc. Suggest how they affect the mood of the music.

---

Ask learners to clap/hum/sing/say at sight appropriate phrases from pieces to be learnt.

---

Using notation, perform extracts with deliberate deviations in rhythm, articulation, phrasing, dynamics, etc. inserted. Ask learners to point out the mistakes.



Music from all parts of the world is appropriate for these activities.

# Programme of Study 4

## B Making and controlling musical sounds

### P4 - B1

## Posture and freedom of movement

- Develop an appropriate relaxed posture and hand position, both sitting and standing:
  - supporting and balancing the instrument with more ease
  - ensuring that both hands are free
  - developing a positive performing image

Suggest to learners that they experiment with postural modifications in order to facilitate more body movement.



By now, learners should have enough control of the guitar to be able to experiment with postural modifications of this kind.

Demonstrate to learners the difference between positive and negative body language when performing.

Use role-play to discuss the effects of good posture in communicating an effective performance.



An occasional lesson in a large space can help to encourage projection.

Ask learners to observe others performing, noting the effects of posture on communication.



Encourage learners to attend live performances where possible, and/or watch live performances online.

Ask learners to look for convenient points in the music where they can counteract any accumulated tension by consciously relaxing.



Some learners may find relaxation methods useful, e.g. yoga, Alexander Technique.

**P4 - B2**

## Tuning the instrument

- Tune the instrument accurately with more independence, recognising when it is necessary to retune
- Begin to develop knowledge of alternate tunings

Demonstrate the use of natural harmonics for tuning on the fifth and 12th frets.



This is a good stage to point out the need for replacing strings or making adjustments to the harmonic adjusters at the bridge.

Ask learners to check their tuning by playing appropriate exercises/pieces.

Help learners to tune to open G, i.e. D/G/D/G/B/D, and then experiment with appropriate songs, e.g. 'Honky Tonk Woman' by The Rolling Stones.

**P4 - B3**

## Right hand

- Play with a consistent, satisfying, clear sound across a large range of dynamics:
  - plucking strings with free right-hand and arm movements at a variety of tempi
  - using the plectrum as appropriate, including 'pinched harmonics'

Teach learners exercises and pieces using a larger range of notes, incorporating wider string crossings.

With learners, listen to a recorded guitar solo demonstrating the 'pinched harmonic' effect, e.g. solos from ZZ Top. Ask them to experiment, using a plectrum.

Demonstrate holding the plectrum between two fingers to allow the right hand to play finger-style, then bring the plectrum into the playing position.



Refined by Martin Taylor, this technique is particularly useful for jazz standards in changing from the 'head' to the improvised solo.

Show learners how to hold the plectrum and use the right-hand second and third fingers to create a finger-picking style.



This technique is used extensively in country music and examples can be found in the playing of Albert Lee, James Burton and Jerry Donahue.

## P4 - B4

### Left hand

- Maintaining an appropriate free left-hand shape which facilitates accurate placement of the fingers
  - recognising and playing with secure intonation more consistently
  - developing speed, strength and flexibility of finger action at a variety of tempi
  - developing security in different positions and when changing between positions
  - developing a variety of tone colours, including hammer-ons and pull-offs from a fretted note, left-hand tapping, slides, string bends and left-handed dampening
  - beginning to develop a vibrato
  - beginning to use natural harmonics

Teach learners exercises using the technique of planting fingers (to be carried out in all positions) so as to develop strength and dexterity across the fingerboard rather than in a linear way.

Teach some hammer-on and pull-off exercises for the left hand on fretted strings. Ask learners to experiment with these techniques in familiar tunes, aiming for a steady rhythm and a clear tone.

Demonstrate (or play a video demonstrating) the use of left-hand tapping and ask learners to experiment with various musical examples that feature this technique.



Sometimes films about musicians' lives explain how various techniques have developed, e.g. Crossroads (Robert Johnson to Steve Vie).

Ask learners to experiment with left-hand dampening, discussing the effect and practicality of the technique and comparing it to palm mute.

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Using a well-known tune, teach two different ways of achieving left-hand vibrato. Ask learners to imitate and to discuss the appropriateness of each method for various tunes they are playing.

---

Show learners the use of the tremolo arm to produce a vibrato effect and ask them to experiment with using this technique instead of left-hand vibrato.



Not all electric guitars are fitted with a tremolo arm and they vary in quality. learners' attention should be drawn to the mechanics of the arm and adjustment of the spring-tension screws.

---

Encourage learners to make up patterns using 12th-fret harmonics, playing them with the third or fourth fingers, touching lightly and removing the finger immediately but without haste.



Make sure harmonics are played with the left-hand finger directly above, not behind, the fret: where harmonics are concerned, the finger is the fret.

---

## P4 - B5

### Articulation and coordination

- Coordinate the right and left hands at a regular pulse:
  - playing with clarity and fluency at a variety of tempi
  - using a variety of articulations and rhythmic patterns

Encourage learners to explore how a tune can be played using different articulations. Discuss the musical outcomes.

---

Ask learners to ornament a familiar tune or solo by exploring and introducing various trills and grace notes.



# Programme of Study 4

## C Creating and developing musical ideas

### P4 - C1

## Improvise with freedom in a wide range of musical structures genres, styles and traditions, drawing on internalised sounds

Ask learners to improvise melodies above predetermined harmonic patterns, using conventions and techniques within the chosen style, e.g. melodies in Dorian mode with added chromatic notes above a chord sequence of seventh chords.



A chord sequence of Dm7/Am7/Gm7/Am7 provides a suitable accompaniment. The Dorian mode with chromatic notes would be D E F G G# A B C C# D.

Ask learners to improvise short melodies using a variety of scales, e.g. major, minor, pentatonic, whole-tone, blues, chromatic, modes.

Demonstrate some cliché licks and ask learners to create a solo using thirds, fourths and sixths over a repeated chord progression.

Ask learners to improvise with others on a specific melody e.g. the pentatonic Raga Bhupali.



### *Raga Bhupali*



Focus on developing an awareness of style by relating the particular scale or mode to repertoire being studied.



Research less-familiar musics from around the world and make links with curriculum music where appropriate.

Ask learners to create a bass line to a well-known song spontaneously, using notes of the chords and passing notes.

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Ask learners to play chords to a given melody.

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Help learners to develop confidence by improvising frequently, doing a little at a time.

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Make recordings of improvisations and discuss the outcomes with learners.



The best improvisations have a coherent, well-phrased, vocal quality. Singing the ideas before trying to play them provides learners with an internal template. This allows their improvisations to be head-led not finger-led and will help prevent them from getting musically 'stuck'.

## P4 - C2

### **Compose in different styles, creating and selecting musical ideas by exploring the characteristics of their chosen resources**

Ask learners to compose some pieces over an extended period of time in a variety of traditional and contemporary styles. This could include:

- exploration of a particular aspect of technique
- a solo piece with accompaniment, possibly evoking different moods or feelings, e.g. clouds, pyramids, the evening, rush hour, dreams
- a short piece for an ensemble, exploring aspects of textures, solos and accompaniments



Ensure that time is allowed for reviewing progress of compositions. It may be appropriate to select particular times of the year when it is possible to focus more on composing, e.g. in the summer term after examinations. Group compositions can be useful for developing ensemble skills.

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Help learners to refine their pieces within the chosen style and idiom.



Rehearsing, interpreting and performing the compositions are essential parts of this process.

# Programme of Study 4

## D Playing music

### P4 - D1

#### Work out by ear how to play moderately easy tunes or accompaniments, e.g. with a wider range of intervals and different octaves/positions

Ask learners to play by ear familiar tunes that include some simple chromatic writing and modulations.

Discuss the effect of accidentals and what needs to be done in order to modulate from one key to another.

Ask learners to work out some of the underlying harmonies. Discuss possible alternatives. Explain that chromatic writing may be decorative and therefore does not require harmonisation.

Ask learners to vary tunes by using alternative melodic and/or rhythmic patterns. Discuss the variations.

Improvise on the given tune and extend the piece for fun.



Regular playing by ear helps to build confidence. Familiar tunes can be worked out during individual practice and then played again in the lesson.

### P4 - D2

#### Repeat phrases of a moderate length and complexity in a variety of styles

Develop further call-and-response or echo exercises, perhaps using more challenging keys and a wider variety of styles and forms, e.g. waltz, Latin-American rhythms, riffs.

Play scales in canon, e.g. one learner starts, the next begins two notes later, the third a further two notes on, thus producing a sequence of chords. Discuss whether the chords are major, minor, diminished, etc.

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Play arpeggios in canon, learners starting on successive notes. Discuss whether the resulting chords are in root position, first inversion, etc.

---

Play simple pieces in canon, with either the teacher or other members of the group leading. The second group repeats the part played by the first group.

Continue the activity in pairs, with the second player decorating the line or improvising answering phrases in the style of the first. Whole pieces can be built up in this manner.

**P4 - D3**

## Play a variety of pieces of moderate difficulty



Many genres of music are traditionally learnt exclusively by ear. Where it would support learning, you may wish to create notation systems that are appropriate to your teaching context, e.g. word rhythms, symbols, numbers, or vocal sounds. However, this may not be necessary or desirable for all musics. Music passed on orally/aurally naturally evolves as it spreads and being fixed in notation can hinder this.

When learners are learning new pieces, ask them to identify and discuss structural relationships, e.g. repetitions, contrasts, deviations, developments. Ask them to describe the musical effects of these features.

---

Encourage learners to learn pieces more independently, identifying and solving problems, and making musical decisions.

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Continue to advise learners on practising strategies.

---

Encourage learners to learn pieces away from the instrument in order to consider the overall character, the shape of phrases, subtleties of tempo, etc.



As learners develop their own responses to pieces, so the teacher's input can be reduced.



Encourage learners to use the holistic approach by prompting them to apply listening skills, solve technical and musical problems and use their imaginations.

## P4 - D4

### **Memorise a variety of pieces from their repertoire in different styles and traditions, featuring a range of musical devices and structures**

Encourage learners to read the score away from the instrument, as another way to help with memorising pieces.

Ask learners to memorise short pieces or sections of music this way, then play them without using the music.



This is a challenging activity that depends on internalising the music, making links to notation and memorising patterns and structures.



Try to include some aspect of memorising in each lesson.



As an aid to memorisation, ask learners to imagine playing the piece with their eyes closed, including all performance details.

## P4 - D5

### **Read and play at sight moderately easy pieces in different styles at a regular pulse; internalise and incorporate less-familiar musical features, e.g. time signatures, variety of tempi, keys**



Many genres of music are traditionally learnt exclusively by ear. Where it would support learning, you may wish to create notation systems that are appropriate to your teaching context, e.g. word rhythms, symbols, numbers, or vocal sounds. However, this may not be necessary or desirable for all musics. Music passed on orally/aurally naturally evolves as it spreads and being fixed in notation can hinder this.

Continue to develop sight-reading skills by regularly asking learners to play appropriate music at sight, using the structured approach outlined in Programme of Study 3, i.e. before playing through pieces for the first time, help learners to gain a clear internal picture of the overall shape and character of the music.

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Ask learners to sight-read appropriate music in small groups, each learner maintaining a separate part individually (the parts possibly having differentiated levels of difficulty). Emphasise the importance of

learners listening to each other in respect of ensemble, tuning, balance, etc.



Use a wide range of styles from different times and places.



As in previous programmes, sight-reading should have fluent, musical outcomes. Attention to rhythmic accuracy and expression will help to project the music.

#### P4 - D6

**Interpret music with understanding and insight, developing a personal response through sustained study of and reflection on the music, applying their knowledge of style, characteristics and historical/social background; evaluate how their interpretation reflects the context in which the music was created and is performed and heard**

Building on Programme of Study 3, discuss the interpretation of pieces being studied, especially how learners can convey their own personal responses within the stylistic conventions and the composer's markings.

---

Encourage learners to be aware of stylistic, structural and idiomatic features of pieces, e.g. musical forms, repetition, contrast, development techniques, and to communicate their feelings and understanding in their playing.



Developing an interpretation is the crux of a personal performance and should be the focus of discussion. Listening to various recordings of the same piece can stimulate discussion and provide a way to develop learners' interpretations.

# Programme of Study 4

## E Playing music with others

### P4 - E1

## Play with others, independently maintaining an individual part with sensitivity, responding to others and leading where appropriate, demonstrating awareness of their role within the ensemble

Encourage more independence by promoting unsupervised rehearsals and by asking learners to take the lead.

Encourage learners to use eye contact when playing in small ensembles.

Discuss ways of using rehearsal time effectively, e.g. marking scores and parts, tuning procedures, dealing with challenging passages.

Encourage learners, through careful listening, to develop greater sensitivity in respect of balance, ensemble, tuning, shaping of phrases, etc.

Encourage learners to be responsive in situations where an ensemble performance is not together, taking action to get the performance back on track.

Ensure there are a variety of opportunities for ensembles/groups to perform to audiences and to each other.



Bear in mind that it can take considerable time and effort to organise ensemble opportunities. It is helpful, therefore, to work in close collaboration with school music departments, Music Services/Hubs, local performing groups and/or other appropriate organisations.

## **Contribute to collective decisions, e.g. balance, ensemble, interpretation, conveying the character and style of the music**

Encourage all learners to contribute to discussions on interpretative issues, e.g. communicating and projecting the style and character of the music.

---

Invite learners to discuss, using appropriate vocabulary, how further refinements can be made.



# Programme of Study 4

## **F** Performing and communicating

### **P4 - F1**

## **Perform to others with growing confidence, responding to the audience, venue and occasion, communicating the character and style of the music through their own/shared interpretation**

Organise performing opportunities at a variety of occasions and venues, e.g. school events, concerts in the wider community.



Aim to give learners a range of performing experiences, e.g. solo, with others, directed, non-directed.

Ask learners to perform, over time, pieces from a range of musical styles and traditions.



Ensure that learners perform music from a range of musical styles and genres so that confidence and experience is developed across a range of repertoire.

Prepare learners to perform with fluency and understanding, encouraging them to communicate their personal feelings within the style of the music and the composer's markings.



Through performance, learners demonstrate their ability to absorb a range of musical and technical skills, knowledge and understanding.

Ask learners to research some background information on pieces, e.g. details of style, the historical/social context.

Encourage learners to perform some or all of their pieces from memory where this will enhance confidence, musical awareness and communication.

Refine pieces through simulated performances in lessons, during performances at school and as part of concerts to the wider community.



Aim to stimulate creative thinking in preparing for performance. Learners should explore a range of possibilities in their quest to communicate the expressive intentions of the composer.

---

Encourage learners to perform music with others independently of the teacher, e.g. duets or small ensembles.



It should be remembered that people respond differently to the idea of performing. It is important to look out for signs of performance anxiety and support learners in developing strategies to address this. Learners should be encouraged to have a sense of anticipation and enjoyment about performing.

**P4 - F2**

## **Evaluate with perception the quality of their performance, using their knowledge of performing conventions, including the performances of distinguished musicians**

Ask learners to reflect on and evaluate each performance in order to make further improvements and build up confidence.

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Encourage learners to devise their own criteria for self-assessment.

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Continue to use technology where appropriate to make audio or video recordings so that learners can listen/watch back and evaluate their performance.



It is vital to check the policy of the school or other organisation you are working in with regards to any form of recording. Children must never be videoed without parental consent and all policies regarding use and storage of recordings must be adhered to.

---

Organise opportunities for learners to perform with directed groups by encouraging them to join bands, orchestras, choirs, large ensembles, etc. that are appropriate to their needs.

# Programme of Study 5

## A Listening and internalising

### P5 - A1

#### **Listen systematically and critically to a wide variety of music from different styles and traditions to develop their own independent interpretations**

Ask learners to listen to and identify music from a variety of styles and traditions, including extended pieces with complex structures. Ask them to compare and contrast various pieces, referring to form, texture, harmonic language, instrumentation, tonality, etc.

Ask learners to listen to music that is related in style and tradition to the pieces they are learning. Ask them to compare and contrast the range of musical ideas/devices and observe how they are used in the music.



It is important for learners to be challenged by a range of relevant questions. Use a framework of open and closed questions that lead learners step by step.



These activities may link with A Level/Highers/BTEC Level 3/RSL Level 3 or other qualifications.

### P5 - A2

#### **Have a clear aural perception of the music to be played, conveying their feeling and understanding of the expressive and stylistic features in practice and performance**

Perform pieces to be learnt and/or listen to recorded/live performances. Ask learners to describe the overall character and style of the music.

Ask learners to compare the performances, noting subtleties of tempo, phrasing, articulation, dynamics, quality/variety of tone, etc.

### P5 - A3

## Identify and incorporate subtle changes to the musical elements in their playing, interpreting music both personally and idiomatically

Help learners to sing/play by ear more extended and/or complex phrases, e.g. those featuring wider leaps and/or challenging rhythms, from pieces to be learnt. Look at how these phrases fit into the whole piece.

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Ask learners to explore the effects of varying the tempi, articulation, phrasing, dynamics, etc. in pieces from different styles and traditions. Encourage them to develop personal interpretations and to use their understanding of the characteristics of the instrument.

---

Discuss the musical effects of more advanced technical devices, e.g. artificial harmonics, and ask learners to experiment with different ways of using them in pieces being studied.

---

Encourage learners to ensure consistency of tempo in extended pieces and large-scale movements.

### P5 - A4

## Recognise and convey in their interpretative decisions a wide variety of musical structures and compositional techniques

Discuss new repertoire with learners, noting structure, tonality, modulations, technically demanding passages, nature of the accompaniment, etc.

---

Encourage learners to improvise in various styles. This could include making up a short cadenza or adding ornamentation.

### P5 - A5

## Hear a wider range of music internally when using notation/symbols, anticipating the sound in their heads

Using notation, ask learners to work out in their heads the sound of phrases/pieces or simple chords then compare these with the actual sound when played.

---

Using notation, ask learners to describe the overall character of pieces, referring to style, structure, harmonic language, dynamic range, texture, etc. Suggest how they affect the mood of the music.

---

Ask learners to clap/hum/sing/say at sight appropriate phrases from pieces to be learnt.

Play extracts with subtle deviations from the text in terms of pitch, rhythm, articulation, phrasing, harmonies, dynamics, etc. Ask learners to point out the differences.



Music from all parts of the world is appropriate for these activities.

# Programme of Study 5

## B Making and controlling musical sounds

P5 - B1

### Posture and freedom of movement

- Develop an appropriate relaxed posture and hand position, both sitting and standing:
  - supporting and balancing the instrument with ease and confidence
  - ensuring that both hands are free
  - playing with a positive performing image

Continue to emphasise the importance of good posture and freedom of movement.



Some learners with poor posture and/or tension problems find relaxation methods useful, eg, yoga, Alexander Technique.

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Ask learners to devise their own checklist of the main sources of tension. Discuss how tension can be alleviated.

---

Continue to encourage positive body language when performing, suggesting that learners look up and out as much as possible, rather than at their left hand.

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Encourage learners to use imagery in order to convey the character and mood of the music. Discuss how posture may contribute towards communication.

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Provide opportunities for learners to observe how others communicate in performance, e.g. masterclasses, concerts.



Encourage learners to attend a wide range of live performances where possible, and/or watch live performances online.

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Help learners to use their posture to communicate musical intention, e.g. beginning and/or changing tempo in a group.

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Discuss ways in which learners can develop the physical and mental stamina required to play longer, more demanding pieces.

## P5 - B2

### Tuning the instrument

- Tune the instrument independently, with greater refinement, e.g. use of harmonic tuning, recognising when it is necessary to retune
- Have a knowledge of alternate tunings (e.g. dropped D, DADGAD)

Ask learners to respond to bad intonation during performance by quickly adjusting an individual string's tuning at a convenient point in the music, e.g. at a double bar or during a rest.

Show learners alternative ways of tuning the instrument. Ask them to learn appropriate pieces requiring non-standard ways of tuning.



Learners should be aware of the reason for these tunings and decide for themselves if they are appropriate to pieces they are playing.

## P5 - B3

### Right hand

- Play with a consistent, satisfying, clear sound across a large range of dynamics:
  - plucking strings with confidence, using free right-hand and arm movements at a variety of tempi
  - using a variety of plectrum techniques and tone colours as appropriate

Teach learners exercises and pieces using the full range of the instrument, developing speed and dexterity.

Further develop the technique of 'pinched' harmonics and incorporate into performances for musical effect.

## P5 - B4

### Left hand

- Maintaining an appropriate free left-hand shape which facilitates accurate placement of the fingers
  - recognising and playing with secure intonation throughout the full range
  - playing with speed, strength and flexibility of finger action at a variety of tempi
  - playing with security in different positions and when changing between positions
  - developing a variety of tone colours, including artificial harmonics and hammer-ons moving up the fretboard
  - using a controlled vibrato

With learners, listen to a range of cliché licks associated with bending strings, eg. 'Samba Pa T' by Carlos Santana. Demonstrate how the effects are produced.

Ask learners to play simple scales and single line melodies with artificial harmonics.



Learners should understand the physics of string vibration with regard to harmonics, e.g. node, antinode.

Teach exercises to develop the technique of left-hand vibrato, encouraging learners to incorporate into pieces for musical effect.

## P5 - B5

### Articulation and coordination

- Coordinate the right and left hands at a regular pulse:
  - playing with clarity, dexterity and fluency at a variety of tempi
  - using a large variety of articulations and rhythmic patterns
  - using advanced techniques requiring specific coordinations (e.g. sweep picking, two-handed tapping, and waterfall or harp harmonics)

Teach learners to play solo pieces that incorporate an alternating bass part with a syncopated melody.





Ragtime pieces are a useful source. The activity can be extended to include improvising while maintaining the bass part.

---

Ask learners to play tunes from their repertoire an octave higher in order to develop fluency on the fingerboard above the 12th fret.

---

Ask learners to choose a well-known tune or melodic passages from their repertoire and play it (by ear) in as many positions and octaves as possible, and also in a range of keys. Make sure that the shifts are as smooth as possible.

---

Ask learners to play arpeggios of extended chords in various positions, using a range of rhythmic patterns and tempi.

---

Demonstrate the use of various sound-effect pedals or simulators and help learners to operate them in order to produce a larger range of tone colours.



An amplifier simulator is useful for this so that the whole range of effects can be demonstrated.

---

Teach learners more advanced techniques such as sweep picking, two-handed tapping and waterfall or harp harmonics. Focus on the coordination requirements of each and develop suitable technical exercises to enable learners to gain fluency in these techniques.

---

After listening together to suitable examples, ask learners to consider how articulation and legato phrasing are approached on different instruments, and what these consciously applied expressive qualities contribute to the overall effect of the music, e.g. making a dance movement seem more animated or a melodic piece more song-like. Explore ways for learners to recreate what they have heard in these examples in their own playing.



Listening to other instruments' means of expression can broaden learners' musical awareness. Some instruments have a more natural capacity for legato, i.e. through playing several notes in one bow or breath, and non legato, i.e. through changing bow on tonguing between notes. Internalising different phrasing characteristics through vocal imitation is a good place to start, followed by playing short passages by ear.

---

With learners, choose an item of repertoire in which articulations, slurs and phrase marks are specified in the text, e.g. a 20th- or 21st-century piece. Ask them to internalise and apply these expressive qualities from

the start of the learning process, using the appropriate techniques.

Next, select together an item of repertoire in which articulations, slurs and phrase marks are *not* specified. From the start of the learning process, ask learners to add their own expressive qualities, using their knowledge and understanding of musical style, etc., and combining the appropriate techniques with an awareness of phrasing and structure.

# Programme of Study 5

## C Creating and developing musical ideas

P5 - C1

### Improvise extended musical ideas with a sense of direction and shape as they develop their own personal style

Ask learners to improvise a piece involving a simple modulation, possibly within a given structure, e.g. A (tonic) B (dominant) A (tonic). Explore techniques involved in modulating and apply them in other improvisations.



Ensure that technical points are fully understood and absorbed, e.g. modulations to relative keys.

Continue to link improvisations to repertoire being studied, e.g. learners improvise a short piece in the style of a well-known composer. Alternatively, this could be in the style of particular musicians, e.g. Richard Thompson (contemporary English folk), Ry Cooder (American roots, slide guitar), BB King (blues).

Ask learners, or possibly teacher and learner, to extend a melody by improvising in turn, each player basing the improvisation on the previous section. Aim for coherence and expression within an agreed style.

Teach a well-known jazz standard, e.g. 'I Got Rhythm':

- play learners a recording of the piece
- familiarise them with the 32-bar A A B A form and teach them the chords and melody. Play it with them as a learner/teacher duo, swapping roles
- demonstrate how to embellish the melody freely and encourage learners to do the same when their turn comes
- finally, ask them to improvise over the chords, making fewer references to the original melody



Latin-American jazz styles also provide an accessible way into jazz improvisation. The samba employs 'straight' as opposed to 'swung' quaver rhythms, while the use of 'chord tones' as a stock improvisational device, i.e. playing the notes of the chords rather than scales, limits the number of notes learners need to hear and use at any given point.

Ask learners to devise/use a graphic score as the basis for a free improvisation in a

contemporary style.

## P5 - C2

# Compose with consistency of style, coherence of musical ideas and a degree of individuality, and by making the most of the instrumental resources

Ask learners to compose pieces for more than one instrument, e.g. rock band, folk ensemble, guitar and voice.



Compositions for more than one instrument provide opportunities for learners to explore different textures. Learners can use techniques associated with pieces being learnt. These may include contrapuntal textures and more complex structures, and can involve a higher level of technical difficulty for the performer. Alternatively, limitations may be imposed, e.g. thematic, structural, technical. Encourage learners to exploit the idiomatic potential of instruments.

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Support learners in refining, notating (if appropriate) and evaluating their ideas.

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Provide guidance on writing for other instruments/voices.

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Provide opportunities for learners' compositions to be performed, if possible in public, and make recordings to help evaluation.

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Ask learners to write programme notes for their pieces, including details of background, style, intention and outcomes.

# Programme of Study 5

## D Playing music

### P5 - D1

#### Work out by ear how to play pieces of increasing complexity

Demonstrate how to play melodies by ear in different keys. For the guitarist, transposing a melody that stays in one position and does not require open strings is a relatively straightforward activity. Ask learners, therefore, to transpose melodies with wide leaps and challenging intervals.



Transposing by ear is an important tool for the advanced musician.

---

Ask learners to practise playing a familiar piece, e.g. 'Happy Birthday', in a variety of keys.

---

Ask learners to make up some variations on well-known tunes by ear, using a range of melodic and/or rhythmic patterns.

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Ask learners to work out by ear some possible harmonies for well-known tunes.

### P5 - D2

#### Repeat longer and more complex phrases, involving different tempi, keys, tonality, and transpositions where appropriate

Encourage learners to play back longer and more complex musical extracts from memory, using a wide range of styles, e.g. raga, hooks and riffs.

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Ask learners to practise repeating patterns that may include augmented and diminished intervals, asymmetrical phrases and irregular rhythms.

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Play a three- or four-part chord or simple chord progression and ask learners to play the upper, inner and lower parts in turn; alternatively, allocate a part to each learner and ask for each chord to be played separately, then as a progression.

As an extension activity, discuss whether the chords are major, minor, diminished, etc. and which position/inversion they are in.

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Ask learners to transcribe pieces by ear using audio recordings. Ask them to duplicate the bass, rhythm and solo guitar parts by stopping and replaying the track. When learners are sure of the various parts, they can play along with the track.

### P5 - D3

## Play a range of pieces from different styles and periods that are technically and musically advanced



Many genres of music are traditionally learnt exclusively by ear. Where it would support learning, you may wish to create notation systems that are appropriate to your teaching context, e.g. word rhythms, symbols, numbers, or vocal sounds. However, this may not be necessary or desirable for all musics. Music passed on orally/aurally naturally evolves as it spreads and being fixed in notation can hinder this.

Continue the holistic approach to learning new pieces by:

- enabling learners to research background knowledge of style, period, etc.
  - discussing the structure, harmonic language, etc.
  - ensuring that technical skills are applied to the musical context
  - devising related listening exercises that support the learning and memorisation of key features of the music
  - enriching learners' understanding by structuring improvisations based on ideas from the pieces being learnt
  - providing opportunities for self- and peer-evaluation, using criteria that have been devised by learners themselves
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Continue to encourage learners to learn pieces away from the instrument in order to consider the overall character, the shape of phrases, subtleties of tempo, etc.

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Continue to suggest appropriate practising strategies.

### P5 - D4

## Memorise systematically and independently pieces from their repertoire with refinement and expressive subtlety, demonstrating a personal response to the music

Help learners to memorise selected pieces from the repertoire being learnt. Offer particular strategies for dealing with longer and more complex pieces, so that learners remember music in different ways. These could include:

- devising ways of visualising the music, ranging from imagining a simple picture outline to a more photographic image
- relating memory to touch and movement, e.g. finger movement, hand position and patterns of notes
- supporting learners in knowing the sound in their heads
- analysing the structure of the music, e.g. counting the number of times a phrase occurs, noting key changes and sequences, consciously remembering deviations and exit points



The aim should be for the eyes, ears and hands to work together as an integral unit.

Provide opportunities for repeated playing and testing in order for learners to develop complete security.



By memorising the music, many performers are able to:

- focus more intimately on the music
- have greater freedom in their playing
- communicate more directly

However, if a musician is not comfortable performing in public without notation then this is by no means essential.

**P5 - D5**

**Read and play at sight a range of pieces in a variety of styles containing elements of surprise and deviation: internalise and incorporate a wide range of time signatures and tempi, rhythmic patterns, melodic range, intervals, tonality and expression**



Many genres of music are traditionally learnt exclusively by ear. Where it would support learning, you may wish to create notation systems that are appropriate to your teaching context, e.g. word rhythms, symbols, numbers, or vocal sounds. However, this may not be necessary or desirable for all musics. Music passed on orally/aurally naturally evolves as it spreads and being fixed in notation can hinder this.

Provide sight-reading practice in music that features a wide range of rhythmic and melodic devices, e.g. syncopated jazz rhythms and a variety of subdivisions where the rhythms are 'straight'. Include pieces that

contain elements of surprise and, with learners, formulate strategies for dealing with them.

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Ensure learners look through the music first, adopting the structured approach described in earlier programmes, in order to internalise the overall sound and character, and spot potential problems.

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Discuss the overall character and style of sight-reading pieces with learners, emphasising the importance of communicating this to others.

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Encourage learners to sight-read straightforward, standard repertoire rather than sight-reading exercises.



It is often useful to return to simple music to develop sight-reading skills and, in particular, the ability to read at sight quickly and fluently. This also helps to build up confidence.



Promote the value of sight-reading as a way of accessing and gaining greater familiarity with a wide range of music.

## P5 - D6

### **Interpret music personally with consistency of style, and an understanding of idiomatic performing conventions; make independent, critical judgements about their interpretation**

Ask learners to evaluate their approach to the interpretation of pieces being studied, justifying musical decisions by referring to musical styles, conventions and personal feelings.

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Explore alternative ways of interpreting the directions of the composer.

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With learners, discuss the interpretations of others, possibly including professional performances and those of their peers, and compare them with their own.

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Encourage learners to respond imaginatively to their own playing, and that of others, as performances unfold.

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Encourage learners to explore alternative ways of interpreting pieces, taking into account their knowledge of genre and period, e.g. approaches to ornaments, cadences, phrasing and articulation, tone quality, etc.

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Encourage learners to communicate their feelings, within their knowledge and understanding of the style, with more freedom, conviction and independence.

# Programme of Study 5

## E Playing music with others

### P5 - E1

## Play with others with assurance and sensitivity, demonstrating an empathy with other performers and musical leadership

Provide ensemble opportunities that make increasing musical and technical demands on learners.

Help learners to develop more sensitivity and subtlety in their playing, e.g. shaping of phrases, variety of articulation, rhythmic flexibility, through increasing musical awareness and communication within the group.

Invite individual learners to take the lead and direct others.

Acknowledge unexpected musical outcomes.

Provide a variety of performing opportunities.



Bear in mind that it can take considerable time and effort to organise ensemble opportunities. It is helpful, therefore, to work in close collaboration with school music departments, Music Services/Hubs, local performing groups and/or other appropriate organisations.

### P5 - E2

## Contribute their own interpretative ideas and respond to those of others, conveying the character and style of the music

Encourage learners to use their knowledge, understanding and relevant musical experience to inform their discussions as they seek to develop a shared interpretation.

Encourage all learners to contribute to a shared interpretation that is developed and refined as the piece is practised and performed.

# Programme of Study 5

## F Performing and communicating

### P5 - F1

## Perform music to others with confidence and conviction, communicating the character and style of the music; demonstrate empathy with other performers and with the audience

Organise performing opportunities at a variety of occasions and venues, e.g. school events, concerts in the wider community.



It should be remembered that people respond differently to the idea of performing. For some it will be rewarding and motivating, but for others it can be stressful to the extent that they may be ill or wish to give up playing. In preparing for a performance, the following should be taken into account:

- the physical and psychological well-being of the learner
- the learner's motivation
- the perceived importance of the performance
- social relationships with other members of the group

Bear in mind that some learners may not wish to perform in public.

Where appropriate, ask learners to research information on each piece, e.g. details on the style of music, the composer's life, the historical/social context, and prepare a short talk/introduction to each piece.

Give learners opportunities to practise their presentational skills.



In addition to other skills of presentation already acquired, learners should practise projecting their voices and slowing down delivery when talking to an audience.

During lessons, encourage learners to develop their own personal interpretations through discussion and debate. Ask them to justify their decisions using appropriate musical vocabulary.

Encourage learners to perform some or all of their pieces from memory where this will enhance confidence, musical awareness and communication.

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Refine pieces through simulated performances in lessons and by performances to others in preparation for concerts within the wider community.

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Continue to encourage learners to make music and perform with others, both in directed and non-directed groups.

**P5 - F2**

## **Make informed evaluations about their performance in the light of their knowledge about the music and the interpretations of distinguished musicians**

Ask learners to evaluate their performances critically, identifying strengths and areas for development.

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Continue to use technology where appropriate to make audio or video recordings so that learners can listen/watch back and evaluate their performance.



It is vital to check the policy of the school or other organisation you are working in with regards to any form of recording. Children must never be videoed without parental consent and all policies regarding use and storage of recordings must be adhered to.

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Provide opportunities for learners to perform to distinguished musicians/teachers in a masterclass situation.



It can be valuable for learners to hear positive, constructive guidance from someone other than their own teacher.



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