

# **BLITZ!** **How To ~~Pass~~**

## **Grade 3 Theory Teacher Guide**

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## Introduction

When I first started writing BlitzBooks, I had been preparing students for AMEB theory and musicianship exams for twelve years. Over this time, I had tried several texts and workbooks, none of which my students found particularly stimulating. I also found that the various texts did not address the way in which the questions are asked in the actual exams. My inspiration to write a series of books arose from this lack of appropriate materials.

It is now 13 years on from there and BlitzBooks is about to celebrate its – you guessed it – 13<sup>th</sup> birthday. I am delighted to say that there are now some students who used BlitzBooks who have grown up to become teachers who recommend BlitzBooks.

This teacher guide is designed to support and enlighten teachers who are unfamiliar with the general expectations of AMEB examiners. Apologies if some of the page numbers are slightly inaccurate; these can change with new edition of workbooks. The content, however, is appropriate to any edition of the workbook.

I hope that the workbooks together with engaged teachers will create confident and well prepared students. If students know their stuff and they know what to expect when they walk into the exam room, they should come out feeling like they “blitzed” it.

## About Book Three

The jump from grade two to grade three is **enormous!** There are twice as many keys to learn and at least four new concepts. For students and teachers intending to skip the exams for grades one and two, I strongly recommend completing the workbooks for those grades as basic preparation for grade three.

You may notice that the size of the manuscript is considerably smaller in this book compared to grades one and two. This is in line with AMEB exam papers – the manuscript is 10mm high for the first two grades but is then reduced to 8.5mm for grade three.

## Note To Teachers Of Instruments Other Than Piano

This book is easy to follow no matter what instrument is being learnt. However, I believe there are certain sections, such as triads and cadences, that will work best with a keyboard demonstration. It is hard to hear a cadence without a keyboard; concepts such as intervals and accidentals are also much easier to reinforce *visually*.

I recommend instrumental teachers try to organise one or two sessions over the year with a keyboard or piano. This will make a huge difference to a student's understanding of some concepts.

## About This Course

These books are written specifically for those students preparing for AMEB written examinations. For each grade there is a workbook, teacher guide and answer book. This workbook is also suitable for students who wish to complete an online exam. There is no need to purchase an online theory course.

Each new concept is introduced with a 'step-by-step' worksheet which shows the student how to approach the question. Many teachers who use BlitzBooks prefer their own methods of explanation for new concepts and leave the 'step-by-step' pages until close to the exam, when the student can use them as a revision resource.

The conversational style of the worksheets makes revision easy, and the book sets out the concepts in the same order as an AMEB exam. There is also a Test Paper at the end for students to mark. This is a great way to help students understand how to check their work.

This teacher guide outlines certain points for discussion and shows common mistakes or variations of acceptable answers. Answer books are also available – these consist of replicas of workbook pages with answers written in.

## How Long Will It Take To Complete This Book?

This depends on the type of music lesson. If theory is taught as a small part of a practical lesson, each book will last approximately 9-12 months. If lessons are solely theory or musicianship, it will potentially take much less time. However, teachers should allow a minimum of approximately six months to cover syllabus requirements and at least a further 2-3 months for revision. The workbook is designed to make revision easy: it would be quite adequate to read through all the 'Remembers' and 'Hot Tips' and anything else highlighted or boxed on the page.

The important thing for teachers to remember is that apart from this book, there are three important ways to practice for an exam:

Past papers, past papers and past papers!!

There is no better learning experience than seeing your mistakes. Completing past papers, sometimes under 'exam conditions', is an important revision strategy.

If you have students enrolled for an online exam, they have the advantage of being able to complete as many online practice papers as they wish, prior to the exam.

## Exam Techniques

Students need to have a few good 2B pencils and a really good eraser. Also, some students prefer/need to use a ruler for bar lines and/or stems.

I often put my hair in a tight bun, put glasses on and, just for a joke, pretend I am the "fussy old lady" who is going to mark their exam! It's amazing how their performance improves.

We all know how hard it is to proof read our own work. This course aims to help the kids to get it right the first time, but the most important thing is for them to be able to check their work properly. So I tell them they must turn themselves into the "fussy old lady", and go about marking their own paper two or three times. This works wonders!

## Revision

Many of these worksheets are step-by-step instruction sheets with one or two examples. With my own students I usually continue this step-by-step style on the whiteboard for at least 2-3 more examples or until I'm sure they've really got the hang of it. Even so, upon revising these concepts most students have forgotten the specific order of processes required. I feel that a lot of the art of teaching theory lies in getting the students to understand all of the concepts at the same time! The step-by-step pages provide an excellent resource for revision.

Doing past papers is a very important learning device for students and teachers. Attempting a past paper two or three months before the exam will show up any weak spots and will perhaps jolt the more laid back student into doing some revision!

# Table of Contents

Remembering Relatives – p. 3 .....	1
E Major and the Sharps – p.4 .....	1
Three New Flat Keys – p.5 .....	2
G Minor and C Minor – p.7 .....	2
Scale Degree Names – p.9 .....	3
Writing Scale Degrees – p.10 .....	3
Intervals – p.12-13 .....	3
Triads – p.15.....	4
Naming Triads – p.16 .....	4
First Inversion – p.17 .....	5
Chord V in Minor Keys – p.18 .....	5
Choir Music: 4-Part Vocal Style – p.22.....	5
Chords for Choirs – p.24 .....	7
The Perfect Cadence – p.26-27.....	7
The Plagal Cadence – p.29 .....	9
Perfect or Plagal? – p.31 .....	9
Cadences in Pianoforte Style – p.28 .....	9
Tails, Beams and Dots – p.35 .....	10
Introducing $\frac{2}{2}$ (♩) and $\frac{3}{2}$ – p.36 .....	11
Introducing: $\frac{3}{8}$ – p.38 .....	11
$\frac{9}{8}$ is just like $\frac{6}{8}$ – p.39.....	12
The Duplet– p.40 .....	12
Time Signatures We Know– p.41 .....	13
Transposition – p.46.....	13
Adjusting Accidentals – p.47 .....	14
Inventing A Rhythm – pp.50-54.....	14
Melody Writing – pp.56-59.....	16
Choosing Between Melody and Rhythm Writing.....	18
Terms and Signs – p.62.....	18
The Sequence – pp.64-65 .....	19
Form – p.67-69 .....	20
Test Paper (sort of) – p.75-80 .....	20
Preparation Guide .....	21

# Guide to Workbook Sheets

This guide does not contain answers to every workbook question, as most of them will be immediately obvious to the teacher.

Some worksheets are not featured in the guide as they are either straightforward revision or self-explanatory.

## Remembering Relatives - p. 3

### Objective

To revise the 6 basic keys covered in Grade 2 Theory.

## E Major and the Sharps - p.4

### Objective

To learn the key signature of E major in addition to keys with up to four sharps.

### Comments

Showing the entire 'family' of sharps is a very effective way of establishing the set order. Some of my students quite liked the idea that F sharp is like the oldest child in the family and always goes first!

As I mentioned in Grade Two, the best way to teach the order of sharps is with a mnemonic, a sentence in which the first letter of each word represents a sharp. Probably the oldest and most famous is:

Father Charles Goes Down And Ends Battle'

which of course, when said backwards becomes:

Battle Ends And Down Goes Charles' Father',

which is the mnemonic for remembering flats.

My personal opinion is that only the order of sharps need be memorised, as the order of flats is simply the reverse. Since the above mnemonic does not really capture children's imagination, I prefer this sentence:

Fat Cat Goes Driving And Eats Bananas'

Of course, there are hundreds of possible variations! Another one I heard recently was:

Five Cats Got Drowned At Elizabeth Bay'

Being a dog person myself, I really liked this one... but it's not really politically correct! Once the order of sharps is established, the most common mistake is this:



Interestingly, this mistake does not crop up as often in the bass clef, perhaps because the G in the bass is still within the staff!

## Three New Flat Keys - p.5

### Objective

To learn the key signatures of B flat, E flat and A flat major.

### Comments

As mentioned before, the mnemonic for flats can simply be the reverse of the sharps.

## G Minor and C Minor - p.7

### Objective

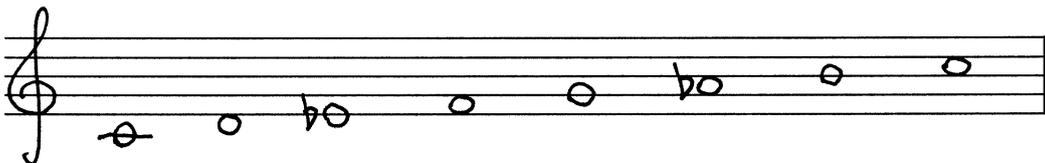
To learn two new minor key signatures.

### Comments

You may find your students are a bit stale with scale writing. Suddenly their 7ths are not raised and semitones are forgotten! It usually doesn't take much practice to get back in the groove.

This worksheet concentrates on the need for a **natural** to raise the leading note in C minor. I find this a constant source of grief... many students raise the 7th with a sharp without even thinking, that is, if they remember to raise it at all! Practice is the only solution. It is also worth pointing out that for this grade C minor is the **only** key that requires a natural to raise the 7th.

When writing these scales using accidentals instead of a key signature, the natural sign is technically not necessary, eg:



The B is not affected by a key signature and, therefore, does not need a natural sign. I prefer my students to write the natural sign as it establishes a good habit of **always** raising the 7th. Some teachers prefer to write the natural in brackets. The answer would be accepted any of these ways.

In terms of the practicalities of memorising key signatures, students' lives can be made much easier with a key signature table. The problem with most tables is that they are either too hard to read or too hard to write out. Students need to have a table that is incredibly easy to remember and write out — this ensures they are looking at a CORRECT key signature table in the exam! The Blitz Key Signature Table is a booklet that teaches a particular (foolproof) way of writing out a cycle of fifths.

## Scale Degree Names - p.9

### Objective

To learn the technical names of the scale degrees.

### Comments

Most of these are quite easy to remember. Kids get the concept quite quickly of subdominant being under dominant, and supertonic being over tonic.

Submediant is just as easy to explain, especially on the keyboard. Mediant is three steps UP; **Sub**mediant is three steps DOWN (which gets you to scale degree no. 6). The same demonstration applies to subdominant / dominant, but as these are adjacent anyway, they are generally no problem to learn.

In the workbook I have referred to the leading note as the '7th' note in relation to scales, but many teachers prefer to call it the leading note at all times.

## Writing Scale Degrees - p.10

### Objective

To familiarise students with examination-style questions.

## Intervals - p.12-13

### Objective

To revise the rules for quality of intervals.

### Comments

The only difference between Grade 2 'Intervals' and Grade 3 'Intervals' is the fact that there are six new key signatures. Page 12 refers to 'quick revision' of quality of intervals and whilst some students may need extra practice in re-acquiring these skills, the major hurdles of learning to recognise and write intervals were covered in Grade 2.

It all comes back to students knowing their key signatures really well and being aware that both treble and bass clefs are tested! It's always a shame when mistakes are made due to misreading the clef.

Another common mistake is this:



Students very often omit accidentals for perfect intervals. My guess is that they think 'perfect' means 'perfection'! Four flat keys are studied so lots of practice is needed, especially for E flat and A flat major where **all** perfect intervals require accidentals.

Some very basic mistakes still crop up in Grade 3, such as writing the interval **below** the given note (usually in an attempt to avoid leger lines!) or misjudging the interval completely (also when leger lines are involved).

## Triads – p.15

### Objective

To learn the technical names the primary triads, as well as how to label them with Roman Numerals.

### Comments

This works exceptionally well with a keyboard demonstration. It is so easy for students to see **and** hear the chords and to understand that the same technical names apply because the chords are built on those same scale degrees.

## Naming Triads – p.16

### Objective

To refine the process of working out the two possible names for a triad and deciding between them.

### Comments

There are quite a few processes involved in naming a triad. Determining the key signature, working out perhaps two possible answers, then deciding between them... this is something that students achieve really well when a whole lesson is devoted to it, but come revision time, they haven't a clue what to do! This is another area where small revision examples can be given each lesson, which will maximise students' ability to have a firm grasp of all concepts equally in the exam. It is also imperative to have the hang of root position triads before moving on to first inversion!

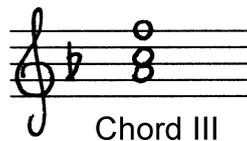
## First Inversion - p.17

### Objective

To learn about chords in first inversion.

### Comments

This is usually not a problem for most students. The only common error is in the naming of triads, when students forget that the root is on top and perhaps name the following triad as such:



The student has seen the A on the bottom of the chord and has forgotten to allow for the fact that it is in first inversion – therefore, A is not the root! The correct answer, of course, is 'Chord I'.

## Chord V in Minor Keys - p.18

### Objective

To reinforce the fact that dominant triads of minor keys require an accidental for the leading note.

### Comments

As with scales, forgetting to raise the leading note in minor dominant triads is by far the most common mistake. There are so many 'instructions' to follow: Key, chord number, position... plus it's quite difficult for kids to remember to raise the leading note **only** for chord V and **only** in minor keys. I often find that I drill the point so much they start to raise all sorts of notes! Of course, it's important to know exactly which note should be raised – both the name of the note and its position in the chord. This is quite a tricky question and requires regular practice.

## Choir Music: 4-Part Vocal Style - p.22

### Objective

To introduce 4-part vocal style.

## Comments

Most children have at least heard, if not sung in, a choir. Although they may be familiar with the words Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Bass, the way these four parts are notated is an entirely new concept, especially for those students learning a single clef instrument.

I usually spend a whole lesson introducing the different choir voices and getting the students to sing together (obviously this only works for group tuition, but for individual lessons it is still possible for student and teacher to create harmony!), as well as finding out to which vocal range they are suited.

There are **four** different voices and only **three** notes in a chord, so doubling the root is the easiest thing to do. Of course, it is possible to double the 5th of the chord, but I have found that presenting this option too early only confuses students.

The following are the accepted ranges for choral writing. Most examiners will accept an extension of one tone at either end, but I have found it safer to adhere quite strictly to these:

The image shows four staves of musical notation, each representing a different voice part. The Soprano staff uses a treble clef and has notes on the second, third, and fourth lines. The Alto staff uses a treble clef and has notes on the first, second, and third lines. The Tenor staff uses a bass clef and has notes on the second, third, and fourth lines. The Bass staff uses a bass clef and has notes on the first, second, and third lines. The notes are staggered vertically to show the range of each voice.

It is **extremely** important that the correct clef is used when writing these ranges in the exam! Another important point is that the notes must be staggered (as above), not written like this:

The image shows a single staff of musical notation with a treble clef. It has two notes: one on the second line and one on the first space. This is an incorrect way to write the notes for Soprano and Alto voices because they are not staggered.

The rules of spacing, although easy to understand, can be quite tricky to adhere to. It's easy to spot an illegal distance between Soprano and Alto, but the most common error is when there is more than an octave between Alto and Tenor, which is not immediately obvious to the eye. Many students forget to check this, so lots of practice is needed.

## Chords for Choirs – p.24

### Objective

To familiarise students with choral writing (single chord only) before introducing cadences.

### Comments

I feel that it is pointless trying to write cadences (i.e. **two** chords) until kids have a really good grasp of writing just one chord in four-part vocal style. They need to remember ranges, rules for spacing and rules for stems – and it's all so new! At least 1-2 weeks can be spent on writing 'Chords for Choirs' – I usually find they have a greater confidence later on with cadences if these initial stages are taken quite slowly.

Once again, for chord V in a minor key the leading note must be raised. The trick here is to **locate** the leading note i.e. in the soprano, alto or tenor voice (the leading note should NEVER be in the bass).

## The Perfect Cadence – p.26-27

### Objective

To learn which chords are used in a perfect cadence, and to learn a set of 'rules' which will facilitate the writing of perfect cadences.

### Comments

Before embarking on this worksheet, it's great if the students can hear some perfect cadences. Being a piano teacher I know it's very easy for me to say this, but to study cadences without knowing how they **sound** kind of defeats the purpose. For 'single clef' instrument pieces it is hard to hear a perfect cadence without the piano accompaniment, but an analysis of the melody notes will at least help students to understand the chord progression.

Sometimes 'setting up' to write the cadence can be as difficult as writing the actual cadence. The students must work out which chords go in which bars and which notes go in each chord... they must then allocate all the notes correctly! This is a huge concept and it can sometimes take several weeks before it becomes reasonably easy.

By writing the letter names of the notes above the bars, students are able to 'cross off' notes as they are allocated, for instance:

A minor  
Perfect cadence

This looks (and probably is) rather unmusical. Many teachers do not want cadence writing to be reduced to a mathematical exercise, but it is a rare Grade 3 Theory student who can hear these cadences in his or her head! It is especially hard for kids who have not studied piano, and I feel that if students need to learn all these rules of harmony, we may as well facilitate the application of these rules as much as possible.

The most common mistake is writing chord I in the first bar instead of chord V, closely followed by forgetting to raise the leading note for minor keys. Another interesting mistake that crops up a lot is this:

Perfect in C major

The leading note is not going to the tonic – but this is because the student has mistaken the leading note for the supertonic i.e. he/she has forgotten that the leading note is BELOW the C (it is B). In the cadence above, the D is going to the C and the leading note must therefore leap down to complete chord I. (This cadence would not be accepted).

Establishing a good habit of making the leading note ALWAYS rise to the tonic will also help later on in melody writing – in fact, I tell my students it is the Golden Rule of all melody and harmony writing!

Following on from the point made above, I sometimes teach perfect cadences with these 'rules':

1. Bass notes
2. Note in common
3. Other voices move BY STEP (either up for Perfect or down for Plagal, which will become obvious)

The problem with the steps above is that it does not teach anything about the importance of the leading note going to the tonic, which in my opinion is at the heart of all harmonic writing. Therefore whilst I often teach with the 3 steps above, I have not set it out this way in the book.

## The Plagal Cadence – p.29

### Objective

To learn which chords are used in a plagal cadence and to follow rules to write them.

### Comments

Having heard many perfect cadences, it is now a great idea for the student to hear some plagal cadences and recognise the difference between them.

Once again, following the 'three steps' may seem a mathematical approach, but it makes cadence writing so much easier! I have also found that after a while students are able to write the cadences without writing the letter names at the top. If they are also listening to the cadences reasonably regularly, they will start to be able to 'hear' what they are writing.

## Perfect or Plagal? – p.31

### Objective

To learn to identify a cadence as perfect or plagal.

### Comments

This is the crux of the matter: we know that both of these cadences END ON CHORD I. As long as the key of the cadence is correctly identified, it is simple to work out whether the first chord is chord IV or chord V. It's good to bring to students' attention that they need only look at the bass note to see if it is scale degree no. 4 or 5!

A giveaway clue for a minor perfect cadence is the presence of an accidental in the first bar – this would indicate chord V in a minor key.

## Cadences in Pianoforte Style – p.28

### Objective

To introduce pianoforte style.

### Comments

In 2010 the AMEB decided that pianoforte style would no longer be examined in Grades 3 and 4 Theory. However, pianoforte style is still on the Grade 5 syllabus, and is therefore still included in the Grade 3 and 4 BlitzBooks, so that students don't get a huge shock when they get to Grade 5! It is up to the teacher to decide whether to complete these pages or not.

There is not much difference between Pianoforte Style and four-part vocal style. There are of course no vocal ranges to worry about in Piano style, and the only spacing rule is that of making sure a chord does not span more than an octave. The rest, however, is the same: it is called **4-part** piano style, so it is still part writing and the same rules of consecutive 5ths and 8ves apply. Many students bring in their piano music and show me all the consecutive octaves they see! I explain to them that we are not writing piano music; we are writing 4-part harmony in piano style. In the case of 8ves in the bass, this can be seen as doubling the bass part.

If four-part vocal style cadences are well understood and students are writing them with relative ease, pianoforte style will usually present few problems. Once again, it is a lot easier for piano students to grasp this style, but there are fewer rules and things to remember so most students, piano or not, find it quite easy.

The most common mistake is not keeping 'leading note to tonic' in the same part of the chord eg.



This would not sound terrible but does not follow the rules of harmony.

## Tails, Beams and Dots - p.35

### Objective

To learn the values of different groupings of quavers and semiquavers, and to reinforce the value of dotted notes and rests.

### Comments

Understanding Grade 3 rhythm involves some knowledge of fractions. It is extremely difficult to add time signatures and/or bar lines without applying mathematical skills. I find that some kids do it easily and others really struggle – basically, it has a lot to do with their age and school year. For students who find fractions difficult, the only answer is lots of extra practice.

The most common error is mistaking  for .

The dotted quaver is pretty difficult to grasp when presented on its own (eg. ) but when grouped with a semiquaver it is far more familiar (.

Most students have memorised that  $\text{♩.} = 3$  and  $\text{♪.} = 1\frac{1}{2}$  without actually thinking about the function of the dot. This memorisation is a great way to learn rhythms, but it is important to understand what the dot does.

In the teacher guide for Grade Two I mentioned that I had deliberately approached the groupings for  $\frac{6}{8}$  **without** the use of the dotted crotchet rest. For Grade 3 the dotted crotchet rest is part of the syllabus and it does make groupings of rests easier in compound time! Students should be aware, however, that the dotted crotchet rest is NEVER used in simple time.

## Introducing $\frac{2}{2}$ (♩) and $\frac{3}{2}$ – p.36

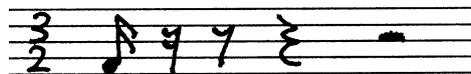
### Objective

To introduce two new time signatures and to familiarise students with exam style questions.

### Comments

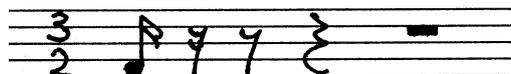
Adding time signatures is usually no problem. There is very little difference between  $\frac{2}{2}$  and  $\frac{4}{4}$ , the only clue is the grouping of the quavers, but anyway it is quite correct to group 4 quavers together in  $\frac{4}{4}$ ! Either answer would be accepted.

Completing the bar is still the most difficult task. The error I come across the most is an incomplete bar of  $\frac{3}{2}$ , eg:



The student has painstakingly completed the first crotchet beat, then added the second, then very diligently placed the minim rest – then nothing! Kids are so used to having a maximum of 4 beats in simple time that they forget about the need for an extra minim rest.

Watch out for this answer:



(Not accepted)

A semibreve rest is not correct here because beats 2 & 3 are grouped together illegally. Two minim rests are required. (Most students think this looks strange – but it's correct!)

## Introducing: $\frac{3}{8}$ – p.38

### Objective

To introduce another 'simple' time signature.

## Comments

Having just mastered  $\frac{6}{8}$  it can be a little confusing switching back to a simple time signature, but if  $\frac{3}{8}$  is constantly related to  $\frac{3}{4}$  it is not difficult to understand.

One important thing...  $\frac{3}{8}$  is NOT defined as 'Compound Single'!

## $\frac{9}{8}$ is just like $\frac{6}{8}$ – p.39

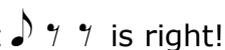
### Objective

To introduce a new time signature in a way that directly relates it to a known one.

### Comments

It will probably help to do a bit of revision of  $\frac{6}{8}$  and all its grouping rules **before** doing this worksheet.  $\frac{9}{8}$  is very easy to understand when it is viewed as an extension of  $\frac{6}{8}$ .

The most important thing for students to remember is the 'BIG-little' grouping rule for rests, i.e.

 is wrong but  is right!

Recently I have begun to use social triggers to help students understand compound grouping. We have talked about the subdivisions in the bar being equivalent to one strong personality and two weak personalities. They seemed to really respond well to Harry Potter characters such as Malfoy (the bully) and Crabbe and Goyle (his two gutless followers).

Three quavers would be equivalent to 'Malfoy, Crabbe, Goyle'; in compound grouping it's ok for Malfoy to team up with Crabbe and leave Goyle on his own (i.e. crotchet-quaver), but it's NEVER ok to have Malfoy on his own and for Crabbe and Goyle to gang up against him (i.e. quaver-crotchet!)

Completing bars of  $\frac{9}{8}$  sometimes yields the same problems as the time signature  $\frac{3}{2}$  – students forget it is 'extra long'. If this is brought to their attention early on (for both time signatures) it helps them to be aware and check more thoroughly for these mistakes.

## The Duplet- p.40

### Objective

To understand the concept of a duplet and its function in compound time.

## Comments

As I mentioned in Grade 2 (in regard to a triplet), a generic definition is required here; it is not quite correct to define a duplet as 'two quavers played in the time of 3', as this only defines one type of duplet (albeit the one that is set for study!)

The workbook drills that duplets are the only legal way of having two quavers together in compound time. This simplifies the concept for students, however it **is** possible to have groups of 2 quavers e.g. in  $\frac{6}{8}$ :



However, the comparisons between duplet and triplet work extremely well when discussed in the manner above. I have found that students rarely get confused and I must say, I have not yet had a student point out the possibilities of two-quaver groupings in compound time during a discussion about duplets!

## Time Signatures We Know- p.41

### Objective

Revision of all time signatures, their definitions and their rules.

### Comments

This is a good page to write out the definitions of all the time signatures in full.

$\frac{3}{8}$  is a rather unique time signature; it has plain, undotted quaver beats, therefore, it is simple triple, yet it is not grouped 'in twos'. It would actually be possible to find a duplet here, eg.



but I have rarely encountered this in general music repertoire and certainly not in the exam (phew!). It is good to point out that  $\frac{3}{8}$  IS NOT like  $\frac{6}{8}$  and  $\frac{9}{8}$ , it is more similar to  $\frac{3}{4}$ .

## Transposition - p.46

### Objective

To learn to transpose melodies with accidentals other than those for the raised seventh.

## Comments

Having covered this thoroughly in Grades 1 and 2, most students are quite adept at transposition. The trick in Grade 3 is knowing how to adjust the accidentals, which is covered more thoroughly in the next worksheet.

## Adjusting Accidentals – p.47

### Objective

To understand the treatment of accidentals when transposing from a sharp key to a flat key or vice versa.

### Comments

The syllabus states that candidates will be asked to transpose a given melody into 'another of the required keys for the grade'. It does not specifically state that candidates will be required to transpose from a sharp key to a flat key or vice versa, but I have not encountered a recent exam paper that did not ask for this! This is because accidentals require much more thought in these situations. Having said this, it is quite foreseeable that the next exam paper will require a sharp key → sharp key or flat key → flat key transposition.

Students **MUST** consider the effect of the new key signature. Some accidentals may need to be altered and some may not!

Assuming the accidentals **do** turn out correctly, there are the usual common mistakes that still crop up:

- Incorrect notes due to incorrect scale degree numbers (or due to not writing the scale degree numbers at all!)
- Not observing the 'up' or 'down' instruction correctly
- Misjudging the key of the original melody
- Not adjusting stems

## Inventing A Rhythm – pp.50-54

### Objective

To learn how to write a rhythm to a given couplet.

### Comments

This is probably one of the hardest subjects to teach. I find that some of my students can say the couplet out loud, clap it to themselves and instantly write it down in any time signature; others are stuck just marking the accents correctly! This is essentially an **aural** skill, which needs to be transferred to written rhythm values.

The point made above about clapping the rhythm and then writing it down is by far the best way to approach this – that is, if the student has good aural skills. In fact,

the worksheets on rhythmic invention in this book will almost be redundant to the student with excellent aural skills. But what of those kids who simply cannot hear a rhythm in their heads?

I believe the worksheets here will equip these students with the tools to write a suitable rhythm. They may approach it purely mathematically at first, eg.

light - ning = two syllables = 

but with lots of practice they will eventually 'hear' these rhythms.

The real creativity comes with deciding between  and , or varying  by writing , not just at random but in places suited to the words. Some students are naturals at this, others need much time and patience. Hyphenating words – or rather the lack of it – causes me much grief! It is a point that needs constant drilling. Another common mistake is writing the time signature on the second staff – this is not correct and is often penalised in the exam.

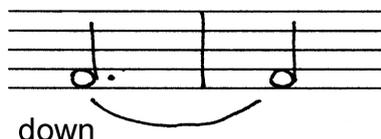
'Groovy Guidelines' for rhythms in  $\frac{2}{4}$  and  $\frac{3}{4}$ :

	$\frac{2}{4}$	$\frac{3}{4}$
1 syllable per bar		
2 syllables per bar	 or 	
3 syllables per bar	 or 	 or 
4 syllables per bar		Any one crotchet becomes two quavers

The second example on page 49 is an interesting one. The last word, 'down', takes up the entire 7th bar, which means an extra bar is needed to provide balance. This can be achieved either with a rest, eg:



or with a tie, eg:

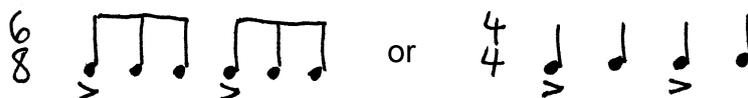


Spacing of words and notes is important – above all it must be neat and legible. It does not matter if only one or one and a half staves (of the two staves given) are used. Students must not break up a bar at the end of a staff.

Deciding between  and  can be very difficult for some students. A rough guide that often works is to give the crotchet value to the more interesting word or more emphasised syllable.

## Rhythms in $\frac{6}{8}$ or $\frac{4}{4}$

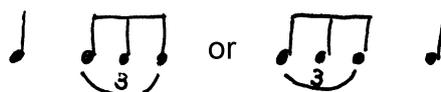
These will be 4 bar rhythms. This is because accents in  $\frac{6}{8}$  and  $\frac{4}{4}$  fall at the beginning **and** in the middle of each bar eg:



The 'Groovy Guidelines' for these time signatures are:

	$\frac{6}{8}$ (half bar)	$\frac{4}{4}$ (half bar)
1 syllable per half bar		
2 syllables per half bar		
3 syllables per half bar		
4 syllables per half bar	N/A	

The more capable students should be able to use a nice variety of rhythms. For instance, could even be transformed into this:



With lots of practice students will eventually start to hear the rhythm in their heads and writing it down will become an easy and enjoyable activity.

## Melody Writing - pp.56-59

### Objective

To learn how to write a balanced melody, using an appropriate harmonic progression and passing notes.

### Comments

Trying to compose a melody without hearing it aloud is a very challenging concept. Even the greatest composers in history often had an instrument by their side! To be able to hear a melody in one's head is an extremely refined skill, and one that is very difficult to teach.

In this section I have tried to break down simple elements of melody writing as much as possible. This may seem a mathematical approach, however I prefer to see it as learning to compose through analysis. If students can apply all the basic elements of melody writing and play their melodies immediately after composing them, they gradually get an idea of what will sound good and what won't. Eventually the mathematical/analytical approach endows them with an 'inner ear' and they start to be able to hear their melodies while writing them down.

At this point I would like to say that for many years I have struggled with melody writing in the context of an AMEB exam. I used to teach my students to compose a melody based on this chord progression:

I IV V I

and they would compose lovely melodies such as this:



Their exam papers came back with scathing remarks because they had not reached an imperfect cadence at the end of the first phrase! But where in the syllabus does it say one **must** do this? There are plenty of beautiful melodies in the world based on all sorts of different chord progressions and reaching chord V at the end of the first phrase is not necessarily the 'mark' of a good melody.

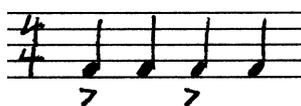
It seems, however, that most examiners want this imperfect cadence, which is why I have decided to teach it in this workbook. It does teach children about the halfway point in music and the need for a 'half-close' – but this is just **one** way to write a nice melody, certainly not the only way. Students can practice writing melodies in all sorts of different ways, but since they have paid their money to do the exam and want to do well, they may as well be aware of what most examiners seem to want.

It is important to base the melody on a chord progression. This ensures it will sound good with an 'accompaniment'. The basic chord progression I have chosen for this workbook is:

I | II | V | V | I ||  
 or  
 I | IV | II | V | IV | V | I ||

Try sticking to one chord per bar at first, then as the students gain confidence they can try two chords in the bar.

The strong beats of the bar are:



### *Passing Notes*

These are notes that 'pass' between notes belonging to the chord on which a particular phrase is based. On page 53 of the workbook, however, I have mentioned that "to make things easier, any note not belonging to the chord in use will be called a passing note". Although this is not technically precise, I have found this to be extremely effective in helping students identify spots in their melodies that may not sound as good as they could!

## Choosing Between Melody and Rhythm Writing

The way the Grade 3 exam is currently formatted, candidates may choose between melody writing and rhythm writing.

I believe it is important to develop skills in each of these areas. Once students have a good grasp of inventing a rhythm and writing a melody, they can then assess which of these they find easier. I know many teachers who, in an attempt to save time, teach only melody writing, as this is part of the fourth grade syllabus. I feel it is a shame to skip over rhythmic invention when for many students this is a valuable precursor to developing the inner ear.

## Terms and Signs - p.62

### Objective

This worksheet lists all the terms required for the grade. Please note these are IN ADDITION TO terms listed for previous grades.

### Comments

Students are only required to give **English translations** for Italian terms.

As for second grade, these simply must be learned. One year I told all my students to put their list of terms up on the bathroom wall, so that whenever they sat on the toilet they would read the list. They found this most amusing ... then afterwards one of the kids confessed that during the exam he had closed his eyes and imagined himself sitting on the toilet so that he could remember his Italian Terms!

The Grade 3 translations are printed in the workbook for convenience, but kids take it in much more if they have to write down the translation themselves, It works quite well to introduce the terms gradually (i.e. 4 or 5 words per lesson) and given them practical applications, like 'play a C major scale **VIVACE!**: or even ' play a C major scale **molto** fast!' My students find this combination of languages quite amusing.

Worth a mention here is this common mistake:

Mezzo staccato = moderately staccato

Obviously this is only half translated!

As mentioned in Grades 1 and 2, all dynamic markings must be written in lower case eg. *f* not *F*.

It is important for students to be just as familiar with the abbreviations as with the words.

A word about the signs M.M and 8va...

It is amazing how many students think M.M stands for 'Metronome Marking'! It stands for 'Maelzel's Metronome'. The correct description for this is: '*Maelzel's Metronome set to beat eighty-four crotchets per minute*'.

The sign '8va' is pronounced 'Ottava' and means to play the notes one octave higher OR lower than written. Consider this more specific sign:

8va - - - - ]

The end bracket indicates this sign is written **above** the music, therefore, it means to play one octave higher than written, as opposed to:

8va - - - - ]

This end bracket would be used if the sign was written **under** the music, therefore, it means to play one octave lower than written.

This seems like real nit picking but one year I had some students who were caught out by this question!

## The Sequence - pp.64-65

### Objective

To learn the definition of a sequence and how to identify a sequence in a melody.

### Comments

The only tricky thing here is **spotting** a sequence, particularly if it has an upbeat, for instance, the last example on page 59.



The dotted brackets show an incorrectly marked sequence (and a very common error). Students are always checking within the bar lines for a sequence but they need to watch out for the possibility of an upbeat (anacrusis).

The syllabus for both Theory and Musicianship states that candidates must have a knowledge of "sequence", yet there are distinct differences in the way it is examined. Theory papers tend to concentrate on the definition of the word, while Musicianship papers generally ask candidates to find and mark a sequence in a melody. The worksheets in this book cover both concepts as these examination trends between the two syllabuses could easily reverse!

## Form - p.67-69

### Objective

To revise Binary and Ternary forms already covered in Grade 2, and to introduce Rondo form.

### Comments

For students who have skipped Grade 2, I recommend consulting the Theory Grade 2 Workbook as it is important to establish a firm understanding of Binary and Ternary form.

Recent examination papers have contained nicely grouped 4 bars-per-phrase melodies for analysis. The only attempt at deception is the use of 'D.C. al fine' – always something to look out for!

Students very often write the answer 'Binary' incorrectly because they have not taken into account the effect of the 'D.C. al fine' sign.

If Binary and Ternary forms are well understood, Rondo Form should present no problems. The mere length of the example often gives this form away!

## Test Paper (sort of) - p.75-80

### Objective

To find all the mistakes and therefore practice 'proofreading' in preparation for checking their own work in the exam.

### Comments

In 'completing' this mock exam paper I have tried to include as many common mistakes as I could think of.

This works best when marked *in the lesson*, stopping for discussion each time a mistake is found. It is also a great idea for the student to rewrite the answer correctly on spare manuscript.

Sometimes answers are wrong for more than one reason, some answers are actually correct! This is sure to provide an amusing resource for revision and is invaluable in helping students learn how to check their work.

N.B. There is an extra Grade 3 Theory test paper available for download, which contains more up-to-date questions.

## Preparation Guide

All students/classes work at a different pace. As they near completion of the workbook, it will be time to think about enrolling them for an exam. The AMEB conducts written exams in May, August and November of each year.

The following is a suggested plan for lessons between enrolment and the examination date. Please note that entries are due only ten weeks before the May series, so if your students will be doing a May exam you will need to start this process before the summer holiday break.

<b>Weeks prior to the exam</b>	
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Go briefly through a past paper, complete sections together over 2-3 weeks</li> </ul>
13-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete all syllabus requirements.</li> <li>Revise certain weak spots where possible</li> </ul>
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issue homework paper</li> <li>Mark the 'mock' paper together</li> </ul>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect homework and mark while they do another paper in class. (This means they can take home 1-2 marked pieces of homework – very valuable!)</li> </ul>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Return homework (or go last week's paper)</li> <li>Test on Italian Terms</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General revision of book</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issue homework paper and identify weak spots in the lesson</li> </ul>
<b>Holidays</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is each student's opportunity to learn all Italian terms (even if they are going away!)</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect homework paper</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Return marked paper</li> <li>Revision for next week</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'Exam conditions' in lesson</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Return marked papers</li> <li>Revision</li> </ul>