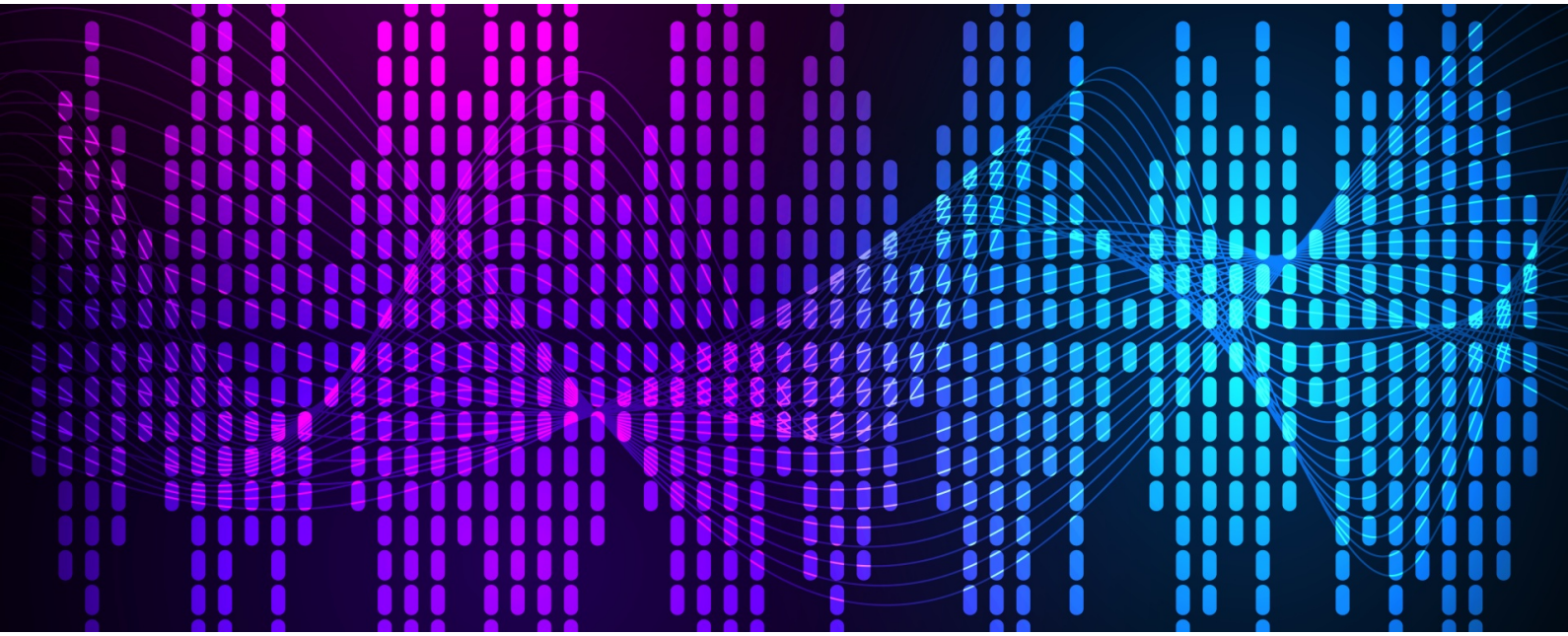
MUSIC MARK | A COMMON APPROACH

Digital Audio Workstations



The Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) curriculum is a new addition for A Common Approach in 2024. It provides learning objectives and activities for Programmes of Study 1 and 2 that can be used with any DAW.

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

Sounds, instruments and sample selection

- Select specific sounds that begin to convey their intention

When using pre-recorded loops found in many DAWs, ask learners to choose loops that reflect their intention from a menu of pre-set samples (e.g. EMD, Hip-Hop, Dubstep). They can further edit specific samples from within these templates and also add new samples from the loops menu.

When using virtual instruments (VSTi) in a DAW, learners can typically choose from a menu of pre-set instrument sounds (e.g. piano, guitar, marimba) or synthesis models (e.g. analogue, FM, granular, wavetable) which reflect their intention. They can further edit specific parameters from within these pre-sets to further shape the sounds.

When using the sequencer in a DAW, encourage learners to select loops and instruments that reflect their intention.

Ask learners to choose either pitched instruments (keyboard, strings, bass, guitar, sitar) or unpitched instruments (acoustic or electronic drum kits) from the available virtual instruments in their DAW and explore the sounds that each creates.

Terminology

Encourage use of correct Music Technology terminology. This may differ from terms used in traditional music but will ensure consistency with Further Education courses and professional Music Technology. Encourage learners to describe their intentions and decisions using these terms:

- Audio – a recording of a real-world voice or instrument
- Clip/Region – the blocks of audio/MIDI that contain musical information; the term 'clip' is typically used in DAWs like Ableton Live or similar.
- DAW – Digital Audio Workstation, the software used to produce music
- FX – abbreviation of 'effects', which are creative enhancements to a sound that change its characteristics in some way. Some common effects are:
  - Delay – adds time-delayed versions of a sound, creating distinct echoes, e.g. ping pong, slapback, plate, spring
  - Reverb – creates a sense of space by adding multiple, simultaneous time-delayed instances of the affected sound to replicate an acoustic environment, e.g. hall, small room, church
- Loop – a short clip/region that can be played repeatedly without break to create a seamless section of music
- MIDI – Musical Instrument Digital Interface, a binary language used to communicate between electronic musical devices. The most common usage of MIDI within a DAW would be the use of MIDI data to create regions to trigger virtual instrument sounds. MIDI keyboards or pads are used to send MIDI data to a DAW and are used to capture live performance.
- Quantising – ability to snap MIDI notes to a defined note duration grid, often called the 'piano roll' (because the notes of the grid are in line with their positions on a piano keyboard). Learners used to the British system should be advised that the quantise function often uses the international duration definitions of:
  - Crotchet is a 'Quarter Note' or '1/4'
  - Quaver is an 'Eighth Note' or '1/8'
  - Semiquaver is a 'Sixteenth Note or '1/16'
- Sequencer – the arrangement window of a DAW
- Track – horizontal lane upon which MIDI/audio information is recorded. The playhead will move from left to right, scrolling through the track or tracks, playing the music held within.
- Velocity – how hard a MIDI note is pressed, often generating a change in timbre. The term 'dynamics' would be an equivalence in traditional music.
- VSTi – Virtual Studio Technology instruments: software emulations of instruments (orchestral, rock/pop, electronic, etc.)

P1 - B2

Pulse and timing

- Perform with some sense of timing, either by performing using virtual instruments, or triggering and manipulating live loops
- Use automatic quantising to correct timing variations in recorded MIDI performances

Within some VSTis, learners can trigger individual samples with a sense of timing (e.g. Groove Agent in Cubase) or clips and scenes in DAWs like Ableton Live; this could be using 2 or 4 bar phrases. Show learners how to trigger the next intended musical phrase ahead of the beat, to ensure it switches in time.

DAWs will have a metronome or click track feature to facilitate performing in time.

Introduce learners to quantising. Quantising is featured in most DAWs and will snap MIDI notes to a defined note duration grid, often called the 'piano roll' (because the notes of the grid are in line with their positions on a piano keyboard). Learners used to the British system should be advised that the quantise function often uses the international duration definitions of:

- Semibreve is a 'Whole Note' or '1/1'
- Minim is a 'Half Note' or '1/2'
- Crotchet is a 'Quarter Note' or '1/4'
- Quaver is an 'Eighth Note' or '1/8'
- Semiquaver is a 'Sixteenth Note or '1/16'

It is important to note that using automatic quantising on selected notes will move them to the nearest position on the defined grid; this may not necessarily be the desired position if the recorded performance has more drastic timing inaccuracies. It is advisable to encourage learners to record the best possible performance or manually move notes to the correct place on the grid.

When using the sequencer in any given DAW, encourage learners to change the tempo to suit their musical intentions.

Whilst a pre-made backing is playing, ask learners to demonstrate a sense of pulse by improvising using the virtual instruments within the session key or scale (e.g. major pentatonic, minor blues) which can be found in the DAW session master settings.

Typically when using loops, DAWs will match scales/keys and tempo. When using VSTis, guidance will need to be given to ensure appropriate note choices are made.

P1 - B3

DAW controls

- Manipulate the dynamics of a piece of music (either to create a balanced piece or to create rhythmic interest within it)
- Automate the dynamic features of a DAW

When using a DAW, ask learners to use the volume faders to alter individual instruments or samples to create a balanced piece of music.

Show learners how to automate the dynamic features of a DAW, typically by drawing in 'automation' curves on a specifically designated track, or lane connected to a track. For example, if a learner wanted to automate volume swells, a line would be drawn on the automation lane or track starting at the point the increase in volume is to start, ascending to the point where the swell is to stop. Similarly, if a fade is required, a line would be drawn on the automation lane or track starting at the point the decrease in volume is to start, descending to the point where the fade is to stop.

Within most DAWs, learners can also record the volume fader adjustments (automation) in real time to manipulate the volume of individual tracks to create a dynamic mix. Demonstrate this and ask learners to experiment.

In many DAWs, the faders are presented vertically in a way that replicates a hardware mixing console. This makes pushing the volume up and down intuitive. However, some DAWs like GarageBand present the faders horizontally on the instrument tracks; moving the fader left lowers the volume and right raises it.

Some MIDI controllers are velocity sensitive; therefore, learners may add dynamic variation to their performances by pressing keys/pads with more or less force.

'Velocity' is the Music Technology version of dynamics.

P1 - B4

FX

- Begin to explore using FX such as echo and reverb within their music

When using most DAWs, learners can apply echo and reverb to specific audio/instrument tracks. Demonstrate this and encourage learners to experiment.

Encourage use of correct terminology: a ‘dry signal’ has no effect added and a ‘wet’ signal has lots.

Reverb is the most used effect; it creates a sense of space. Too much reverb can make a mix sound unclear. Encourage learners to listen to their work critically.

The terms ‘FX’ and ‘effect’ can be used interchangeably.

P1 - B5

Structure and texture

- Sequence a piece of music within a simple structure (e.g. binary), and understand how adding and removing layers alters the texture of a piece of music

When using loops, ask learners to create at least two distinct sections of music and use these two sections to perform a binary (AB) piece of music. Ask learners to create short intros and outros to their work.

When using the sequencer in a DAW, ask learners to add/remove tracks, instruments, and loops to change the texture of their piece. Encourage them to experiment with moving the ‘blocks’ of sounds or ‘regions’ laterally to change the structure and order of their piece of music.

P1 - B6

Recording

- Use the DAW record function to capture live audio
- Use the red record button within a DAW to record musical ideas

Show learners how to use the audio recorder function to record vocals/instruments.

Ask them to use the red record button to capture musical ideas and demonstrate how to use the metronome function to help keep time.

Recording audio is a hugely open-ended activity with a vast range of musical elements and technical skills that can be honed. At this stage, using the recording function to simply capture external vocals or instruments will provide plenty of challenge and musical development for the learner.

P1 - B7

EQ

- Use EQ to cut and boost bands of frequencies on a selection of sounds

Show learners how to use the graphic equalisation function to cut or boost certain frequency bands to ensure each instrument has its place in the mix.

Young people are often tempted to heavily boost frequencies. It is often useful to ask learners to listen critically and discuss the aesthetic effect of this. Layering sounds in a DAW session has an accumulative effect on frequencies, particularly low and low mid; it is often necessary to cut these frequencies in some instruments to ensure instruments can be heard with more clarity.

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 virtual instruments within a DAW in response to stimuli.

The teacher can promote learners' confidence by:

- demonstrating how to experiment with musical ideas
- providing step-by-step assistance with models, patterns and procedures
- using pre-set scales to allow a safe musical space for the learners to improvise within
- 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. loops, pentatonic scales, 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. This can later be extended to selecting the number of octaves visible on the screen at any one time.

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 vocal or DAW sequencing, audio recording and MIDI performance 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 above. 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 beneficial to use the screen record function on the device that learners are using to allow them to record their musical thinking as they create ideas. They can later review their work and build upon ideas they have created.

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 their DAW skills in creative activities in the classroom, applying technical skills already acquired.

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

P1 - C3

Sequence simple verse/chorus structures with contrasting drum parts and different chord progressions and melodies

Learners should be encouraged to ‘loop’ loops using their DAW’s repeat loop function (often found by clicking and dragging a corner of the region in question); copy and paste sections; and edit the length of

loops accordingly.

It is worth emphasising that contemporary music tends to have repetitions in groups of 4, 8 or 16 when learners are structuring their compositions. Encourage a coherent structure with distinct sections.

P1 - C4

Apply dynamic processes to a DAW session, such as balancing the volume levels, panning and compression

Demonstrate how to balance volume levels and use panning and compression. Encourage learners to experiment with these.

Learners should be encouraged to trust their ears over visual cues from faders and rotary controllers. Such manipulations may be subtle or drastic; however, the result should always be audibly pleasing.

Some learners may be tempted to make drastic alterations, such as arbitrarily pushing faders up. Learners should be invited to listen critically and asked if their decisions sound good and correct their DAW setting accordingly.

P1 - C5

Apply FX to a selection of sounds within the context of a composition

Encourage learners to experiment with FX. In contemporary music, reverb is the most commonly used effect. Learners may want to use named pre-sets from environments familiar to them, such as large hall, churches, small room and so forth.

Some learners may be tempted to make drastic alterations, such as pushing the wet/dry balance all the way to wet. Learners should be invited to listen critically and asked if their decisions sound good in the context of the mix and correct their DAW setting accordingly.

Listen to the effect different reverb settings have on a variety of sounds such as short percussive sounds and longer, sustained notes.

P1 - C6

Apply EQ to a selection of sounds within a composition

Introduce the concept of using EQ. To begin with, it is often useful to utilise preset EQ curves. Many DAWs have categories of EQ curves, specific to common instruments, for example ‘clear acoustic guitar’, ‘bright piano’ or ‘boomy kick drum’.

Some learners may be tempted to make drastic alterations, such as massively boosting bass frequencies. Learners should be invited to listen critically and asked if they decisions sound good in the context of the mix and correct their DAW setting accordingly.

Encourage learners to listen to the effect different EQ settings have on a variety of sounds such as short percussive sounds and longer, sustained notes.

P1 - C7

Produce a fully realised composition with a coherent structure, balance of sounds, panning, FX (especially reverb) and EQ

Provide opportunities for learners to produce and refine compositions in lessons. Learners should be encouraged to listen critically to their music and make alterations as necessary.

This is a great opportunity for learners to present their work to peers and receive praise and constructive feedback.

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

Using a melodic virtual instrument (for example the keyboard in GarageBand), choose appropriate starting notes and 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 their virtual 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 virtual instrument, gradually building up the complete tune.

Ask learners to play the complete tune expressively to others.

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

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

P1 - D2

Repeat with accuracy short, easy rhythmic and melodic patterns by singing or 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.

A piece of music in GarageBand can be created by the teacher for this activity. The teacher can then change the tempo accordingly within GarageBand.

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.

Using a virtual instrument or the voice, 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 virtual 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

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

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.

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 any 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

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 an 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

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

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

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.

Listen critically to performances, can they be improved upon?

P1 - E3

Work as a production team of artist/artists and producer to perform and record music on a DAW, demonstrating some basic skills of communicating instructions and keeping in time with the click track

Create opportunities for learners to work with a partner.

All learners should be provided with opportunities for paired working. By creating music 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 creating recorded music collaboratively.

Ask learners to follow a metronome or click track.

This can be tricky if learners are not used to playing in time. Stick with it and insist upon good timing; it is better to capture a good performance than 'fix it in the mix'.

Programme of Study 1

F Performing and communicating

P1 - F1

Play produced 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 listening of learners' recorded music in lessons and for parents/carers, relatives and friends at home.

Sharing recorded works is a key skill that should be a natural part of the learning process from the earliest lessons.

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

Encourage learners to have a sense of anticipation and enjoyment about sharing their music .

P1 - F2

Discuss the quality of their produced music and, with guidance, learn from their performance

Help learners to evaluate each piece of music 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.

Encourage learners to develop their own portfolio 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

Sounds, instruments and sample selection

- Select specific sounds that convey their intention, with thought given to duration and tonality

When using pre-recorded loops found in many DAWs, encourage learners to choose loops that reflect their intention from a menu of pre-set samples (e.g. EMD, Hip-Hop, Dubstep). They can further edit specific samples from within these templates and select new samples from the loops menu, with thought given to the number of bars a sample is, and its tonality.

When using virtual instruments (VSTi) in a DAW, ask learners to choose from a menu of pre-set instrument sounds (e.g. piano, guitar, marimba) or synthesis models (e.g. analogue, FM, granular, wavetable) which reflect their intention. They can further edit specific parameters from within these pre-sets, with thought given to the number of bars a sample is, and its tonality.

When using the sequencer in a DAW, ask learners to select suitably complementing loops and instruments that reflect their intention.

Encourage learners to choose either pitched instruments (keyboard, strings, bass, guitar, sitar) or unpitched instruments (acoustic or electronic drum kits) from the available virtual instruments in their DAW. Support them to further finesse their instrument choice by selecting a specific type of instrument/style (e.g. plucked or muted bass guitar) or by adjusting the VSTi parameters to achieve a desired timbre.

Terminology

Continue to encourage the use of correct Music Technology terminology. This may differ from terms used in traditional music but will ensure consistency with Further Education courses and professional Music Technology. Encourage learners to describe their intentions and decisions using these terms:

- Audio – a recording of a real-world voice or instrument
- Clip/Region – the blocks of audio/MIDI that contain musical information; the term 'clip' is typically used in DAWs like Ableton Live or similar.
- DAW – Digital Audio Workstation, the software used to produce music
- FX – abbreviation of 'effects', which are creative enhancements to a sound that change its characteristics in some way. Some common effects are:
  - Chorus – as the name suggests, creates a choral effect by introducing multiple, slightly detuned, instances of a voice or instrument.
  - Delay – adds time-delayed versions of a sound, creating distinct echoes, e.g. ping pong, slapback, plate, spring
  - Phaser – produces a 'whooshing' sound by adding an out of phase instance of the original sound.
  - Pitch Shift/Autotune – altering the frequency components of a recording (typically voice) so that each note fits a defined scale or key. This can produce subtle improvements to pitch or drastic, robotic sounding effects.
  - Reverb – creates a sense of space by adding multiple, simultaneous time delayed instances of the affected sound to replicate an acoustic environment, e.g. hall, small room, church
- Loop – a short clip/region that can be played repeatedly without break to create a seamless section of music
- MIDI – Musical Instrument Digital Interface, a binary language used to communicate between electronic musical devices. The most common usage of MIDI within a DAW would be the use of MIDI data to create regions to trigger virtual instrument sounds. MIDI keyboards or pads are used to send MIDI data to a DAW and are used to capture live performance.
- Processes – sometimes referred to as 'dynamic processes', affect the characteristics sound in a more practical way. The most common examples are:
  - Compression – squashes the sound, making the loud parts quieter and the quieter parts louder, i.e. compressing the dynamic range of the sound
  - Gate – a way of omitting quieter noise, such as hiss or background noises, from in between louder parts of a recording. The gate opens to let the louder sounds through and closes to stop the quieter ones. It is worth stressing to learners that the quieter noises will still be evident if happening whilst the louder sounds are present.
- Quantising – ability to snap MIDI notes to a defined note duration grid, often called the 'piano roll' (because the notes of the grid are in line with their positions on a piano keyboard). Learners used to the British system should be advised that the quantise function often uses the international duration definitions of:
  - Semibreve is a 'Whole Note' or '1/1'
  - Minim is a 'Half Note' or '1/2'
  - Crotchet is a 'Quarter Note' or '1/4'
  - Quaver is an 'Eighth Note' or '1/8'
  - Semiquaver is a 'Sixteenth Note or '1/16'
- Sequencer – the arrangement window of a DAW

- Track – horizontal lane upon which MIDI/audio information is recorded. The playhead will move from left to right, scrolling through the track or tracks, playing the music held within.
- Velocity – how hard a MIDI note is pressed often generating a change in timbre. The term 'dynamics' would be an equivalence in traditional music.
- VSTi – Virtual Studio Technology instruments, software emulations of instruments, orchestral, rock/pop, electronic, etc.
- Wet/Dry – the amount of effect added to a signal; for example, a wet signal has loads of an effect added.

P2 - B2

Pulse and timing

- Perform with a good sense of timing, either by performing using virtual instruments, or triggering and manipulating samples within narrow timing windows (time snaps)
- Use automatic quantising to correct timing variations in recorded MIDI performances, and manual manipulation of notes on the piano roll to create a more natural groove, as appropriate to the desired musical outcome

Within some VSTis, learners can trigger individual samples with a sense of timing (e.g. Groove Agent in Cubase) or clips and scenes in DAWs like Ableton Live, with a good sense of timing. This could be using 1, 2 or 4 bar phrases. Ask learners to experiment triggering sounds within narrow timing windows using the 'time snap' feature and selecting either more forgiving parameters, such as 1 bar and 1/2 note, or more challenging parameters, such as 1/4, 1/8 or 1/16 note.

DAWs will have a metronome or click track feature to facilitate performing in time. As an alternative, learners could use a premade drum loop to perform to or create their own drum patterns.

It is important that loops used for performing to have a strong pulse so that a learner can easily follow it or, if using their own drumbeat, it is preferable that this is quantised so there is a regular pulse to perform to.

Support learners to further develop their skills in quantising. Quantising is featured in most DAWs and will snap MIDI notes to a defined note duration grid. Learners used to the British system should be advised that the quantise function often uses the international duration definitions of:

- Semibreve is a 'Whole Note' or '1/1'
- Minim is a 'Half Note' or '1/2'
- Crotchet is a 'Quarter Note' or '1/4'
- Quaver is an 'Eighth Note' or '1/8'

- Semiquaver is a ‘Sixteenth Note or ‘1/16’

It is important to note that using automatic quantising on selected notes will move them to the nearest position on the defined grid; this may not necessarily be the desired position if the recorded performance has more drastic timing inaccuracies. It is advisable to encourage learners to record the best possible performance or manually move notes to the correct place on the grid.

When using the sequencer in their chosen DAW, encourage learners to use the settings function to change the tempo and time signature to suit their musical intentions.

Whilst a pre-made backing is playing, ask learners to demonstrate a sense of pulse by improvising using the virtual instruments within the session key or scale (e.g. major pentatonic, minor blues) which can be found in the DAW session master settings.

These scales are just given as examples, but any of the many preset scales would be a viable option.

P2 - B3

DAW controls

- Manipulate the dynamics and audio listening field of a piece of music (either to create a balanced piece or to create rhythmic interest within it)
- Automate the dynamic features of a DAW

When using a DAW, ask learners to use the volume faders to alter individual instruments or samples to create a balanced piece of music.

When using a DAW, ask learners to use the pan controls to alter the stereo position of individual instruments or samples to create a sense of space.

Model the skills learnt at Programme of Study One of automating the dynamic features of a DAW, typically by drawing in ‘automation’ curves on a specifically designated track, or lane connected to a track. Help learners to develop this further by creating detailed increases and decreases in volume across many instruments, to highlight key events such as snare fills, to lead breaks, or to emphasise certain phrases.

Within most DAWs, learners can also record the volume fader adjustments (automation) in real time to manipulate the volume of individual tracks to create a dynamic mix. They can also adjust a specific track’s

pan with consideration to how it fits within the stereo field. Demonstrate these features and ask learners to experiment.

In many DAWs, the faders are presented vertically in a way that replicates a hardware mixing console. This makes pushing the volume up and down intuitive. However, some DAWs like GarageBand present the faders horizontally on the instrument tracks; moving the fader left lowers the volume and right raises it.

Panning a sound may be achieved by using a rotary type of controller: rotating left (anti-clockwise) moves the sound to the left and rotating right (clockwise) moves a sound to the right. Some DAWs, however, employ a horizontal slider bar to pan sounds.

Some MIDI controllers are velocity sensitive; therefore, learners may add dynamic variation to their performances by pressing keys/pads with more or less force. Learners should be encouraged to apply use of velocity that is appropriate to the music that they are recording.

'Velocity' is the Music Technology version of dynamics; velocity can be manipulated after notes have been recorded. Learners should be encouraged to identify when velocity of notes stands out and make appropriate alterations.

P2 - B4

FX

- In addition to adding FX to specific tracks, add FX sends to multiple tracks and to varying degrees, to add a sense of cohesion into a mix

When using a DAW, learners can alter a specific track's pan setting to create a more interesting stereo field. Demonstrate this and encourage learners to experiment.

Encourage learners to use these FX in musical ways – for example, using the repeater FX at the end of a 4-bar phrase to build up excitement transitioning into a different section.

P2 - B5

Structure and texture

- Sequence music within different structures (e.g. binary, ternary, rondo) and use texture in a musical way to add interest to a piece of music

When using loops, ask learners to create at least three distinct sections of music and use these three sections to perform binary (AB), ternary (ABA) and rondo (ABACA) pieces of music. Ask learners to create intros and outros to their work, using one-shots to add further interest.

When using the sequencer in a DAW, ask learners to gradually add/remove tracks, instruments, and loops to change the texture of their piece. They can create a melody and accompaniment texture by using creating chordal accompaniments and single line melodies. They can also move the 'blocks' of sounds laterally to change the structure and order of their piece of music. By doing this they can create pieces with structures such as binary, ternary and rondo form.

P2 - B6

Recording

- Use the DAW record function to capture live audio
- Use the red record button within a DAW to record musical ideas and apply groove templates or autotune in a musical way

Continue to create opportunities for learners to use the audio recorder function to record vocals/instruments.

Ask them to use the red record button to capture musical ideas and the metronome function to help keep time. After recording MIDI sounds, encourage them to quantise notes in a musical way.

When recording live audio, the teacher should encourage promoting a balanced distance between the microphone (connected to an audio interface) and the performer. Here 'balanced' is used to mean not too close and not too far.

P2 - B7

EQ

- Use EQ to filter and shape sounds to create a cohesive mix

Encourage learners to use the graphic equalisation function to cut or boost certain frequency bands to ensure each instrument has its place in the mix.

Encourage learners to articulate their intentions, for example, ‘I am cutting/boosting the low/mid/high frequencies because…’

Young people are often tempted to heavily boost frequencies. It is often useful to ask learners to listen critically and discuss the aesthetic effect of this. Layering sounds in a DAW session has an accumulative effect on frequencies, particularly low and low mid; it is often necessary to cut these frequencies in some instruments to ensure instruments can be heard with more clarity.

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

Using virtual instruments, ask learners to improvise musical sounds and phrases freely in response to stimuli.

Using virtual instruments, introduce learners to improvising by selecting patterns and phrases over diatonic harmony and common chord schemes:

- demonstrating the idea to learners
- selecting a range of notes or preset scale within a DAW that will fit a simple chord scheme
- playing the chord scheme on the piano or using an appropriate backing track, such as a pre-set live loops template
- helping learners to select notes that fit each chord. Using the 'smart' function on most virtual instruments in a DAW can help with this, as learners can play block chords as well as individual notes from chords.
- asking learners to play one of the appropriate notes as each new chord is sounded, trying different options when the chord comes round again
- continuing by adding passing notes that lead through the bar from one chord change to the next
- exploring the effect of moving in step and by larger intervals

The chords of a major scale can be used for the chord scheme and can be selected by using the 'smart' function on virtual instruments such as piano and guitar within a DAW.

Simple patterns are:

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

As the ear develops, learners will realise that a 'wrong' note is never more than one scale degree away from the 'right' one; moving quickly to a higher note therefore turns a 'mistake' into an accented passing note! This activity can also be done without an accompaniment: learners play question-and-answer phrases with each other and/or with the teacher.

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

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

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

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

Introduce a simple structure by asking learners to improvise a ‘sandwich’ rondo. Swap roles: teacher plays rondo and learner improvises episodes.

P2 - C2

Compose by developing musical ideas within simple given structures and applying DAW sequencing, audio recording and MIDI 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.

Ask learners to explore musical ideas using the virtual instruments function on a DAW.

It may be beneficial to use the screen record function on the device that learners are using to allow them to record their musical thinking as they create ideas. They can later review their work and build upon ideas they have created.

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 the edit feature on a DAW which shows all notes of a particular track as MIDI data.

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.

P2 - C3

Sequence song form or similar structures with contrasting drum parts and different chord progressions and melodies

Learners should be encouraged to practise 'looping' loops using their DAW's repeat loop function (often found by clicking and dragging a corner of the region in question); copying and pasting sections; and editing the length of loops accordingly.

It is worth emphasising that contemporary music tends to have repetitions in groups of 4, 8 or 16 when learners are structuring their compositions. Encourage a coherent structure with distinct sections.

P2 - C4

Apply dynamic and expressive enhancements to a DAW session tastefully, such as balancing the volume levels, panning, compression and gating

Support learners to apply a range of dynamic and expressive enhancements including balancing the volume levels appropriately; panning; and adding compression and gating to certain sounds for clarity.

Learners should be encouraged to trust their ears over visual cues from faders and rotary controllers. Such manipulations may be subtle or drastic; however, the result should always be audibly pleasing. Learners

may wish to automate the levels of certain instruments to focus attention to them in certain parts of the music.

Some learners may be tempted to make drastic alterations, such as arbitrarily pushing faders up. Learners should be invited to listen critically and asked if their decisions sound good and correct their DAW setting accordingly. The focus should always be on being musical over technical.

P2 - C5

Apply FX tastefully to a selection of sounds within a composition, with effects such as reverb set up as 'sends'

Encourage learners to continue to develop their use of FX. In contemporary music, reverb is the most commonly used effect. Learners may want to use named pre-sets from environments familiar to them, such as large hall, churches, small room and so forth. However, learners should be made aware of the parameters such as delay time, decay and so forth and encouraged to experiment.

Some learners may be tempted to make drastic alterations, such as pushing the wet/dry balance all the way to wet. Learners should be invited to listen critically and asked if their decisions sound good in the context of the mix and correct their DAW setting accordingly.

Listen to the effect different reverb settings have on a variety of sounds such as short percussive sounds and longer, sustained notes.

P2 - C6

Apply EQ to a selection of sounds within a composition, with consideration to the overall tonal balance of the mix

Encourage learners to further develop their skills with preset EQ curves. Many DAWs have categories of EQ curves, specific to common instruments, for example 'clear acoustic guitar', 'bright piano' or 'boomy kick drum'.

Learners should be encouraged to consider bands of frequencies and the effect of boosting or attenuating these:

- Low
- Low-mid

- Mid
- High-mid
- High

Some learners may be tempted to make drastic alterations, such as massively boosting bass frequencies. Learners should be invited to listen critically and asked if they decisions sound good in the context of the mix and correct their DAW setting accordingly.

Encourage learners to listen to the effect different EQ settings have on a variety of sounds such as short percussive sounds and longer, sustained notes.

A common need for EQing comes from having a ‘muddy’ mix; typically this is where the combination of sounds in the low-mid frequency area results in a lack of clarity. Attenuating low-mids in certain instruments can address problems.

P2 - C7

Produce a fully realised, professional sounding composition, from a variety of sound sources with attention to detail, such as, structure, balance of sounds, appropriate panning, FX sends (especially reverb}, and appropriate EQ

Continue to provide opportunities for learners to produce and refine compositions in lessons. Learners should be encouraged to listen critically to their music and make alterations as necessary. Learners may wish to use automation to create a dynamic mix; this could be levels, panning or FX.

This is a great opportunity for learners to present their work to peers and receive praise and constructive feedback.

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

Using a melodic virtual instrument, show learners how to work out the notes and rhythms of simple, well-known pieces by ear and ask them to play them to others.

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

Ask learners to begin to identify intervals such as thirds, fourths, fifths and octaves using well known songs e.g.:

- Major third – Oh When The Saints
- Perfect fourth – Here Comes The Bride
- Perfect fifth – Twinkle Twinkle Little Star
- Octave – Somewhere Over The Rainbow

P2 - D2

Repeat with accuracy short, easy rhythmic and melodic phrases by singing or 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.

Using a virtual instrument or the voice, 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

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.

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 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
- possibly includes compound time
- 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, e.g. by identifying patterns, identifying the form, noting how passages are similar, or how they change, and devising mnemonics to remember sections such as endings.

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

P2 - D5

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

Encourage learners to read short, simple passages/pieces at sight, making sure that they are well within their technical 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.

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 with one hand and the rhythm with the other
- note the shape of the melody and the melodic range
- identify, from the notation, intervals larger than a second
- sing/hum the larger intervals, having given them one of the two pitches

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

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

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

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

P2 - D6

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

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

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 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 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.

This may be an opportunity to discuss professional practices such as:

- Demo recording – a rough recording, part of planning for a more professional recording where performers and producers can agree upon the fine details.
- Rough mix – an interim part of a production, where producers can listen back and critique the project so far. At this point learners may decide that parts need rerecording or overdubs added, or how best to proceed with the mix.

P2 - E3

Work as a production team of artist/artists and producer to perform and record music on a DAW, demonstrating skills of communicating instructions and keeping in time with the click track; attention to detail; selection of appropriate sounds; dropping in; and quantising, as appropriate.

Encourage learners to record a variety of voices and instruments, maintaining a regular pulse and listening to the other players.

Remind learners to pay attention to the pulse.

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

Ask learners to follow a metronome or click track.

This can be tricky if learners are not used to playing in time. Stick with it and insist upon good timing, it is better to capture a good performance than ‘fix it in the mix’.

Programme of Study 2

F Performing and communicating

P2 - F1

Play produced music 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 produced pieces to be played with others of a similar standard in lessons, and occasionally for parents/carers, relatives and friends.

Give learners opportunity to play their music to others and allow constructive feedback, building on a range of acquired skills, knowledge and understanding. Simulated performances in lessons help to develop these skills before playing to larger audiences.

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

Refine pieces through simulated performances during instrumental lessons.

Aim to give understanding and meaning to the music. Learners should consider different ways of communicating the character of the music.

P2 - F2

Evaluate the quality of their produced pieces 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 piece of music. Help them to build confidence and make further improvements.

Discuss strategies for overcoming nerves and solving problems.

Encourage a sense of anticipation and enjoyment about sharing their music.

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

MUSIC MARK | A COMMON APPROACH