



The harp curriculum is a new addition for A Common Approach 2022. The learning objectives and activities are relevant to both the lever harp and the pedal harp.

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.

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.

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



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).

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

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).

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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 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, hand position, and recognition of strings and levers

Posture and hand position:

- Sit at an appropriate height that facilitates playing in the centre of the strings with ease, with relaxed shoulders and feet flat on the floor
 - For **pedal harp**, change pedals with the heel on the floor

Recognition of strings and levers:

- Recognise notes based around the string colours and their repetition
- Recognise levers and change lever positions for closely related keys
 - For **pedal harp**, recognise the pedals and the direction in which to move to a flat/sharp. Set pedals for simple keys at beginning of passage

Posture and hand position:

Demonstrate to learners how the harp is pulled back and positioned between the legs while sitting up straight. Explain how the harp is moved slightly to the right to balance lightly on the right shoulder and partly held between the knees.



Demonstrate the point of balance when the harp is tilted backwards in order to avoid relying on the shoulder to fully support the weight of the harp. This is especially important with the pedal harp.



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.

Ask learners to sit at a variety of heights to ascertain the most natural body position, and to play with arms relaxed at chest height.



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

Show learners how to raise their elbows to a relaxed position where the wrists naturally depress slightly when hands are placed on the strings.

Demonstrate the ideal placing of the hand on the strings.

Show learners how to place the second finger on strings pointing downwards in a curved position, with all other fingers flat in the centre of the hand and thumb raised.

Demonstrate how the shoulders should be down and relaxed and the feet flat on the floor.



Encourage self-evaluation by use of a mirror. 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.

Show learners how to play with a relaxed hand shape, curving the fingers downwards with lowered wrists and point thumbs upwards. Ensure that they elevate the elbows, lightly resting only on the right-hand side of the soundboard.

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.

Recognition of strings and levers:

Begin by demonstrating the coloured strings (C and F).

Explain the letter names of the other strings, relating them to C and F.

Demonstrate the high pitches at the top of the harp and the low pitches at the bottom.

Ask learners to comment on the aural similarity between notes of the same letter name and explain to them the repetitive pattern of the harp strings.

Play games where learners locate the note and touch the appropriate string, as specified by the teacher.

Ask learners to identify notes played randomly by the teacher, using a large range of the harp.

Show how the levers raise and lower the pitches by pressing and depressing the strings.

Demonstrate the layout of the pedals according to the note names, and how moving the pedals raises and lowers the pitches.



Demonstrate how the discs press on the strings as pedals raise the pitch, and vice versa. Explain the rod connections within the column.

P1 - B2

Tuning

- Recognise whether a string is out of tune

With beginners, ask them to explore the sound of each string – what do they look like, and how do they sound different?

Ask learners to identify whether their sound is the same pitch as that of the teacher.

Finger articulation, placing and extended techniques

- Play with fingers 2 and 3 articulating fully into hand and thumb closing over at upper joint
- Play 2 and 3-finger placings, hands together and passing from hand to hand avoiding raising the wrist
- Play 2 notes simultaneously with fully closing hands
- Play, at a steady pulse, passages hands separately and together – melody in right hand and simple accompaniment in left hand.
- Play rhythmically, arpeggiated passages using 2 or 3 fingers which pass between hands
- Use appropriate fingering for single notes, octave scales, and arpeggios.
- Follow appropriate finger-placing within pieces
- Play a single finger glissando with a legato sound

Begin with learners playing finger 2, articulating fully into the hand. Ask learners to play both hands separately and together.

Introduce the thumb and how it bends over completely at both the upper and lower joint when playing a note. Practise playing 2- and 3-note intervals with thumb and second finger, 1–2 and 2–1.

Introduce placing of the fingers. Show how brackets written over the fingerings relate to placing ahead.



Some simple interconnecting of placing might be used at this point.

Introduce the third finger and reiterate the importance of closing fingers fully into the hand after playing a note.

Ask learners to play placed notes passing between hands and simultaneously, up to an interval of a fourth.

Demonstrate how an ascending and descending glissando merges at the top. Ask learners to try sliding the second finger up with the thumb up ready to slide downwards. Simple bass notes could be added to keep the pulse steady.

Tone quality, sound production and damping

- Create a warm and clear sound:
 - Play with raised thumb (pressing with the outer edge), except for larger intervals
 - Allow notes to resound for their full value before replacing finger(s) on the same notes, avoiding buzzing
 - Damp at the end of a piece with both hands
 - Play with some dynamic contrast and control over changes in dynamics

Play the passages that the learners are working on, showing that by quickly replacing the fingers on the strings, the value of each note is cut short. Replay the same passages, replacing fingers only when needed, to demonstrate how to achieve a legato sound.

Demonstrate how playing the thumb at differing points of the tip produces a different sound. Ask learners to comment on the differences.

Play and sing very simple phrases with a variety of dynamics. Ask learners to imitate and identify the dynamics used.



Nature or animal images can be useful to explore a range of associated textures and musical characteristics. Glissandi could be used to enhance effects.

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. Encourage experimentation with the less conventional sounds of the harp to create different moods, e.g. scraping the wire strings, the percussive potential of the strings and the body of the instrument.



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. pentatonic phrases, drones, 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. It may be necessary to score 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.

Provide opportunities for learners to perform their compositions to others.

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



Productive links with general classroom work should be made wherever possible.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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
-

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

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

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.

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



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, 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.

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.

P1 - D6

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

Play pieces to learners at different points of the strings, e.g. pdlt: ask them to describe how this changes the nature of pieces.

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

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

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.

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.

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.

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.



Demonstrate to pupils how harps should be pulled back simultaneously at the start of a performance and lowered at the end of the performance. The final damping of the strings should also be practised together.



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.

P1 - F2

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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

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.

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, hand position, and recognition of strings and levers

- Maintain appropriate posture with relaxed shoulders
- Play with a relaxed, curved hand shape, maintaining lowered wrist position and a gap between thumb and finger within repertoire that demands more connected finger placing
- Recognise, and become fluent at recognising, the entire range of notes
- Extend the range of lever position changes to encompass a greater variety of keys
 - For **pedal harp**, recognise and begin moving pedals into position at the beginning of a passage without looking at the feet

Explain how the right elbow and forearm freely move up and down the side of the harp as required. Ask learners to play various notes within different octaves to practise this arm movement.

Explain and demonstrate a range of physical warm-ups, at and away from the harp, to encourage relaxed shoulders, a supported spine, supple wrists, etc.



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

For **pedal harp**, demonstrate how pedals are moved silently, with the harp back in playing position and the hands damping the strings. Ask learners to set a harp set in C major to keys with only one or two pedal movements, e.g. G major, F major etc.



Learners will require appropriate footwear for keeping the heels on floor and moving the pedals quietly. Keeping the feet flat on the floor may not be possible at this point if learners are very young and struggle to reach.

P2 - B2

Tuning

- With guidance, recognise whether a note is too sharp or flat
- Understand how the tuning key is used to tighten or loosen the string

Encourage learners to identify whether strings are in tune, sharp or flat when compared with the sound of the teacher's strings.



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.

Show learners how the instrument is tuned using the tuning key.

P2 - B3

Finger articulation, placing and extended techniques

- Play with fingers 2,3, and 4 articulating fully into hand and thumb closing over at upper joint
- Play 2,3, and 4-finger placings connecting some simple passages, hands together and passing from hand to hand avoiding raising the wrist
- Play 3-note chords in root position with fully closing hands
- Play, at a steady pulse, passages hands separately and together that have more rhythmic independence between the hands, maintaining coordination between the hands
- Play rhythmically and fluently, arpeggiated passages using 2 or 3 fingers which pass between hands
- Recognise and use consistent fingering for exercises and pieces
- Play glissandi using a variety of dynamics and tempi.

Introduce the fourth finger and set exercises/pieces that incorporate the movement of all fingers into the palm of the hand, ending with a closed hand position. Remind learners to keep all fingers flat within the palm with the thumb bent over at the top joint.

Explain the bracketed fingering system to learners, and how the interlocking brackets require placing ahead.

Practise passages where just one finger is placed ahead and build up to two and three fingers ahead. Show how fingers need to be placed back in the same position they were originally placed in order to maintain the correct hand shape.



Remind learners to keep an open rounded gap between the thumb and fingers every time the hand is in open position, ready to play.

Introduce short scalar passages placing ahead the third or fourth finger. The movement from thumb to third or fourth finger should be repetitively practised until the technique is mastered without changing the arm or wrist position. Help learners devise some rhythmic exercises to practise this movement.

Demonstrate how to place the thumb ahead in descending passages, always keeping it upright to maintain the correct hand shape.

Introduce the one-octave scale and one-octave arpeggio in both hands, always placing all fingers ahead. In the scale, practise up to and including the point of passing the fourth finger underneath repetitively, until this becomes comfortable.



Encourage learners to place ahead appropriate fingers at the same time and not one at a time.

Explain how intervals are usually played with standard fingering, and not to stretch fingers one and two to accommodate intervals that are too large.

Demonstrate how passages with broken chord movement either in one hand or moving between hands can be first played as simultaneous chords in order to practise placing.



Encourage learners to listen carefully in order to produce an even tone within all broken chord passages.

Encourage learners to listen carefully when playing three-note chords to ensure an even sound on each note, especially the middle note.



Start by practising playing chords as broken chords in the first instance. Vary the rhythms of the notes in the broken chords and accent the weakest finger.

Demonstrate some strategies for dealing with passages requiring rhythmic independence, e.g. tapping the rhythm for the left hand on the soundboard while playing the right hand; miming one hand while playing the other.

Practise glissandi passages incorporating forte and piano dynamics. Encourage a legato sound at a variety of tempi.

P2 - B4

Tone quality, sound production and damping

- Create a warm and clear sound:
 - Play with raised thumb (except for larger intervals) and extending hands backwards after playing a note or chord to project sound
 - Allow notes to resound for their full value before replacing fingers on the same notes, avoiding buzzing
 - Damp at cadential points when appropriate, either with both hands, or left hand only
 - Play with some dynamic contrast and control changes in dynamics with more ease
 - Shape and define phrases and control tone quality when playing arpeggiated figures passing between hands

Demonstrate examples of a well-rounded tone and contrast this with examples of poorly produced tone, using the same passage. Invite learners to comment on the differences.

Provide some simple explanations of the physical origins of a well-rounded tone.



Remind learners of the importance of maintaining the rounded gap in order for the thumb to have space to move and project.

Demonstrate a passage played with buzzing and poor clarity, inviting learners to discuss methods of resolving the issues. Play again with clarity and a legato sound, discussing the changes.

Demonstrate examples of good and poor balance between melody and accompaniment, inviting learners to comment.

Ensure learners listen for tonal control when melodies are divided between the hands.

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

Ensure learners practise dynamics in both hands independently before playing hands together.

Play a simple piece to learners and discuss how it might be phrased. Ask them to sing or hum the melody to see where breathing naturally occurs. Demonstrate how the musical interest is enhanced by clear phrasing.



Harpists should be encouraged to link the idea of phrasing with singing and breathing at all times.

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.

Ask learners to improvise using modal/blues scales or call-and-response ideas. Focus on musical coherence and an increasing awareness of expressive possibilities, including dynamics.



Teachers might like to use this as an opportunity to reinforce attention to phrasing and melodic shaping.

Demonstrate the idea of a 'sandwich rondo' and how episodes can be created in between the main tune. Ask learners to improvise the main tune whilst the teacher plays the episode. Swap roles: teacher plays rondo and learner improvises episodes. In group lessons, learners can share the roles.

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.

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

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

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.

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

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.

Demonstrate how learners can use fifths and sixths to provide a simple but effective harmonic backing for pieces learnt by ear.

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.

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 and extends technical skills and knowledge
- uses simple key signatures
- includes a larger variety of rhythmic groupings
- includes a more extended pitch range

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 by:

- encouraging them to identify overall shapes and structures and important 'crossroads' in pieces
- encouraging them to associate ideas or images with particular passages
- asking them to identify 'safety net' points in pieces being memorised



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 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 (mostly avoiding changes of hand position or hands-together reading), 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, 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, and tone quality.

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

Tease out learners' understanding in questions about the music.

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

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.

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.

Encourage learners to revise pieces from their repertoire.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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, hand position, and recognition of strings and levers

- Maintain appropriate posture and a relaxed stance whilst using a greater range of the instrument
- Play with a relaxed hand position, maintaining lowered wrist and gap between thumb and finger within repertoire which demands more connected finger placing and covers a greater range of the instrument
- Lever changing should be fluent and moved promptly at the beginning of pieces, scales, etc.
 - For **pedal harp**, move pedals within a simple passage aiming for quiet movement
- Change levers during playing within moderately challenging passages. Practise melodic minors (in right hand only)
 - For **pedal harp**, move pedals with fluency within more technically demanding passages

Demonstrate a range of physical warm-ups, at and away from the harp, to encourage free shoulders, a supported spine, supple wrists, etc.



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



Remind learners to keep a relaxed jaw, allowing the mouth to open slightly if feeling tension in this area.

Encourage learners to use video recordings or mirrors to check their posture, hand position and articulation in between lessons.



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.

P3 - B2

Tuning

- With guidance, tune the non-wire strings, using the sound of an octave and a fifth as an aural measurement

Continue to involve learners in identifying whether strings are in tune, sharp or flat when compared with the sound of the teacher's strings.



Learners develop this skill at different stages and therefore some learners will still not have fully grasped this by Programme of Study 3. Continue to support them with careful questioning and demonstration.

Help learners to begin to tune the non-wire strings.

Ensure that learners recognise that levers are all in a non-contact position for tuning (and for pedal harps, pedals in flat position).

P3 - B3

Finger articulation, placing and extended techniques

- Continue to develop a natural finger articulation, with greater fluency.
- Join placed passages with clarity avoiding raising the wrist
- Play 3-note chords of various intervals with fully closing hands. Explore rolling the chords.
- Play, at a steady pulse, a variety of passages that have more rhythmic independence between the hands, maintaining coordination between the hands
- Play rhythmically and fluently, arpeggiated passages using three fingers passing between the hands at a variety of tempi
- Use consistent fingering within all passages
- Play single-note harmonics in both hands

Demonstrate to learners the phrasing implications of particular choices of fingering, along with placing as opposed to coming off the strings. Demonstrate the differences and discuss optimal sound.

With learners, discuss the best fingering choices to enhance fluency and maintain clarity.

For **pedal harp**, encourage careful practice of pedalling, aiming for as quiet a sound as possible.

Introduce two-octave scales, demonstrating the fingering used. Explain the importance in ensuring that the three-finger grouping remains in the same location within every scale.

Show learners the movement required for three-octave divided arpeggios, i.e. moving the left hand over the right, maintaining the same raised thumb position in a rising central line.



Remind learners of the importance of maintaining an even tone within the third octave.

Demonstrate glissandi using graded dynamics. Encourage playing rising glissandi with the right hand and descending with the left hand with fluency.

Explore rolled chords, beginning with playing an arpeggio and gradually increasing the tempo. Explain and demonstrate some simple exercises to ensure that all notes within the rolled chord are evenly played, both in terms of rhythm and tone.



Accent weaker notes within the rolled chord as an exercise to strengthen and even out the sound.

Demonstrate single finger harmonics in both hands, explaining how the position of the lever (and, for pedal harp, the pedal and consequently the disc) impacts the location of the harmonic.



It is important for the learner to move the hand away after executing the harmonic to allow for projection of sound.

Tone quality, sound production and damping

- Create a warm and clear sound:
 - Play with correct thumb placement and squeezing individual notes/chords to enhance tone, extending hands backwards to project sound
 - Allow notes to resound for their full value before replacing finger(s) on the same notes avoiding buzzing
 - Damp where required and use étouffez thumbs where appropriate
 - Play with a larger range of dynamics, controlling the changes and shaping and defining phrases, taking into consideration tonal impact on the strings
 - Control tone quality when playing arpeggiated figures passing between hands and use an appropriate range of accent and emphasis, highlighting the top note of a chord
 - Control the tonal balance within a chord or a succession of chords

Demonstrate playing single notes and chords, following through with a wrist and forearm movement away from the strings after playing. Follow this with playing the same passage without movement. Discuss the differences in sound with the learner.

Demonstrate the effects of good and poor balance, both between and within hands, and invite learners to comment on the results.

Show learners how to damp in the left hand after playing a passage whilst continuing to play with the right (where there are rests in the bass part).

Introduce the étouffez thumb, demonstrating how to move cleanly from note to note.



Ensure that the hand is flat on the strings, and not raised, for efficient damping to take place.

Illustrate exercises for chordal balance, playing the top note of the chord f, followed shortly after the rest of the chord p, and with the lower notes followed by the top note.

Select, demonstrate and discuss repertoire that uses contrasts of dynamics and various methods (glissandi, arpeggiation, chordal patterns) to create colour and mood, e.g. *The Minstrel's Gallery* by Kanga and *Graded Recital Pieces* by McDonald and Wood.

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

Explore the different sound effects a harp can produce within improvisation, e.g. scraping the wire strings, tapping the body of the instrument, playing with nails. Discuss the mood created by these sounds.

Regularly ask learners to make up improvisations:

- in particular styles, e.g. rags, marches, folk-songs; 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.

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.

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

Make a recording, if possible.



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.

P3 - C2

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 own (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.

Encourage some use of harmonic backing where possible.

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 a wide range of repertoire that builds on learners' technique, musical understanding and creativity. Ensure that it is relevant to their stage of development and interests.

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.

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

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 that is well within their technical range and in familiar keys or modes.

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
- 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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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, hand position, and recognition of strings and levers

- Maintain appropriate posture and a relaxed stance whilst using a greater range of the instrument within more physically demanding passages
- Maintain a relaxed hand and wrist position and gap between thumb and finger within passages that are more technically demanding
- Change levers during playing within moderately challenging passages. Practise melodic minors (in right hand only)
 - For **pedal harp**, move pedals with fluency within more technically demanding passages

Demonstrate and reinforce the importance of remaining relaxed whilst playing and being aware of any unwanted tension in the body. Encourage small breaks where learners shake any tension from their hands and arms and stretch.

Reinforce how the arms should be free to move across the range of the instrument with ease:

- left arm moving freely, without touching the harp
- right arm lightly resting on the side of the harp with elbow free to move as required

Ask learners to identify any points of possible tension, e.g. arms, wrists, hands, shoulders.

For **pedal harp**, reinforce the requirement for heels to be on the floor while using the pedals.

For **pedal harp**, practise pedal movements ‘in time’ but without playing the notes.



Change pedals on the beat where possible. Ask learners to ‘pedal’ any new pieces before lessons to encourage independence and organisational skills.

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



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

Encourage learners to reflect on their body language and to observe others performing, noting the effects of posture on communication.



Making a video during their practice sessions can be a useful tool for reviewing their own body language. Remember that 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.

P4 - B2

Tuning

- Become more proficient at tuning and use the harmonic equivalent as an extra tuning guide

Ask learners to tune the instrument more independently, using harmonic equivalents to support this.

P4 - B3

Finger articulation, placing and extended techniques

- Maintain a natural finger articulation within more challenging passages
- Join placed passages with clarity and fluency at a variety of tempi
- Play 4-note chordal passages either rolled or non-rolled with ease
- Play rolled chords with a rhythmic and tonal evenness
- Play, at a steady pulse, a variety of independent rhythmic passages between the hands, with clarity and control including 2 against 3
- Play rhythmically, with clarity and control, arpeggiated passages using four fingers over an extended range of the harp passing between the hands at a variety of tempi
- Observe and adhere to chosen fingering, particularly in more demanding passages
- Play double-note harmonics in the left hand
- Stop notes by replacing finger(s) to create staccato effect
- Experiment with playing at various points in the strings to create a different tone
- Play steady bisbigliandi with even and controlled notes

As scales and arpeggios span a greater range of the harp, ensure that fingering is adhered to and that thumbs and fingers are articulating fully with an even tone throughout.

Introduce melodic minors in the right hand only, aiming for fluent lever changes.



Encourage practising in different rhythms and with accents to strengthen individual fingers in turn.

Encourage learners to practise exercises and studies to strengthen and reinforce technique at the beginning of each practice session, e.g. Method for Harp by Grossi, 110 Daily Exercises by Bochsa.

Practise rolled chords in separate hands and together, in both ascending and descending patterns, varying the speed of the roll.

Engage learners in writing fingering and placing into new parts, encouraging them to discuss the best combination of fingering to allow for fluent playing and phrasing.

Demonstrate the double harmonic in the left hand. Ask learners to pull the hand away from the strings in order for the sound to project.

Demonstrate a staccato sound by quickly replacing the finger/fingers on the notes just played. Show how to play a staccato scale using the top knuckle to muffle the sound.

Show learners how playing at different points on the strings creates different tones. Encourage them to experiment with dropping the left hand on the strings slightly in passages that require greater clarity.

Provide learners with strategies to deal with two against three rhythms, e.g. Playing in the rhythm of 'Nice cup of tea'.



Begin by breaking it down and counting it out.

Tone quality, sound production and damping

- Create a warm and clear sound:
 - Play with correct thumb placement using appropriate pressure on strings to create a warm tone and project sufficiently (without over-pulling) within technically demanding passages
 - Recognise beats/bars where notes require careful and considered finger placement to avoid buzzing
 - Damp where required and practise playing with a flat palm and étouffez thumbs
 - Play with a dynamic range appropriate to the musical requirements, controlling changes in dynamics with confidence
 - Shape and define phrases with more dynamic subtlety and rhythmic flexibility
 - Control dynamic levels within each hand independently
 - Control the tone quality when using different ranges of the harp
 - Use a range of accent and emphasis appropriate to the style
 - Draw out a melody using tonal emphasis within a passage of arpeggiated notes
 - Exercise tonal control between the hands in simple polyphonic textures
 - Control the tonal balance within a chord or a succession of chords

Demonstrate to learners the techniques used to create warmth and project individual notes/chords, i.e. by squeezing strings before playing and by applying very focused pressure on the string/strings. Ask learners to imitate and discuss the outcomes.

Discuss with learners any passages that require a careful placing of fingers to maintain clarity. Ask them to offer solutions to any potential 'buzzy' passages, e.g. a later placing of notes, avoiding placing all fingers ahead of time or just careful positioning of the finger on a string to avoid an adjacent string that has just been played.

Demonstrate open hand octaves, moving all fingers simultaneously into the hand after playing. Ask learners to practise closing the hand fully.



Clarify to learners how the flat of the hand makes contact with the strings in order to muffle.

Practise divided arpeggios initially as chords, to consolidate the position of the hand crossing over and maintain an even, balanced sound. As divided arpeggios cover a greater range of the harp, encourage learners to listen carefully to the evenness of tone throughout.

Practise divided arpeggios with a range of varied dynamics, maintaining control when hands cross over and avoiding harshness in the upper register of the instrument.

Demonstrate how to bring out a melodic line from an arpeggiated passage, phrasing the line and controlling the dynamics, e.g. the final variation of *Watching The Wheat* by John Thomas.

Using the same passage of music as mentioned above, play passages with more, or less, subtle phrasing and ask learners to comment on the effect.



The final variation of this well-known harp piece incorporates many important aspects of playing at this level, e.g. closely interwoven arpeggios requiring clarity of sound; arpeggios that cross over into the upper register; clear phrasing; fully closing bass octaves; as well as tonal control in bringing out the melodic line.

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 short melodies using a variety of scales, e.g. major, minor, pentatonic (e.g. for harp tuned in E flat, set D and G levers up), modal, whole-tone. Set the levers/pedals to begin with and incorporate glissandi with the melodies to create different moods.

For **pedal harp**, explore various options for creating different sounds using preset pedals.



A useful reference is *A Harpist's Survival Guide to Glisses* by Kathy Bundock Moore.

Ask learners to improvise with others by embellishing a melody, e.g. the pentatonic Raga Bhupali.



Raga Bhupali



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

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

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'.



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.

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:

- a solo piece for harp within a given structure, aiming for consistency of style
- a short piece for an ensemble, including harp
- a solo piece for harp, possibly evoking moods or feelings, e.g. clouds, pyramids, the evening, rush hour, dreams



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.

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 modulations.

Discuss the effect of accidentals and how one might modulate from one key to another taking into consideration the requirement for the left hand to be free to move levers at key points.

Ask learners to work out some of the underlying harmonies. Discuss possible alternatives.

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.

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.

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.



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



Try to include some aspect of memorising in each lesson.

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.



Encourage learners to develop greater independence between the hands.

Using carefully structured questions, lead learners to make observations about the musical language, e.g. cadences, passages that are diatonic, chromatic, consonant, dissonant.

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.

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

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.

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 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
- 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, hand position, and recognition of strings and levers

- Maintain appropriate posture and a relaxed stance whilst using the entire range of the instrument within more physically demanding passages
- Maintain a relaxed hand and wrist position and gap between thumb and finger within passages that are considerably more technically demanding
- Change levers during playing with fluency within technically demanding passages
- For **pedal harp**, move pedals with control and fluency within technically demanding passages

Encourage learners to evaluate their posture and hand/arm position, using video recordings and mirrors where appropriate.



Video from different angles in order to fully observe both sides.



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.

Plan and practise techniques that can specifically help with alleviating tension. Encourage them to make these a habit. Ask learners to plan regular breaks within practice sessions, walking around the room and staying hydrated.



Some learners with poor posture and/or tension problems may find relaxation methods useful, e.g. breathing techniques, yoga, Alexander Technique.

For **pedal harp**, encourage learners to wear concert shoes or specific harp practice shoes within every session, in order to feel completely at ease with pedal changing.



Keep checking that the heel remains on the floor during pedal changes.

Practise passages that have tricky/multiple lever changes at a slow tempo initially, building up the tempo gradually.

Continue to encourage positive body language when performing.



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

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

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

Help learners to use their posture and arm/hand movements to communicate musical intention, e.g. beginning and/or changing tempo in an ensemble.

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

P5 - B2

Tuning

- Tune the entire range of the harp by ear, using a cycle of fifths

Encourage learners to tune the instrument independently and accurately using a cycle of fifths.



A digital tuner may be useful if playing in an ensemble, or an exam/concert/recording.

Finger articulation, placing and extended techniques

- Maintain a natural finger articulation within more challenging passages and adjust position accordingly to maintain clarity
- Join placed passages with clarity and fluency at a greater variety of tempi
- Play a variety of chordal passages (non-rolled, rolled, brisée) with ease. Roll chords with a rhythmic and tonal evenness
- Play, at a steady pulse, a wide variety of complex rhythmic passages, including cross rhythms between the hands, with clarity and control
- Play rhythmically, with clarity, control and fluency, arpeggiated passages over the entire range of the harp, passing between the hands at a large variety of tempi
- Observe and adhere to chosen fingering, particularly in technically challenging passages
- Play three-note harmonics in the left hand.
- Play steady bisbigliandi at a variety of tempi with fluency
- For **pedal harp**, play pedal slides with rhythmic accuracy and clarity of sound

Demonstrate scales played a third and a tenth apart, ensuring complete coordination between the hands and an even tone throughout.

Encourage learners to practise all scales, arpeggios and dominant/diminished 7ths in various rhythms, e.g. dotted, triplets, etc.

Set daily exercises to challenge, develop and encourage independence of finger movement and complete coordination, e.g. Exercises and Études Op. 9 by Lariviere, Conditioning Exercises by Salzedo.



Begin with the easier of these exercises e.g. Lariviere No.2 (1-26) until fingers build more independence.

Demonstrate how to begin narrow position (arpeggio and dominant 7ths) practice as chords, placing all four fingers in a group and replacing the hand carefully without compromising the clarity. When playing the arpeggiated notes, ensure a completely even sound, both in terms of rhythm and tone, and discuss how to keep the pattern going without buzzing.



Continue to encourage the full articulation of fingers into the hand without raising the wrist.

Encourage learners to develop an increasing awareness of the relationship between the choice of fingering and the specific sound it creates. Demonstrate how to maintain a specific sound quality by only using certain fingers. Play the same passage again with different fingers and discuss how this affects the sound.



Encourage learners to make these choices independently.

Assign passages with a more complex range of placing, emphasising the requirement for precision of sound and clarity, e.g. Shule Aroon arr. Robertson.



For **pedal harp**, suitable repertoire includes Bach/Grandjany Etudes Nos. 1 and 8.

Assign passages/repertoire that require further practise of more complex rhythms and cross-rhythms, e.g. Milonga Para Amar by Ortiz.



For **pedal harp**, suitable repertoire includes Au Matin by Tournier.

Continue exploring the rolling of chords with greater independence within each hand, e.g. rolling/brisée in one hand only with the other hand playing non-rolled.

Demonstrate the bisbigliando. Emphasise the importance of a fluid, relaxed wrist with upright thumb bending when pressing on the string. Aim to develop an even sound that is completely fluid. Practise in various rhythms, at various tempi (beginning slowly) and with a variety of dynamics.

Tone quality, sound production and damping

- Create a warm and clear sound:
 - Play with correct thumb placement using appropriate pressure on strings to create a warm tone and project sufficiently (without over-pulling) within more technically demanding passages
 - Recognise beats/bars where notes require careful and considered finger placement to avoid buzzing
 - Use the full range of damping techniques with fluency as required to maintain clarity
 - Play with a dynamic range appropriate to the musical requirements, taking into account the acoustics. Controlling changes in dynamics with confidence. Defining the phrases and overall structure of the music through dynamic shaping and rhythmic flexibility. Control the dynamic levels of each hand with confidence and the tone quality when using different ranges of the harp
 - Use a range of accent and emphasis appropriate to the style
 - Draw out a melody using tonal emphasis within a passage of arpeggiated notes
 - Exercise tonal control between the hands and within one hand in polyphonic textures
 - Control the tonal balance within a chord or a succession of chords

Encourage learners to listen carefully to the sound they are creating and to aim for a warm, rounded tone, squeezing gently before playing e.g. the melody in *The Knappogue Melody* by O'Farrell.



Suitable repertoire for the pedal harp includes *Étude No.3*, Bach/Grandjany.



Maintain an upright thumb (apart from within large stretches), avoiding playing with just the tip.

Demonstrate repertoire that allows for a greater exploration of phrasing and rubato, e.g. *Nataliana* by Henson-Conant. Suitable repertoire for the pedal harp includes *Au Matin* by Tournier.



Encourage learners to listen to a wide range of harp repertoire, e.g. *Images* by Tournier, *Danses* by Debussy, *La Source* by Hasselmans, *Rhapsodie* by Grandjany, *Harp Concerto in B flat* by Handel, *Absidiolos* or *Parvis* by Andres.

Encourage daily separate hand practice of repertoire, ensuring dynamics and performance markings are observed within both hands.

Demonstrate how certain passages require single finger damping, primarily of bass notes, in addition to étouffez thumbs in order to maintain clarity. Refer to the Bach/Grandjany Études and encourage learning Nos. 6 and 9.



Encourage learners to listen to the original violin version of the Bach/Grandjany Études being performed and discuss how this might inform/influence our performance decisions for harpists.



Making videos to check on clarity are useful at this stage. Remember that 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.

Choose a piece of repertoire such as La Source by Hasselmans, which requires tonal control of melody in the top line, even arpeggiation between the hands, and fully closing octaves in the bass. Begin the process by practising chordally. Ask learners to use their experience so far to phrase appropriately.

Choose a 20th/21st century piece of repertoire which focuses on rhythmic textures and varying articulation to practise control, e.g. Absidioles by Andres, Firedance by Watkins.

For **pedal harp**, encourage learners to practise the top octave of melodic minor scales, ensuring the pedal change at the top is fluid and silent. Start with melodics that have a pedal change on each side, before progressing to two changes on one side, e.g. A minor.

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.

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.

Encourage learners to improvise a cadenza for a concerto or ornaments for a baroque or classical solo piece.



Improvisation provides an obvious and enjoyable way of exploring musical devices and conventions. It often provides the groundwork for more extended compositions. These advanced improvisations can be as challenging for the teacher as the learner!

Teach a well-known jazz standard for harp, e.g. New Blues by Henson-Conant

- play learners a recording of the piece
- familiarise them with the form and teach them the chords and melody. Play it with them as a learner/teacher duo, swapping roles
- experiment with extended techniques that complement the jazz sound, e.g. pedal slides, xylo effect
- 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. harp duet, harp and other instruments, harp 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.

Support learners in refining, notating and evaluating their ideas.

Provide guidance on writing for other instruments/voices.

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



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.

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. Initially, let learners take the most natural key and then transpose to another.

As an extension activity, encourage learners to play a well-known tune in a 'difficult' key and note the problems that need solving.

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

Help learners to internalise both melodic and harmonic elements by ear.

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

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



An awareness of transposition is important for the advanced musician.

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. ritornello, raga, hooks and riffs.

Ask learners to practise repeating patterns that may include augmented and diminished intervals,

asymmetrical phrases and irregular rhythms.

Play a three- or four-part chord or simple chord progression and ask learners to play the upper, inner and lower parts in turn, or the complete progression.



Before playing chords, it may help to sing or hum the notes/individual parts.

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

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

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.

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, and for pedal harp memorising pedal charts (having written them in at key points in the piece) and practising them rhythmically.



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.

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.

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

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.

Explore alternative ways of interpreting the directions of the composer.

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

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

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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.



© 2023 Music Mark. All Rights Reserved.