

## May 18<sup>th</sup> Lesson Plan

Happy MAY 18<sup>th</sup>! If you were working on a cool recital piece with your tutor or some other SMP musician, you might be able to be featured at the end of the year! Our staff is trying to figure out how to showcase the orchestra, band and a few of the top recital performances. We'll have more info as we figure out the details but keep working on your recital piece because you might be the STAR!

### **Beginning Band:**

*#78, Minuteman March.* Congratulations! I've been super impressed with those I've heard during Zoom lessons! It's obvious that most of you understand the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> measures and how the KEY signature and ACCIDENTALS work! Generally, we've been playing this too slowly so your goal for this week is to speed up the tempo. With most marches, our ultimate goal would be around 120.

*#81, Frere Jacques.* Although this is a relatively simple piece to play, I've noticed there's a lot of confusion about how to make it into a *round*. If you'd like to play this with someone else, then you can easily turn it into a round by having one person start and simply play through to the end. The second person waits for TWO measures and then starts at the beginning and plays it normally all the way to the end. If you do it right, it'll sound cool and the second person will play the final two bars alone. Give it a shot with a Zoom friend or someone in your house.

*New Orleans Strut.* Those of you doing Zoom lessons know that we've focused on this piece a lot. We'll continue to work on this because it's our combined band piece and, if we record it, we'll have more people involved. Most of the beginning band kids aren't quite ready to play along with the recording yet so to get ready for that, your goal is to play it with a steady, but slow tempo. Some specific suggestions would be to play the entire piece with a loud metronome – count all the empty measures – keep going if you make a mistake. That's this week's goal!

### **Advanced Band:**

*New Orleans Strut.* Those of you doing Zoom lessons know that we've focused on this piece a lot. We'll continue to work on this because it's our combined band piece and, if we record it, we'll have more people involved. Most of the advanced kids are ready to play along with the recording we've posted on the SMP website. Put on some headphones or earbuds and play along this week. Once you're successful, we'll chat about recording YOU during your Zoom session!

*Procession for a New Day.* Wow! The progress you've shown on this composition is amazing! We've even had a couple of kids play through the entire piece with very few mistakes. Since it's our most complicated piece, most of us will need to slow it down and work on "chunking" the hardest parts. Choose a few of the most difficult measures and play them over and over until you train your fingers to do it smoothly. If you can, play the piece top-to-bottom and let me know in your Zoom lesson so I can hear your progress!

*Page 21, Montego Bay.* If the recording on our website goes too fast, I'd suggest searching for this piece on YouTube. There are TONS of young bands playing this piece and they choose different tempos. Seeing other groups will also give you the chance to observe things like posture, attention position, seating chart, cut offs, dynamics, quality, instrumentation, and professionalism (yes, elementary bands can perform in a very professional way!).

### **Beginning Strings:**

*#116, Song for Maria.* In our Zoom lessons, we've not spent much time on this. It's a good training piece for young string players. Since we probably won't be using this in our final concert, let's go ahead and put the "pick up" note back in (we removed it because it confused last year's orchestra). Also called an "upbeat," this is a note or a set of notes that start a musical passage *BEFORE* count one. In this case, the pick up note is on count 4. The way you'd start this is to think (or have someone say) "1,2,3" and then play on 4. If you look at #118, there are four 8<sup>th</sup> notes that act as pick up notes. Since this piece is in  $\frac{3}{4}$  (we haven't talked about that yet), the piece starts on count 2. We'll look at pick up notes a LOT as we all continue playing.

*#125, Jingli Nona.* Again, let's add the pick up note back into this piece. The piece is in 4/4 (displayed as a boldfaced "C" which stands for "common time") and the pick up note is one beat before count 1 so that note is on count 4. As you practice this piece, think "1,2,3" at the beginning and then enter on 4. This will get easier, I promise! Lots of songs have pick up notes such as "Happy Birthday" and even our national anthem!

*March of the Metro Gnome.* Violinists should know that one of our amazing tutors added a video of this piece to our website for you to use as a resource! About half of you are now playing the melody correctly but it's important to play with a steady beat. Use a metronome and set it for a fairly slow tempo. Once you start, keep playing! Also, the Zoom lessons have shown that lots of us are making our half notes and whole notes WAY too short. Concentrate on giving notes their full value!

### **Advanced Orchestra:**

*March of the Metro Gnome.* Violinists should know that one of our amazing tutors added a video of this piece to our website for you to use as a resource! Cellists – your part is CRUCIAL to the success of this piece so please use a metronome and play all pizzicato parts a little louder than the written dynamics (Zoom mics don't pick up low sounds very well). Most of the advanced strings are now playing the melody correctly but it's important to play with a steady beat. Use a metronome and set it for a fairly slow tempo. Once you start, keep playing! Also, the Zoom lessons have shown that lots of us are making our half notes and whole notes WAY too short. Concentrate on giving notes their full value! Also, take a closer look at the last four measures because they're a bit different than the common pattern throughout the piece.

*#192, Simple Gifts.* To appreciate this amazing tune, I recommend listening to Aaron Copland's treatment of the same melody within his composition Appalachian Spring:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XiLTwtuBi-o>. If you can ever hear it done by a live orchestra, do!

We've not spent much time on this piece in our Zoom meetings but it would be a terrific piece for any two string players to put together for our year-end concert! When you work on #192 this week, strive for loooooong notes that sound almost connected to each other. This will require smooth bowings and smooth hooked bowing (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AtjCaiQyc3I>).

*Dragon Hunter.* My gosh, a few of you played this piece SO well last week! Again, making this piece sound aggressive (as opposed to the smooth treatment of Simple Gifts) requires slightly more pressure on the strings and a confident approach to playing. Confidence comes with repetition so I'd like you to play this piece with a metronome at your own speed for the beginning of the week and then play along with the recording we've supplied on the SMP website for the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the week. It'd be fun to hear some of you play with the recording during this week's Zoom session!