How To ~~Pass~~ BLITZ!

AMEB Musicianship Grade 3

Teacher Guide

Samantha Coates

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Introduction

When I first started writing BlitzBooks at the end of 2000, I had been preparing students for AMEB theory and musicianship exams for twelve years. Over this time, I have 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.

At the time of publishing this web edition it is nearly 17 years on from there and BlitzBooks is about to celebrate its – you guessed it – 17th 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 AMEB Grade Three

Apart from the new topics of cadences, melody writing and form, Grade 3 Musicianship mostly expands on concepts already covered in Grade 2. The aim in Grade 3 is to refine basic skills and further develop musicality and the 'inner ear'. The hints and tips can be easily applied to online exams.

It is extremely difficult to 'jump in' at Grade 3 level without having established the musical and theoretical foundations offered in Grades 1 and 2. For students and teachers who have decided to skip the first two exams, I strongly recommend working through the Grade 1 and 2 Workbooks, as this will greatly facilitate understanding of most concepts in this book.

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 3.

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, which will work best with a keyboard demonstration. It is hard to hear these things without a keyboard; concepts such as intervals and their inversions 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 the BlitzBooks Style

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 Musicianship 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. The multiple-choice section shows up silly (and not so silly!) mistakes in an amusing way that appeals to children. 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 students 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

Guide to Workbook Sheets

This guide does not contain answers to every workbook question; most of them will be immediately obvious to the teacher. It provides handy teaching tips and common mistakes to look out for.

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

Major Sharp Keys / Minor Sharp Keys - pp.3-4

Objective

To reinforce the key signatures of G, D, A, E and B major and to learn those of F sharp and C sharp major and minor.

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!

But my favourite mnemonic of all time actually comes out as a two-line story (1st line for sharps and 2nd line for flats):

'Father Christmas Gave Dad An Electric Blanket'

Blanket Exploded And Dad Got Cold Feet!'

For students who are having trouble with D and A key signatures, I show them all seven sharps on the stave and explain that each sharp is like a child in a big family,

where F sharp was born first! (And will therefore always be the oldest and will always go first). To remember that D major has **two** sharps and A major has **three** sharps, a good tip is to demonstrate that it takes two pen strokes to write a capital D and three pen strokes to write a capital A!

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!

Let's Write Scales - pp.5-6

Objective

Practice in answering examination-style questions on scales.

Comments

You may find your students are a bit stale with scale writing. After mastering this in Grade 2, suddenly their 7ths are not raised and semitones are forgotten! It usually doesn't take much practice to get back in the groove.

There are 21 keys set for study – even 8th Grade piano does not require this many scales to be learnt!

It is, however, important to realise that key signatures are derived from **scales**. Even if 'playing' an F sharp minor scale means slowly finding all the notes by going through it tone/semitone at a time, this is better than not playing anything at all. By remembering the pattern of tones and semitones, it is possible to work out the key signature of any major or minor scale. I find that by working it out from an aural and practical perspective it helps the students to memorise their key signatures.

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.8

Objective

Reinforcement of concepts learned in grade two.

Intervals – p.10

Objective

To reinforce concepts learned in grade two.

Comments

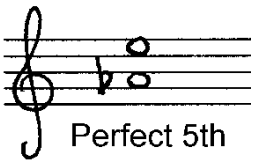
There are only two differences between Grade 2 'Intervals' and Grade 3 'Intervals':

1. There are seven new key signatures
2. The concept of inversions will be introduced (which is covered in the next chapter)

Page 11 of the workbook 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).

Inversions of Intervals – p.12

Objective

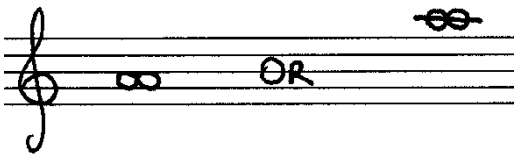
To learn how to write the inversion of a given interval.

Comments

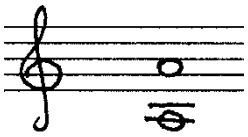
Although this is not a difficult subject to teach or to understand, I find that the majority of students forget how to invert and re-name intervals as quickly as they've learnt it! It is the **process** they have forgotten and regular practice is needed so that it will always seem simple.

A very common mistake is the inversion of a perfect octave – it should become a perfect unison, e.g.

when inverted becomes



However, many students write the following:



In this case, the top A has been moved 2 octaves - this is incorrect. It can help to remind students that the interval + its inversion = 9.

Naming Inversions – p.13

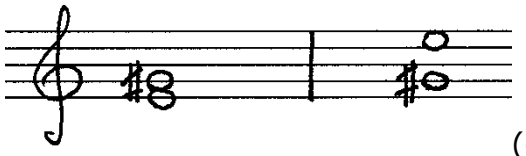
Objective

To understand the concept that an interval has a different name when inverted, and to learn how to name the inversion.

Comments

It is **extremely** important to name the original interval first, for two reasons:

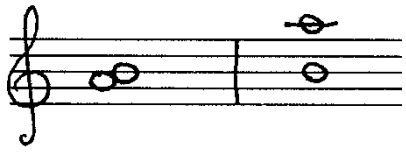
1. After inverting an interval, the new bottom note (tonic) may be from a key not set for study, therefore making it very difficult to work out the tonality, e.g.



(ex.1)

It is very difficult to name the quality of the inverted interval here, as G sharp major/minor is a key signature unknown to most grade three students. The answer can simply be drawn from the original interval (maj 3rd) and renaming the inversion (min 6th).

2. We have learnt that all seconds and sevenths are **major**, as this is the case in diatonic scales. But the inversions of these become minor, therefore, in a question such as this:



..... (ex.2)

The students must name the original interval first (major 2nd) and then derive the name of the inversion (minor 7th); otherwise they will accidentally misname the inversion as a 'major 7th' by following the abovementioned rule.

I always stress the point that any **given** 2nds or 7ths should be major however that is only according to my interpretation of the syllabus. There have been a couple of instances where a minor 7th has appeared in the exam, but it was eventually decided to award students full marks for that question. After inverting a major 2nd or 7th it will become minor and this should be the **only** time students encounter minor 2nds and 7ths.

Another point worth mentioning is the placement of the dotted line on which students write their answer (see ex.2 above). Many students are put off naming the original interval before the inversion simply because of the absence of a dotted line! If the students are aware that this is the way the exam will be set out it lessens the chance they will be affected by this.

Triads – p.16

Objective

To revise writing root position triads (tonic, subdominant and dominant).

Comments

The most common mistake in this area is still the omission of the accidental to raise the leading note in dominant triads of minor keys. It is imperative to get this right before embarking on first inversion!

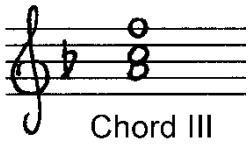
First Inversion – p.17

Objective

To understand the concept of a triad in its 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:



(not correct)

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 First Inversion – p.18

Objective

To establish a habit of remembering to raise the leading note in dominant triads of minor keys.

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 students 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: Four-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.

Vocal Ranges and Spacing – p.23

Objective

To introduce the range of each voice and the rules of spacing.

Comments

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 those printed in the book.

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 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 students 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

Objective

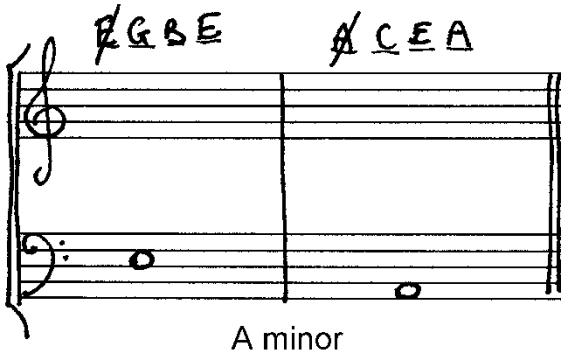
To learn which chords are used in a perfect cadence and to learn a set of 'rules' which will facilitate the writing of perfect cadences.

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

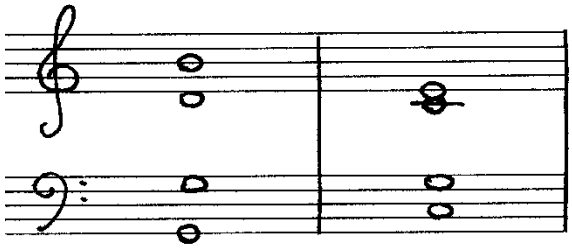
This looks (and probably is) rather unmusical. Many teachers do not want cadence writing to be reduced to a mathematical exercise, but it is a rare Grade 3 Musicianship student who can hear these cadences in his or her head! It is especially hard for students who have not studied piano, and I feel that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

Although there are four steps on page 27, emphasising the importance of 'leading note to tonic', I actually find that teaching three steps can be even easier:

1. Bass sings root
2. Note in common
3. Remaining voices step down!

It is virtually impossible to muck up the cadence following these rules. However, it does not emphasise the point of the leading note going to the tonic, which becomes very important in Grade 4.

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!

The Imperfect Cadence – p.29

Objective

To introduce the imperfect cadence I-V and to learn how to write it correctly.

Comments

Once perfect cadence writing is well in hand, it is a simple matter to reverse the order of the chords and create an imperfect cadence. Of course, this is only one type of imperfect cadence, but I have found that it is better to concentrate entirely on I-V before introducing any others.

Many textbooks demonstrate imperfect cadences such as II-V and VI-V, but I have chosen not to include these in this workbook for the simple reason that they will not be examined; only the primary triads (I, IV and V) are set for study, and many students have such a hard time coping with these chords that it is a shame to further complicate the issue.

The more capable students can easily write all sorts of imperfect cadences, and extending the boundaries for these students is a great idea.

More Imperfect Cadences – p.30

Objective

To introduce the imperfect cadence IV-V.

Comments

In the exam, students will be asked to write an imperfect cadence. They can choose from any they have learnt – it will be marked correctly provided all necessary rules have been observed.

Perfect or Imperfect? – p.31

Objective

To learn to identify a given cadence as perfect or imperfect.

Comments

Trying to work out whether the last chord is chord V or chord I resembles the skills involved in naming triads. There are often two answers, one each for the major and minor key possibilities, but only one of the answers will be V or I.

The 'Handy Hint' of looking for a raised leading note is quite a good trick, but in my experience some students do not find this helpful, only confusing! For this reason I have not drilled this as a technique for identifying the key.

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 students 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 once again 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 𝅗𝅥. = 3 and ♩. = 1½ 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

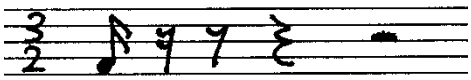
Objective

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

Comments

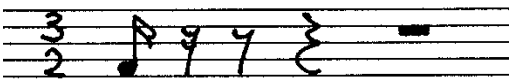
Adding time signatures is usually no problem. There is very little difference between $\frac{2}{2}$ and $\frac{4}{4}$, the only clue is the grouping of the quavers, but anyway it is quite correct to group 4 quavers together in $\frac{4}{4}$! Either answer would be accepted.

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! Students 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!)

Another thing to point out to students is the name 'allabreve' for $\frac{2}{2}$ time, although interestingly this does not appear in the syllabus.

$\frac{9}{8}$ is just like $\frac{6}{8}$ - p.38

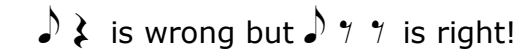
Objective

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 grouping rule for rests within each dotted crotchet beat, i.e.

 is wrong but is right!

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.39

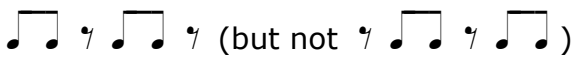
Objective

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 $\frac{6}{8}$:

 (but not)

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

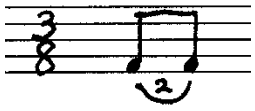
Objective

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 $\frac{3}{4}$. As mentioned in Grade 2… $\frac{3}{8}$ is NOT defined as 'Compound Single'!

Inventing a Rhythm – p.46

Objective

Revision of concepts covered in grade 2.

Comments

This question is set out in exactly the same way as Grade 2 but a higher level of creativity is expected. This worksheet is a revision of Grade 2; if students find this difficult I suggest spending a couple of weeks on this before moving on.

(Consult the M2 teacher guide for 'Rhythm Guidelines' for each bar)

Adding Variety – p.48

Objective

To learn how to add variety to a rhythm.

Comments

As discussed in the M2 teacher guide, by learning certain skills and techniques, students will eventually become adept at writing interesting rhythms. At Grade Three level students are expected to write a rhythm that is not only correct but with a certain amount of variety.

Stretching Syllables – p.49

Objective

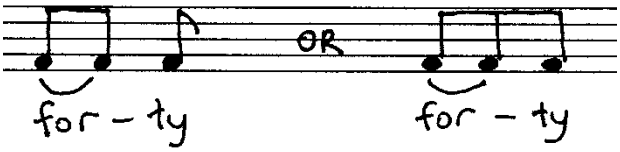
To learn how to vary a rhythm with the use of melismas.

Comments

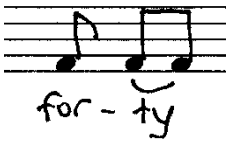
This worksheet shows how to vary a rhythm with **added** notes. This is often necessary when there are not enough notes to simply adjust the note values as in the previous worksheet, 'Varying Your Rhythms'.

It is extremely important to get students to write the slur (a melisma) when adding notes. It would be better not to add the note than to forget the slur!

A word about groupings:



Both of these are correct. The only problem would be if the melisma were on the second syllable, e.g.



This is not correct due to the grouping; the three quavers would need to be connected here. It is much better however to add notes only to the strong beats of the bar.

One other possibility would be

which is perfectly correct and quite creative.

Melody Writing – p.52-55

Objective

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

Comments

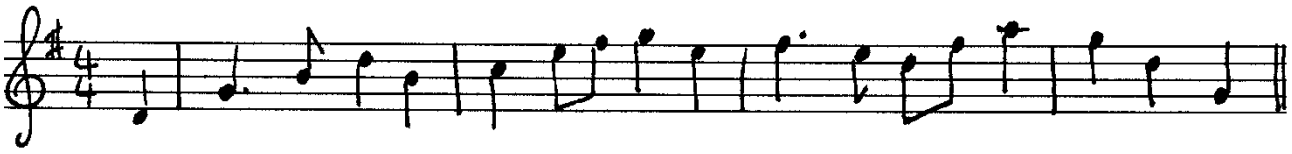
Trying to compose a melody without hearing it aloud is a very challenging concept. Even the greatest composers in history often had an instrument by their side! To be able to hear a melody in one's head is an extremely refined skill, and one that is very difficult to teach.

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.

I have struggled with the decision between teaching students good melody writing and teaching them good 'AMEB' melody writing – but in the end, it is possible to do both! It seems that most examiners want this imperfect cadence, which is why I have decided to teach it this way in the 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 suggested in the workbook is:

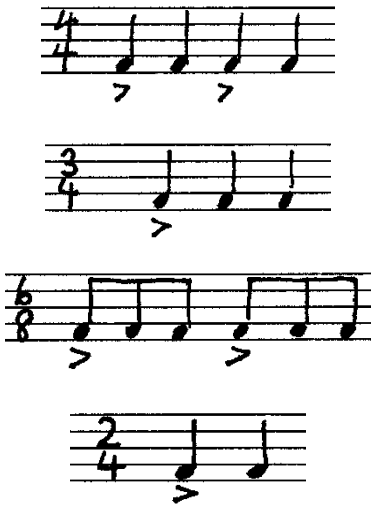
I | II | V | V | I ||

or

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

It is best to stick 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 49 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!

Terms and Signs – p.58

Objective

To learn the Italian terms and signs required for this grade.

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 students 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 students 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 e.g. f not F.

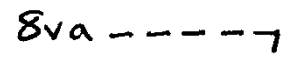
It is important for students to be just as familiar with the abbreviations as with the words.

Maelzel's Metronome

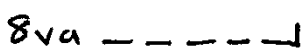
It is amazing how many students think M.M stands for Metronome Marking! It stands for 'Maelzel's Metronome'. The correct answer to question 6 on page 59 is: '*Maelzel's Metronome set to beat sixty crotchets per minute'.*

8va

The sign '8va' is pronounced 'ottava' and means to play the notes one octave higher OR lower than written. (The AMEB syllabus does not cover the term '8vb' which is the more precise way to indicate notes should be played an octave lower.) Consider this more specific sign:



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



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!

Modulating Melodies p.60

Objective

To identify a modulation in a given melody and to understand key relationships.

Comments

Whereas for Grade 2 the starting key was limited to C, G or D major, the starting key in Grade 3 may be any key set for study.

Sometimes the question is set out in a similar way to Grade 2, i.e. the melody ends in a different key. Often, however, the modulation takes place in the middle of the melody, which then returns to the tonic key. This is a much more musical format, as pieces usually start AND end in the same key!

I find that no matter how familiar students are with their key signatures, it can sometimes be quite confusing working out the effect of accidentals on the key signature. In the fourth example on page 55, the melody modulates from D major to B minor. Many students see the extra sharp and immediately think: "3 sharps=A major!", whereas in this case the accidental is the leading note of the relative minor key.

In minor melodies, it is the **absence** of an accidental that will indicate a modulation to the relative major, due to the 7th no longer being raised. This is the trickiest one to spot and I find I am constantly reminding my students to consider the possibility of a modulation to the relative major.

There is a common misconception that the dominant key of a minor key is major. This is not true – it is only the dominant **chord** of a minor key that becomes major, due to the leading note being raised. It is worth reinforcing the 'Groovy Guidelines' about tonality – that a modulation to the relative major or minor is the **only** time a melody can switch tonality!

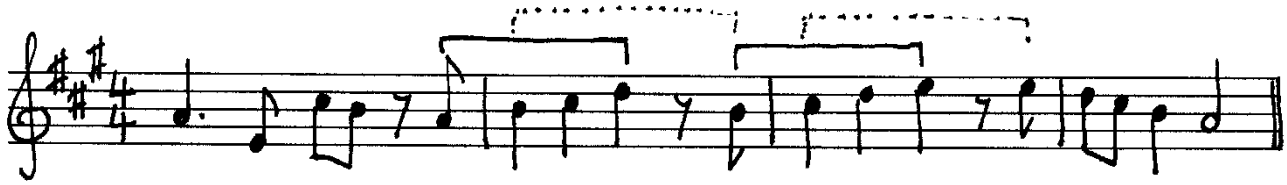
The Sequence – p.62

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 61:



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.65-66

Objective

To introduce Binary and Ternary form.

Comments

Form itself is not a complicated issue, but it certainly makes for a difficult subject to teach. This is because many (or dare I say most) students are unable to 'sight-sing' a melody out loud, let alone inside their heads! If they do not know what the piece sounds like, they are left with only visual clues to decide the form.

Having said that, the best way to introduce form is to listen to many pieces and short melodies and decide their form aurally. The terms 'Binary' and 'Ternary' are often quite unfamiliar to students and they need to get used to using them.

'Twinkle Twinkle' is always the most perfect example of ternary form - it ends on the tonic for both 'A' sections and on scale degree no. 2 (which belongs to chord V) for the end of the 'B' section. Seeing this piece in different formats and marking the

sections really helps to solidify the understanding of ternary form, and of marking sections.

Becoming a Form Detective / More Form Clues – pp.67-68

Objective

These worksheets familiarise students with examination-style questions and provide practice in 'seeing' the form.

Comments

These pages provide six examples for practice, but most students need HEAPS more. It is extremely important to look at past papers as the melodies in these are usually more difficult to decipher than extracts from general music repertoire.

Some students try to decipher the form by counting up the bars and seeing if they divide evenly into two or three sections. This is very dangerous! Another common mistake is that students see the melody written on two lines of manuscript and immediately assume binary form. (As you may have noticed, 5 of the 6 examples in the workbook are written on two lines!)

Allowing for the possibility of an anacrusis in section B and in the return of section A is another tricky point to consider. For group classes it works well to split them into parts A and B and sing the melody – in this way they can hear that the anacrusis belongs to the next bar. Otherwise it is simply a matter of drilling the more visual and rhythmic aspect: a short note right at the end of the bar after a rest or long note generally 'belongs' to the next phrase or section. Phrasing can also provide a clue, but students need to be aware that one section may contain more than one phrase.

'D.C. al fine' at the end of a binary melody generally transforms it into ternary form, provided the 'fine' is in an appropriate place. A repeat sign, however, does not change the form; it simply directs either the whole or part of the melody to be played twice. This is a very important point to drill.

The return of the 'A' section is often varied rhythmically and melodically. This makes it difficult to see, but the second or third bar is usually unchanged from the original, so I draw my students' attention to these bars.

Although it is good to point out that each section in binary form should balance the other, it is important to note that there may be slight alterations, and in Ternary form there may be distinct differences in the number of bars between A1 and A2.

Test Paper… sort of – pp. 74-80

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.