

**Overall Organization of Unit  
UNIT COVER PAGE**

**Unit Title:** Pop Music Through the Years!

**Grade Level:** 8<sup>th</sup> grade and above

**Subject/Topic Area(s):** String Orchestra

**Designed By:** Alice Cojocaru, Georgia State University

**Unit Duration:** 9 weeks (class meets daily for 45 minutes)

**Brief Summary of Unit (including curricular context and unit goals):**

This unit focuses on the end of the year spring concert. It introduces a various selection of pop music from the 1930s until today. Through the variety of musical selections and mini-history background lessons, students get a better understanding of how pop music has evolved over the years. Additionally, at the end of this unit, after the Spring concert, students will learn how to improvise a 16-bar phrase based on the song "Tangerine" that they will record and place into a digital sketchbook.

**Overall Organization of Unit**  
**Stage 1: DESIRED RESULTS**

**National Standards:**

**MU:Cr1.1.E.5a** Compose and improvise melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives that reflect characteristic(s) of music or text(s) studied in rehearsal.

**MU:Cr2.1.E.5a** Select and develop draft melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives that demonstrate understanding of characteristic(s) of music or text(s) studied in rehearsal.

**MU:Cr2.2.E.5b** Preserve draft compositions and improvisations through standard notation and audio recording.

**MU:Cr3.1.E.5a** Evaluate and refine draft compositions and improvisations based on knowledge, skill, and teacher-provided criteria.

**MU:Cr3.2.E.5a** Share personally-developed melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives – individually or as an ensemble- that demonstrate understanding of characteristics of music or texts studied in rehearsal.

**MU:Pr4.1.E.8a** Select a varied repertoire to study based on music reading skills (where appropriate), an understanding of formal design in the music, context, and the technical skill of the individual and ensemble.

**MU:Pr4.2.E.5a** Demonstrate, using music reading skills where appropriate, how the setting and formal characteristics of musical works contribute to understanding the context of the music prepared or improvised performances.

**MU:Pr4.3.E.8a** Demonstrate understanding and application of expressive qualities in a varied repertoire of music through prepared and improvised performances.

**MU:Pr6.1.E.8a** Demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire of music representing diverse cultures and styles.

**MU:Pr6.1.E.8b** Demonstrate an understanding of the context of the music through prepared and improvised performances.

**MU:Cr7.1.E.8a** Explain reasons for selecting music based on characteristics found in the music and connections to interest, purpose, and context.

**MU:Cr8.1.E.8a** Identify and support interpretations of the expressive intent and meaning of musical works, citing as evidence the treatment of the elements of music, contexts, and (when appropriate) the setting of the text.

<p><b>Georgia Standards:</b></p> <p><b>MMSAO.2</b> –Performing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music</p> <p><b>MMSAO.3</b> –Reading and notating music</p> <p><b>MMSAO.4</b> –Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments</p> <p><b>MMSAO.5</b> –Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines</p> <p><b>MMSAO.6</b> –Listening to, analyzing, and describing music</p> <p><b>MMSAO.7</b> –Evaluating music and music performances</p> <p><b>MMSAO.9</b> –Understanding music in relation to history and culture</p>	
<p><b>Understanding(s): <i>Students will understand that...</i></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The styles of music from the past have influenced today’s music.</li> <li>2. Different styles of music can be performed on the same instrument.</li> <li>3. One melody can be expanded on differently from one person to another.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Essential Question(s):</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How has pop music changed or expanded over the years?</li> <li>2. Does performing a piece help develop our understanding of different music styles?</li> <li>3. What are some specific elements learned through pop music that can be utilized to improvise?</li> </ol>	
<p><b><i>Students will know...</i></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How to play their instruments at a grade 3/4.</li> <li>2. How to incorporate different styles of music into their playing.</li> <li>3. The different styles of pop music over the years.</li> </ol>	<p><b><i>Students will be able to...</i></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Perform the following pieces: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It Don’t Mean a Thing” –e minor</li> <li>• “Tangerine” –e/a minor</li> <li>• “Lowdown, Hoe-Down” –D major</li> <li>• “Salute to Michael Jackson” –G major</li> <li>• “Rolling in the Deep” –e minor</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Identify the different styles of pop music.</li> <li>3. Create a 16-bar melody and perform it on their instruments.</li> </ol>
<p><b><i>Students’ prior knowledge...</i></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Essential Technique 2000 for Strings: Book 3 by Michael Allen, Robert Gillespie, and Pamela Tellejohn Hayes.</li> <li>2. Shifting up to III position for violin/viola and up to V position for cello/bass.</li> <li>3. Understanding of chromatic scales.</li> </ol>	

**Overall Organization of Unit**  
**Stage 2: ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE**

**Performance Tasks:**

1. Perform excerpts from each selected piece in the appropriate style.
2. Perform selected pieces at the spring concert.
3. Create a variation of the song "Tangerine." Perform it on your instrument and record performance.

**Key Criteria:**

**History:**

1. Identifying different popular musical styles, as well as the songwriters and/or performers associated with each style.

**Performance:**

1. Playing the musical selections in the required style.
2. Spring concert performance.

**Improvisation:**

1. Students will create a 16-bar melody of the song "Tangerine."
2. Students will perform and record their melody which will go into a digital sketchbook.

**Other Evidence:**

Students will rate and critique each other's improvised performance based on the steps introduced for improvisation.

**Overall Organization of Unit  
Stage 3: LEARNING PLAN**

<b>Week 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The songs that will be performed at the spring concert will be introduced, and students will sight-read the music.</li> <li>• A brief history on the musical selections will be presented through a PowerPoint.</li> <li>• Throughout the week, focus on rhythms and intonation, and point out the key elements that lead to the improvisation lesson in Week 7 (scales with a swing).</li> </ul>
<b>Week 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rhythms and intonation is key here. Students will become more familiar with half and whole steps through chromatic scales.</li> <li>• Students should become more familiar with the music by not only playing it, but also by listening to it online.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued focus on rhythms and intonation.</li> <li>• Students will have their assessment on a challenging rhythm from the music that will be applied to a given key. Students should have a good grasp on the rhythms at this point.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on proper bowings and style (dynamics too).</li> <li>• The PowerPoint that was introduced in Week 1 will be revisited while identifying the style of the performed pieces and finding similarities between the other examples presented.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expressing music through dynamics and articulation – keep in mind the musical selections listened to.</li> <li>• Students will have their assessment on selected excerpts.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined orchestra rehearsal –with both periods in concert seating.</li> <li>• Spring concert performance!</li> </ul>
<b>Week 7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will learn how to improvise on their string instruments through the six steps presented by Dr. Norgaard’s “Unlocking Your Potential as an Improviser” (2016).</li> <li>• A more in-depth history and review of Johnny Mercer will be presented and discussed, which will lead into the following week’s lesson.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will create a 16-bar melody of “Tangerine.” It will be recorded and placed in a digital sketchbook that the students will critique and grade the final week.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 9</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will critique and grade the digital sketchbook.</li> <li>• Clean the instruments, wrap-up closing of the school year.</li> </ul>

**Lesson Plan 1**

<b>Lesson Title:</b> Introduction and History	<b>Unit:</b> Pop Music Through the Years!	<b>Grade:</b> 8th
<p><b>National Standards:</b></p> <p><b>MU:Pr4.1.E.8a</b> Select a varied repertoire to study based on music reading skills (where appropriate), an understanding of formal design in the music, context, and the technical skill of the individual and ensemble.</p> <p><b>MU:Cr7.1.E.8a</b> Explain reasons for selecting music based on characteristics found in the music and connections to interest, purpose, and context.</p> <p><b>MU:Cr8.1.E.8a</b> Identify and support interpretations of the expressive intent and meaning of musical works, citing as evidence the treatment of the elements of music, contexts, and (when appropriate) the setting of the text.</p> <p><b>Georgia Standards:</b></p> <p><b>MMSAO.2</b> –Performing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music</p> <p><b>MMSAO.3</b> –Reading and notating music</p> <p><b>MMSAO.9</b> –Understanding music in relation to history and culture</p>		
<p><b>Goals/Learning Targets:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Be able to do</b> (behavioral): will be able to name three to five key factors to look out for when sight-reading music.</li> <li>• <b>Understand</b> (cognitive): recognize the importance of the key signature before sight-reading music.</li> <li>• <b>Encounter</b> (experiential): will sight-read all five musical selections for the spring concert</li> <li>• <b>Construct meaning</b> (constructivist): will be able to appreciate the importance of the music’s history.</li> </ul>		

**Anticipatory Set:**

- Teacher reviews sight-reading procedures:
  1. Tempo of the piece is identified.
  2. Students acknowledge the key and time signatures, accidentals, rhythms, dynamics and articulation.
  3. Teacher goes over challenging rhythms (clap and count).
  4. Students ask questions pertaining to the piece at hand.
  5. Finally, the piece is ready for sight-reading.

**Procedures: Monday and Tuesday**

1. Teacher hands out all music scores to the students:
  - “It Don’t Mean a Thing” –e minor
  - “Tangerine” –e/a minor
  - “Lowdown, Hoe-Down” –D major
  - “Salute to Michael Jackson” –G major
  - “Rolling in the Deep” –e minor
2. Students sight-read music independently: air-bowing and clapping rhythms.
3. Teacher goes over the key and time signatures, and provides clarification on challenging rhythms – have students count and clap these rhythms together.
4. Allow time for students to ask questions.
5. Teacher gives tempo and conducts the musical selection while the student practice sight-reading the music.

**Procedures: Wednesday and Thursday**

1. Teacher introduces a mini-history lesson on each of the pieces in chronological order (see [PowerPoint Presentation](#))
2. Teacher reviews challenging rhythms in each piece.
3. Students count and clap the rhythm, then play it on an open string, and lastly apply it to a scale. [*Note: This procedure is repeated daily at the beginning of each piece so students have a good grasp on the rhythms*].
4. Students apply the rhythms learned to the individual pieces of music. The following measures require immediate attention for a better rhythmic understanding (not to say there are not others):
  - “It Don’t Mean a Thing” – measure 4
  - “Tangerine” – measure 13
  - “Lowdown, Hoe-Down” – measure 7 (breakdown the ties)
  - “Salute to Michael Jackson” – measure 36
  - “Rolling in the Deep” – measures 14, 19, 25

**Closure: Friday**

1. All of the pieces are played through, and teacher takes note of challenging areas that require further attention.
2. If time permits, have the students play an E minor scale on quarter notes with a piano accompaniment of i-IV-V-i. This will lead to the improvisation section in Week 7.

**Required Materials and Equipment:**

Tuner  
Metronome  
Music scores  
Students' binders  
Pencils  
PowerPoint

**Assessment and Follow-Up:**

A group assessment will be done at the end of each week when all pieces are played through. This can help guide the instruction for the following week.

**Resources Used:**

Ellington, Duke (arr. Longfield, Robert). 2007. It Don't Mean a Thing. Hal Leonard Corporation. Alfred Publishing Co. Print.

Mercer, Johnny and Schertzing, Victor (arr. Caponegro, John). Tangerine. Kendor Music, Inc. Print.

Firth, Andy (arr. Phillips, Bob). Lowdown, Hoe-Down. Alfred Publishing Co. Print.

Jackson, Michael (arr. Longfield, Robert). 2009. Salute to Michael Jackson. Hal Leonard Corporation. Alfred Publishing Co. Print.

Adkins, Adele & Epworth, Paul (arr. Moore, Larry). 2011. Rolling in the Deep. Hal Leonard Corporation. Alfred Publishing Co. Print.

**Recommended reading for the teacher:**

Norgaard, M. (2016). Unlocking your potential as an improviser. *American String Teacher*, 66(2), 26–29. <http://doi.org/10.1177/000313131606600205>



**Lesson Plan 2**

<b>Lesson Title:</b> Keys and Rhythms	<b>Unit:</b> Pop Music Through the Years!	<b>Grade:</b> 8th
<p><b>National Standards:</b></p> <p><b>MU:Pr4.2.E.5a</b> Demonstrate, using music reading skills where appropriate, how the setting and formal characteristics of musical works contribute to understanding the context of the music prepared or improvised performances.</p> <p><b>MU:Pr6.1.E.8a</b> Demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire of music representing diverse cultures and styles.</p> <p><b>Georgia Standards:</b></p> <p><b>MMSAO.2</b> –Performing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music</p> <p><b>MMSAO.3</b> –Reading and notating music</p>		
<p><b>Goals/Learning Targets:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Be able to do</b> (behavioral): be able to perform on their instrument, all five musical selections with accurate notes and rhythms.</li> <li>• <b>Understand</b> (cognitive): be able to apply a challenging rhythm from the music to a given scale.</li> <li>• <b>Encounter</b> (experiential): be able to hear and identify similar rhythmic patterns between all five pieces.</li> <li>• <b>Construct meaning</b> (constructivist): be able to realize how various rhythms (e.g. syncopated) really influence the style of the piece.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Anticipatory Set:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Challenging rhythms are written on the board each day for further development.</li> <li>2. Students count and clap the rhythm, then play it on an open string, and lastly apply it to a scale. <i>[Note: This procedure is repeated daily at the beginning of each piece so students have a good grasp on the rhythms].</i></li> </ol>		

**Procedures: Monday and Wednesday**

1. Teacher gives students a challenging rhythm to focus on (see anticipatory set)
2. Students play that rhythm on a chromatic scale.
3. Teacher works with students on two pieces. Students establish the key that the piece is written in.
  - “Lowdown, Hoe-Down” –e minor
  - “Rolling in the Deep” –e minor

**Homework:**

Students listen and familiarize themselves with the music found on: [www.jwpepper.com](http://www.jwpepper.com), as well as different versions of the pieces on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com).

**Procedures: Tuesday and Thursday**

1. Teacher gives students a challenging rhythm to focus on (see anticipatory set)
2. Students play that rhythm on a scale pertaining to the key of the piece that the rhythm is selected from. Students establish the key that the piece is written in.
3. Teacher works with students on three pieces:
  - “It Don’t Mean a Thing” –D major
  - “Tangerine” –e/a minor
  - “Salute to Michael Jackson” –G major

**Homework:**

Students listen and familiarize themselves with the music found on: [www.jwpepper.com](http://www.jwpepper.com), as well as different versions of the pieces on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

**Note:**

- The pieces have been paired up by difficulty level and similarity in rhythms.
- Half of each piece should be worked through each day.

**Closure: Friday**

1. All of the pieces are played through, and teacher takes note of challenging areas that require further attention.
2. If time permits, have the students play an E minor scale with 8<sup>th</sup> notes (with a slightly swing-feel, and more legato). This will lead to the improvisation section in Lesson 7.

**Required Materials and Equipment:**

Tuner  
Metronome  
Music scores  
Students’ binders  
Pencils

**Assessment and Follow-Up:**

A group assessment will be done at the end of each week when all pieces are played through. This can help guide the instruction for the following week.

**Lesson Plan 3**

<b>Lesson Title:</b> Rhythm and Intonation	<b>Unit:</b> Pop Music Through the Years!	<b>Grade:</b> 8th
<p><b>National Standards:</b></p> <p><b>MU:Pr4.2.E.5a</b> Demonstrate, using music reading skills where appropriate, how the setting and formal characteristics of musical works contribute to understanding the context of the music prepared or improvised performances.</p> <p><b>MU:Pr4.3.E.8a</b> Demonstrate understanding and application of expressive qualities in a varied repertoire of music through prepared and improvised performances.</p> <p><b>MU:Pr6.1.E.8a</b> Demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire of music representing diverse cultures and styles.</p> <p><b>MU:Cr8.1.E.8a</b> Identify and support interpretations of the expressive intent and meaning of musical works, citing as evidence the treatment of the elements of music, contexts, and (when appropriate) the setting of the text.</p> <p><b>Georgia Standards:</b></p> <p><b>MMSAO.2</b> –Performing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music</p> <p><b>MMSAO.3</b> –Reading and notating music</p>		
<p><b>Goals/Learning Targets:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Be able to do</b> (behavioral): be able to perform on their instrument, all five musical selections with accurate notes and rhythms.</li> <li>• <b>Understand</b> (cognitive): be able to apply a challenging rhythm from the music to a given scale.</li> <li>• <b>Encounter</b> (experiential): be able to hear and identify similar rhythmic patterns between all five pieces.</li> <li>• <b>Construct meaning</b> (constructivist): be able to realize how various rhythms (e.g. syncopated) really influence the style of the piece.</li> </ul>		

**Anticipatory Set:**

1. Challenging rhythms are written on the board each day for further development.
2. Students count and clap the rhythm, then play it on an open string, and lastly apply it to a scale. [*Note: This procedure is repeated daily at the beginning of each piece so students have a good grasp on the rhythms*].
3. Teacher plays a drone (e, a, d, g) during scale and rhythm warm up. This way students can identify out-of-tune pitches better and learn to adjust their finger placement. Students develop better intonation and pitch accuracy.

**Procedures: Monday and Wednesday**

1. Warm-up on scales of the given pieces. While continuing to improve intonation in the given keys of the pieces, teacher plays a drone (e) in the background for students to perfect pitch accuracy.
2. Conduct playing quiz (see rubric in Appendix B)
3. Teacher and students identify similarities in rhythms between the selected pieces.
4. Students make connections through the musical selections by identifying bowing styles.
  - “Lowdown, Hoe-Down”
  - “Rolling in the Deep”

**Procedures: Tuesday and Thursday**

Warm-up on scales –playing quiz

1. Warm-up on scales of the given pieces. While continuing to improve intonation in the given keys of the pieces, teacher plays a drone (D, e/a, G) in the background for students to perfect pitch accuracy.
2. Conduct playing quiz (see rubric in Appendix B)
3. Teacher and students identify similarities in rhythms between the selected pieces.
4. Students make connections through the musical selections by identifying bowing styles.
  - “It Don’t Mean a Thing”
  - “Tangerine”
  - “Salute to Michael Jackson”

**Note:**

- The pieces have been paired up by difficulty level and similarity in rhythms.
- Half of each piece should be worked through each day.

**Closure: Friday**

1. All of the pieces are played through, and teacher takes note of challenging areas that require further attention.
2. Students are given an understanding of the chord progressions, and similarities between the pieces. Look over the solo section in “Tangerine” that already has the chord progressions labeled.

**Required Materials and Equipment:**

Tuner  
Metronome  
Music scores  
Students' binders  
Pencils

**Assessment and Follow-Up:**

Students will have their assessment on a challenging rhythm played on an ascending scale (see Anticipatory Set above). In order to conserve class time, test 5-8 students daily throughout the week; this way you can still tend to the lesson at hand. Each day a new rhythm and scale (based on the music that is being worked on that day) should be quizzed. A group assessment will be done at the end of each week when all pieces are played through. This can help guide the instruction for the following week.

**Lesson Plan 4**

<p><b>Lesson Title:</b> Understanding the Musical Style</p>	<p><b>Unit:</b> Pop Music Through the Years!</p>	<p><b>Grade:</b> 8th</p>
<p><b>National Standards:</b></p> <p><b>MU:Pr4.2.E.5a</b> Demonstrate, using music reading skills where appropriate, how the setting and formal characteristics of musical works contribute to understanding the context of the music prepared or improvised performances.</p> <p><b>MU:Pr4.3.E.8a</b> Demonstrate understanding and application of expressive qualities in a varied repertoire of music through prepared and improvised performances.</p> <p><b>MU:Pr6.1.E.8a</b> Demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire of music representing diverse cultures and styles.</p> <p><b>MU:Cr8.1.E.8a</b> Identify and support interpretations of the expressive intent and meaning of musical works, citing as evidence the treatment of the elements of music, contexts, and (when appropriate) the setting of the text.</p> <p><b>Georgia Standards:</b></p> <p><b>MMSAO.2</b> –Performing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music</p> <p><b>MMSAO.3</b> –Reading and notating music</p> <p><b>MMSAO.9</b> –Understanding music in relation to history and culture</p>		
<p><b>Goals/Learning Targets:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Be able to do</b> (behavioral): perform on their instrument with proper bow distribution, the dynamics and articulation from the music.</li> <li>• <b>Understand</b> (cognitive): be able to explain how bow weight, speed, and placement influences their dynamics.</li> <li>• <b>Encounter</b> (experiential): will be able to hear and identify the dynamics and articulation used in each piece.</li> <li>• <b>Construct meaning</b> (constructivist): be able to realize how bow distribution contributes to the overall outcome of their performance.</li> </ul>		

**Anticipatory Set:**

1. How do we produce certain dynamics and articulation on our instruments?
  - Teacher reviews how articulation is played (discusses techniques and concepts from previous semesters – tenuto, staccato, accents, etc.).
  - Teacher reviews how dynamics are played (bow weight, placement, and speed).
2. Teacher asks students to point out measures that require more attention to dynamics and articulation. In what measure does the piece reach its peak?
3. Teacher emphasizes the right hand, the bow hand does all of the coloring/flourishing in the music.

**Procedures: Monday and Wednesday**

1. Warm-up on scales with dynamics and proper bow distribution – guided through teacher’s conducting. The teacher should conduct the scale emphasizing a wide range of dynamics for students to play with. Students should watch the conductor and focus on bow distribution in order to play with the dynamics requested.
2. Teacher reviews the history behind the musical selections.  
(see [PowerPoint Presentation](#))
3. Students identify connections through the musical selections based on similarities in bowing styles and rhythms.
  - “Lowdown, Hoe-Down”
  - “Rolling in the Deep”
4. Teacher and students discuss bowing and articulation, and apply it to their music.

**Procedures: Tuesday and Thursday**

1. Warm-up on scales with dynamics and proper bow distribution – guided through teacher’s conducting. The teacher should conduct the scale emphasizing a wide range of dynamics for students to play with. Students should watch the conductor and focus on bow distribution in order to play with the dynamics requested.
3. Teacher reviews the history behind the musical selections.  
(see [PowerPoint Presentation](#))
4. Students identify connections through the musical selections based on similarities in bowing styles and rhythms.
  - “It Don’t Mean a Thing”
  - “Tangerine”
  - “Salute to Michael Jackson”
5. Teacher and students discuss bowing and articulation, and apply it to their music.

**Note:**

- The pieces have been paired up by difficulty level and similarity in rhythms.
- Half of each piece should be worked through each day.

**Closure: Friday**

1. All of the pieces are played through, and teacher takes note of challenging areas that require further attention.
2. Review chord progressions from "Tangerine." As the students, is there anyone who would like to play the solo for the concert? Multiple students? Not a problem. The solo part can be repeated allowing more students to shine on their improvisation.  
\*Teacher should work with those students individually (perhaps morning practice) and introduce the "6 Steps to Improvisation" found in Lesson 7.

**Required Materials and Equipment:**

Tuner  
Metronome  
Music scores  
Students' binders  
Pencils  
PowerPoint

**Assessment and Follow-Up:**

Engage students in a conversation to make connections through history and music:

- Which pieces have similar styles?
- Which piece has a swing style?
- How has pop music evolved over the years?
- What are the similarities between the pieces?

Discuss the dynamics and articulation in the individual pieces:

- Is the articulation noticed from listening selections?
- How can we apply it to our instruments?



Lesson Plan 5

<b>Lesson Title:</b> Expression	<b>Unit:</b> Pop Music Through the Years!	<b>Grade:</b> 8th
<p><b>National Standards:</b></p> <p><b>MU:Pr4.2.E.5a</b> Demonstrate, using music reading skills where appropriate, how the setting and formal characteristics of musical works contribute to understanding the context of the music prepared or improvised performances.</p> <p><b>MU:Pr4.3.E.8a</b> Demonstrate understanding and application of expressive qualities in a varied repertoire of music through prepared and improvised performances.</p> <p><b>MU:Pr6.1.E.8a</b> Demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire of music representing diverse cultures and styles.</p> <p><b>MU:Cr8.1.E.8a</b> Identify and support interpretations of the expressive intent and meaning of musical works, citing as evidence the treatment of the elements of music, contexts, and (when appropriate) the setting of the text.</p> <p><b>Georgia Standards:</b></p> <p><b>MMSAO.2</b> –Performing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music</p> <p><b>MMSAO.3</b> –Reading and notating music</p> <p><b>MMSAO.9</b> –Understanding music in relation to history and culture</p>		
<p><b>Goals/Learning Targets:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Be able to do</b> (behavioral): perform on their instrument with proper bow distribution, the dynamics and articulation from the music while also adding vibrato to longer notes.</li> <li>• <b>Understand</b> (cognitive): be able to explain how bow weight, speed, and placement influences their dynamics.</li> <li>• <b>Encounter</b> (experiential): will be able to hear and identify the dynamics and articulation used.</li> <li>• <b>Construct meaning</b> (constructivist): be able to realize how bow distribution contributes to the overall outcome of their performance.</li> </ul>		

**Anticipatory Set:**

Ask the students, how do we express ourselves every day? –through conversation, facial/hand gestures, clothing, the way we walk, etc.

Ask the students, how do we express ourselves through music? –through dynamics, articulation, vibrato, etc.

**Procedures: Monday and Wednesday**

1. Warm-up on scales.
2. Teacher reviews the different music styles and how that is accomplished through our bowing techniques.
3. Teacher reviews essentials of vibrato exercises.
4. Students apply and focus on vibrato and dynamics.
5. “Lowdown, Hoe-Down”
6. “Rolling in the Deep”

**Procedures: Tuesday and Thursday**

1. Warm up on scales.
2. Teacher reviews the different music styles and how that is accomplished through our bowing techniques.
3. Teacher reviews essentials of vibrato exercises.
4. Students apply and focus on vibrato and dynamics.
5. “It Don’t Mean a Thing”
6. “Salute to Michael Jackson”
7. “Tangerine”

**Note:**

8. The pieces have been paired up by difficulty level and similarity in rhythms.
9. Half of each piece should be worked through each day.

**Closure: Friday**

1. All of the pieces are played through, and teacher takes note of challenging areas that require further attention.

**Required Materials and Equipment:**

Tuner  
Metronome  
Music scores  
Students’ binders  
Pencils  
Playing Test Rubric  
Grading Sheet

**Assessment and Follow-Up:**

Students will take their playing tests before or after school. The seating for the concert will be based on the results of the test. The “Salute to Michael Jackson” piece was omitted due to its simplicity. Playing test excerpts are selected based on difficulty level and should be decided by the teacher. (See appendix B and C).

A group assessment will be done on Friday when all the music is played through. What are some elements we can improve on before the concert next week?

**Lesson Plan 6**

<b>Lesson Title:</b> Performance	<b>Unit:</b> Pop Music Through the Years!	<b>Grade:</b> 8th
<p><b>National Standards:</b></p> <p><b>MU:Pr4.2.E.5a</b> Demonstrate, using music reading skills where appropriate, how the setting and formal characteristics of musical works contribute to understanding the context of the music prepared or improvised performances.</p> <p><b>MU:Pr4.3.E.8a</b> Demonstrate understanding and application of expressive qualities in a varied repertoire of music through prepared and improvised performances.</p> <p><b>MU:Pr6.1.E.8a</b> Demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire of music representing diverse cultures and styles.</p> <p><b>MU:Cr8.1.E.8a</b> Identify and support interpretations of the expressive intent and meaning of musical works, citing as evidence the treatment of the elements of music, contexts, and (when appropriate) the setting of the text.</p> <p><b>Georgia Standards:</b></p> <p><b>MMSAO.2</b> –Performing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music</p>		

**Goals/Learning Targets:**

- **Be able to do** (behavioral): perform on their instrument all five musical selections for the spring concert.
- **Understand** (cognitive): be able to explain specific characteristics found in the music (melody, harmony, rhythm, timber, and form).
- **Encounter** (experiential): be able to hear and identify the section that is playing the melody for proper balance on the performance.
- **Construct meaning** (constructivist): be able to evaluate the overall performance of the spring concert.

**Anticipatory Set:**

Students are assigned concert seating.

**Procedures: Monday and Wednesday**

1. Review proper concert etiquette.
  - Dress code: black from the waist down (no jeans or sneakers), and the orchestra polo.
  - Once a piece is done, open to the next sheet music and wait quietly for the audience to settle back down.
  - Be respectful while the other grades are performing.
  - No cell phones.
2. All pieces are played through in concert order:
  - "It Don't Mean a Thing"
  - "Tangerine"
  - "Lowdown, Hoe-Down"
  - "Salute to Michael Jackson"
  - "Rolling in the Deep"

**Procedures: Tuesday and Thursday**

1. Students have combined orchestra rehearsal (with both 8<sup>th</sup> grade periods) in concert seating.
2. All pieces are worked through in concert order.
3. Concert is performed [Thursday] evening for parents, teachers, and students.
  - I had several students volunteer to introduce each piece performed. Each student gave a brief review of the composer and the time period in which it was composed. This gave the audience insight into the curriculum taught over the last several weeks.

**Note:**

- Percussion provided by high school band students will be a part of the combined rehearsals with all students. Based on the availability of the high school students, the teacher should plan for two rehearsals.

<p><b>Closure: Friday</b></p> <p>1. Evaluate the overall performance through a collaborative discussion. Discuss positives and areas that could be improved. Ask students –what can we do to have a better outcome on our next performance.</p> <p>*have a recording of the concert as “proof” of how the performance went from the audience’s perspective.</p>
<p><b>Required Materials and Equipment:</b></p> <p>Tuner  Metronome  Music scores  Students’ binders  Pencils  Percussion/drum set  Sound system for the performance</p>
<p><b>Assessment and Follow-Up:</b></p> <p>See Friday’s closure.</p>

**Lesson Plan 7**

<b>Lesson Title:</b> Let’s Improvise! (Part 1)	<b>Unit:</b> Pop Music Through the Years!	<b>Grade:</b> 8 <sup>th</sup> grade
<p><b>National Standards:</b></p> <p><b>MU:Cr1.1.E.5a</b> Compose and improvise melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives that reflect characteristic(s) of music or text(s) studied in rehearsal.</p> <p><b>MU:Cr2.1.E.5a</b> Select and develop draft melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives that demonstrate understanding of characteristic(s) of music or text(s) studied in rehearsal.</p> <p><b>Georgia Standards:</b></p> <p><b>MMSAO.4</b> –Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments</p> <p><b>MMSAO.5</b> –Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines</p>		

**Goals/Learning Targets:**

- **Be able to do** (behavioral): perform on their instrument, a rhythmic variation on one of the melody lines from the music performed.
- **Understand** (cognitive): will have perspective on how history can influence music.
- **Encounter** (experiential): be able to create an 8-bar rhythm that can be played on any melodic line from the music performed.
- **Construct meaning** (constructivist): will be able to compare and apply to their instrument, the swing-style found in “Tangerine.”

**Anticipatory Set:**

Incorporating a swing-style into rhythmic variations (dotted 8<sup>th</sup> with 16<sup>th</sup>, dotted quarter with 8<sup>th</sup>...)

**Procedures:**

1. Teacher will go more in depth on Johnny Mercer and his contribution to the “Pop” music through the PowerPoint (Monday).
2. Teacher will introduce the six steps to improvising (Norgaard, 2016). Two of the six steps should be worked on daily.
  - Step 1: Play scale in quarter notes
  - Step 2: Play scale with repeated rhythms
  - Step 3: Improvise on rhythms
  - Step 4: Change melodic direction once
  - Step 5: Change melodic direction several times
  - Step 6: Add skips in melody

\*Teacher can play I –ii –V –I on piano or use the play along tracks from “Jazz Fiddle Wizard Junior”
3. Teacher will have students focus on a swing-style.
4. Teacher will provide a bass line (see chord progressions in the solo in “Tangerine”)
5. Students will create their own melodic variation on one of the pieces played in concert
6. Teacher will go over the “I” chord of each piece which students will start and end on.

**Note:**

- Since this is in a group setting, the steps to improvisation will not be feasible in a day or two, but should be split up over the entire week. I completed two steps per day with the following day going back one-step for review.

**Closure:**

- Teacher will have the classroom set up in a circle.
- Students will improvise on an 8-bar phrase (incorporate smooth pass offs the next student to increase comfort). This can also be done at the end of each class with volunteers on the material/step that was presented that day.

**Required Materials and Equipment:**

Audio backing track or piano accompaniment.

Jazz Fiddle Wizard Junior, Book 1 by Dr. Martin Norgaard (Optional - the book includes an online audio recording for accompaniment).

**Assessment and Follow-Up:**

- Students will have 8-bar pass-offs on a given scale while applying steps 1-5. (See Appendix D)

**Resources Used:**

Norgaard, M. (2016). Unlocking your potential as an improviser. *American String Teacher*, 66(2), 26–29. <http://doi.org/10.1177/000313131606600205>

Norgaard, Martin. *Jazz Fiddle Wizard Junior book 1*. 2002. Missouri: MEL BAY, 2003. Print.

**Lesson Plan 8**

<b>Lesson Title:</b> Let's Improvise (Part 2)	<b>Unit:</b> Pop Music Through the Years!	<b>Grade:</b> 8th
<p><b>National Standards:</b></p> <p><b>MU:Cr2.2.E.5b</b> Preserve draft compositions and improvisations through standard notation and audio recording.</p> <p><b>MU:Cr3.1.E.5a</b> Evaluate and refine draft compositions and improvisations based on knowledge, skill, and teacher-provided criteria.</p> <p><b>MU:Pr4.3.E.8a</b> Demonstrate understanding and application of expressive qualities in a varied repertoire of music through prepared and improvised performances.</p> <p><b>MU:Pr6.1.E.8a</b> Demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire of music representing diverse cultures and styles.</p> <p><b>MU:Pr6.1.E.8b</b> Demonstrate an understanding of the context of the music through prepared and improvised performances.</p> <p><b>Georgia Standards:</b></p> <p><b>MMSAO.4</b> –Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments</p> <p><b>MMSAO.5</b> –Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines</p>		
<p><b>Goals/Learning Targets:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Be able to do</b> (behavioral): perform on their instrument, an improvised 16-bar phrase off of the melodic line from “Tangerine.”</li> <li>• <b>Understand</b> (cognitive): be able to apply musical characteristics from “Tangerine.”</li> <li>• <b>Encounter</b> (experiential): will record their improvisations.</li> <li>• <b>Construct meaning</b> (constructivist): will realize the importance of harmony when improvising.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Anticipatory Set:</b> Students will review the six steps to improvising from the previous lesson.</p>		



**Procedures:**

1. Teacher will record the chord progressions (from the solo section in “Tangerine”) for students to practice on (recorded on a piano or keyboard is best).
2. Students will be given individual time to work on their improvisations.
3. Teacher will give guidelines for students to work within:
  - 16-bar phrase
  - a written bass line for students to create on/chord progressions
  - include a variety of rhythms
  - use the entire range of your instrument in 1<sup>st</sup> position

**Closure:**

1. Students will perform and record their improvisations.

**Required Materials and Equipment:**

Blank staff sheet paper  
Pencils  
Piano (optional)  
Audio playback equipment  
Recording device

**Assessment and Follow-Up:**

- Students will improvise a variation of “Tangerine” and perform and record it on their instrument

**Resources Used:**

Norgaard, M. (2016). Unlocking your potential as an improviser. *American String Teacher*, 66(2), 26–29. <http://doi.org/10.1177/000313131606600205>

**Lesson Plan 9**

<b>Lesson Title:</b> Let's Wrap It Up!	<b>Unit:</b> Pop Music Through the Years!	<b>Grade:</b> 8 <sup>th</sup> grade
<p><b>National Standards:</b></p> <p><b>MU:Cr3.2.E.5a</b> Share personally-developed melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives – individually or as an ensemble- that demonstrate understanding of characteristics of music or texts studied in rehearsal.</p> <p><b>MU:Cr8.1.E.8a</b> Identify and support interpretations of the expressive intent and meaning of musical works, citing as evidence the treatment of the elements of music, contexts, and (when appropriate) the setting of the text.</p> <p><b>Georgia Standards:</b></p> <p><b>MMSAO.7</b> –Evaluating music and music performances</p> <p><b>MMSAO.9</b> –Understanding music in relation to history and culture</p>		
<p><b>Goals/Learning Targets:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Be able to do</b> (behavioral): observe and critique other students' work.</li> <li>• <b>Understand</b> (cognitive): be able to explain some similarities that were found in the improvisations.</li> <li>• <b>Encounter</b> (experiential): be able to identify some musical characteristics from "Tangerine" used to improvise.</li> <li>• <b>Construct meaning</b> (constructivist): will realize the importance of harmony when improvising.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Anticipatory Set:</b></p> <p>Teacher will explain the grading process and review key elements in improvisation that should be focused on. Teacher will demonstrate on an instrument an example of what an improvisation with a higher and lower score/grade should sound like. Students will give a verbal grade based the grading scale on both improvisations.</p>		

**Procedures:**

1. Teacher will have all composed recordings from the students compiled into a digital sketchbook.
2. Students will critique and grade the digital sketchbook (see Appendix E). The recordings should be viewed twice in order to provide more accurate grading.
3. Students will engage in a collaborative discussion:
  - Explain which students had similar improvisations
  - Identify musical characteristics from “Tangerine” that were noticed in the improvisations
  - Realize the importance of harmony when improvising. Did the improvisation fit over the chord progressions?

**Closure:**

- Clean off instruments and pack up the school year.

**Required Materials and Equipment:**

Promethean board or TV to display the digital sketchbook.  
Olive oil and cleaning cloths (cut-up t-shirts)

**Assessment and Follow-Up:**

**Resources Used:**

## Appendix A

### Resources utilized in the creation of the mini-history PowerPoint presentations:

#### Sound Recordings:

Berlin, I. (1994). *Irving Berlin*. New York: Columbia Music Collection.

Burns, K. (2000). *Ken Burns' jazz: The story of American music*. New York, NY: Columbia/Legacy.

Carson, F. J., and Virginia Reelers (Musical group). (1997). *Fiddlin' John Carson: Complete recorded works in chronological order*. Vienna, Austria: Document Records.

Gershwin, G., and Gershwin, I. (1989). *The great American composers: George and Ira Gershwin*. New York: Columbia Music Collection.

Georgia Crackers 2010 "Kiss Me Quick" (GA Yellow Hammers song)

Mercer, J., Sinatra, F., Fitzgerald, E., Crosby, B., Wilson, N., Williams, A., Tilton, M., ... Benny Goodman Orchestra. (2000). *The songs of Johnny Mercer*. New York, NY: Warner/Chappell.

Miller, Emmett, and Georgia Crackers. *The Minstrel Man from Georgia*. Roots N' Blues. New York, NY: Columbia/Legacy, 1996.

*Nipper's greatest hits - The 20's*. (1990). New York: RCA.

*Nipper's greatest hits - The 30's: Volume 2*. (1990). New York, NY: RCA.

Rodgers, R., and Hammerstein, O. (1993). *The great American composers: Rodgers and Hammerstein: Vol. I*. New York: Columbia Music Collection.

*Swing time: The fabulous big band era, 1925-1955*. (1993). New York: Columbia.

Tanner, G., Puckett, R., McMichen, C., Stokes, L., Layne, B., and Skillet Lickers. (2012). *Gid Tanner and The Skillet Lickers*. London: JSP Records.

*Western swing: The absolutely essential 3 CD collection*. (2011). Place of publication not identified: Big 3.

#### Books

Bloom, K., and Feinstein, M. (2005). *The American songbook: The singers, the songwriters, and the songs*. New York: Black dog and Leventhal.

Boyd, J. A. (1998). *The jazz of the Southwest: An oral history of western swing*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Jasen, D. A. (2012). *Tin Pan Alley: An encyclopedia of the golden age of American song*.

Kernfeld, B. D. (1988). *The new Grove dictionary of jazz*. London: Macmillan Reference Ltd.

Kingsbury, P., McCall, M., Rumble, J. W., Gray, M., Orr, J., and Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum (Nashville, Tenn.). (2012). *The encyclopedia of country music: The ultimate guide to the music*. New York: Oxford University Press.

**Appendix B**

**Rubric for playing test/quiz**

	<b>Mastered 10-9</b>	<b>Proficient 8-7</b>	<b>Beginning 6-5</b>	<b>Struggling 4-1</b>
<b>Position and Bow Hold</b>	LH and RH are in perfect position: Flat L wrist w/round thumb (mouse hole), all fingers curved on bow hold, elbow under instrument (violins, violas), elbow up (celli, bass). Perfect posture: sitting/standing straight on the edge of chair with both feet flat on the floor.	Demonstrates understanding of instrument/bow hold but needs improvement.	Limited understanding of instrument/bow hold. Needs extra one-on-one help.	Unacceptable instrument or bow hold. No evidence of understanding or demonstrating proper position and bow hold. Individual work with director is a must.
<b>Rhythm Accuracy</b>	Tempo is secure and steady throughout the piece: no stopping, stumbling, rushing, or dragging. Rhythms are accurate; longer notes and rests are counted correctly.	Demonstrates a steady tempo and accurate rhythms most of the time.	Tempo is not steady: rushed/dragged, with stops. Rhythms are not clear. Counting and subdividing is needed.	Unacceptable rhythm, no accuracy. Individual work with director is a must!
<b>Intonation</b>	Notes are correct. Demonstrates knowledge of the key signature. Finger patterns are accurate with understanding of whole and half steps.	Demonstrates knowledge of the key signature but the distance between half and whole steps are not accurate.	Key signature is unknown. Finger patterns are not clear and all over the fingerboard.	No understanding of key signature and figure patterns. Individual work with director is a must!
<b>Tone Quality</b>	Sound projects well with an excellent tone quality. Bow weight and speed are correctly distributed.	Demonstrates a good tone quality but need more work on bow distribution.	Sound is washy and muffled. Flat bow hair on string is needed.	Due to improper bow hold, tone quality is affected. Individual work with director is needed!
<b>Expression</b>	Vibrato is used consistently and throughout the piece. Dynamics are clear with an excellent range. Articulation is played properly.	Vibrato is used at times. Dynamics should have a wider range. Articulation is noted but not played in the proper part of the bow.	Little expression is used through vibrato and articulation.	No expression of the piece is demonstrated. Individual work with director is needed!

**Appendix C**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Instrument: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: 8<sup>th</sup>

Pos. and Bow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Rhyth. Acc.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Intonation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Tone Quality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Quiz/Test Material \_\_\_\_\_ *It Don't Mean a Thing* \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Score X2 \_\_\_\_\_

Pos. and Bow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Rhyth. Acc.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Intonation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Tone Quality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Quiz/Test Material \_\_\_\_\_ *Tangerine* \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Score X2 \_\_\_\_\_

Pos. and Bow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Rhyth. Acc.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Intonation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Tone Quality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Quiz/Test Material \_\_\_\_\_ *Lowdown, Hoe-down* \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Score X2 \_\_\_\_\_

Pos. and Bow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Rhyth. Acc.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Intonation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Tone Quality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Quiz/Test Material \_\_\_\_\_ *Rolling in the Deep* \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Score X2 \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix D**

Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Instrument: \_\_\_\_\_

1. 8-bar phrase	/20
2. Correct notes –in scale	/20
3. Improvise on rhythms	/20
4. Change melodic direction several times	/20
5. Started and ended on I	/20

**Appendix E**

Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Instrument: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did the student complete 16 bars of improvisation?
2. Was there a variety in rhythms used?
3. Did the improvisation stay within the chord progressions (did it sound like it “fit”)?
4. Did the improviser play all/most notes using the entire range of 1<sup>st</sup> position?
5. Was there a swing/jazzy feel to the improvisation?

\*Each question is graded on a 20-1-point scale where 20 is the highest and 1 is the lowest score.



**For more information on  
Johnny Mercer, Lesson Plans, and Activity Guides:**

The Johnny Mercer Foundation  
630 Ninth Avenue, Suite 610  
New York, NY 10036  
Phone: (212) 589-5477  
[www.johnnymercerfoundation.org](http://www.johnnymercerfoundation.org)

**For additional resources on Johnny Mercer and Popular Music:**

Special Collections & Archives  
Georgia State University Library  
100 Decatur Street, SE  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
Phone: (404) 413-2880  
E-Mail: [archives@gsu.edu](mailto:archives@gsu.edu)  
<http://research.library.gsu.edu/merc>