

## May 4<sup>th</sup> Lesson Plan

Happy MAY Monday, SMP musicians! This is our sixth set of lesson plans and our tunes should be nearly ready for an audience. You should know that SMP is looking into ways to show your parents, families, and the public the work you've been doing at home. We're not sure what that will look like yet but our staff is thinking creatively so you have a chance to shine! After this week, you'll notice the lesson plans will seem shorter. That's exactly what happens as any performing group nears their performance date. If you've ever been in a school play, you'll remember loooooong rehearsals when the cast learned their lines, where to stand, how to move, all the lighting and microphones, etc. As the cast got closer to the gig, people had learned all those important skills and could enjoy shorter rehearsals and lots of run-throughs. It's the same with band and orchestra! Even though the lesson plans will look shorter, try to maintain the same amount of TIME so your stamina playing the instrument continues to grow. Lastly, don't forget that we've added recordings of all these pieces on our website. It's a good time to listen and/or play along with those recordings!

### **Beginning Band:**

*#78, Minuteman March.* Last week, I said we'd add a musical element to our literature that wasn't even in the music but audiences love it. What we'll be adding for the beginning band tunes are unwritten dynamics. What this means is that whenever a series of notes go uphill or "ascend," it's very common for musicians to get a bit louder (crescendo). The opposite is also true; any series of notes that goes downhill or "descends," typically gets softer (decrescendo) as you descend. This is the PERFECT piece for us to practice this. Start by taking a pencil (never a pen in the music world) and add up and down arrows beneath any passages that go up or down. The easiest example is to add a down arrow below the first measure and an up arrow below measures 3-4.

*#81, Frere Jacques.* Yup, we're gonna apply what we learned above to this piece as well! The most obvious measures here are 3 and 4. You might be a bit confused by 5 and 6 because there's a high note that interferes with the downhill pattern but that's super common and you can ignore that note – just look for general patterns. Once you understand this concept, feel free to add actual crescendo and decrescendo marks...look at the top of page 29 to see how these look (they're easy to make and I wish the book introduced them a little earlier).

*New Orleans Strut.* This is one of my favorite pieces we're working on! I like the jazzy feel and Mark Williams was one of my favorite band composers – and he lived in Washington! Since this is our combined beg/adv piece, we'll have five trombonists (Beatrice, Boryad, Henry, Daniel, Saire) playing the first 8 bars. This has to be SOLID so please focus on those measures, trombones! Percussionists...do any of you have a drum set at home? If so, we could add the bass drum and cymbal parts easily! The rest of the band can add unwritten dynamics as described above. This is the perfect week to see if you can make it all the way through this piece without stopping! Even if you make a mistake, keep going (it's super common for musicians to stop after every mistake but we need to learn to keep going). Please play the entire piece with a metronome on.

### **Advanced Band:**

*New Orleans Strut.* It's time to add this combined beg/adv piece back into your weekly work. Yes, it's easy for you advanced players but it also has to be solid! If you're having any problems with this piece, look back on past lesson plans where it's listed under the Beginning Band's lesson plans for hints, tips, and guidance.

*Procession for a New Day.* Don't forget that we're all playing "cue notes" for this tune. Percussionists – it's time to start assigning parts. Do any of you have a drum set at home? If so, we can add the bass drum! Let me know who is comfortable with the snare part for this. Also, how about the bell part? Just email me at [ward@seattlemusicpartners.org](mailto:ward@seattlemusicpartners.org). The rest of the band can add unwritten dynamics as described above in the Beginning Band lesson plan. This is the perfect week to see if you can make it all the way through this piece without stopping! Even if you make a mistake, keep going (it's super common for musicians to stop after every mistake but we need to learn to keep going). Please play the entire piece with a metronome on.

*Page 21, Montego Bay.* Again, drummers – it's time to start assigning parts. Once I know about the drum set situation, we can tackle that. Also, if any of you have claves or maracas at home (or a synthesizer that has those sounds), let me know. It'd be cool to add those! For the rest of the band, please set your metronome (loud is good) for 100 and try to make it from the beginning to the end. Count out all empty measures. If you're able to do this, play along with the recording we posted on SMP's website! (PS: it's time to go back and only play the TOP of the divisi parts)

### **Beginning Strings:**

*#116, Song for Maria.* We're hoping that most of you are now playing this piece at 100 beats per minute (have you used the online metronome we offer on our website?). What we'll be adding for the beginning strings tunes are unwritten dynamics. What this means is that whenever a series of notes go uphill or "ascend," it's very common for musicians to get a bit louder (crescendo). The opposite is also true; any series of notes that goes downhill or "descends," typically gets softer (decrescendo) as you descend. Start by taking a pencil (never a pen in the music world) and add up and down arrows beneath any passages that go up or down. The easiest example is to add an up arrow below measures 2, 4, and 6.

*#125, Jingli Nona.* Yup, we're gonna apply what we learned above to this piece as well! Do you see the ascending patterns in measures 1,2,5,6,etc? Now look at the descending patterns in 3, 7-8, etc? Look at the top of page 42 for tips on how to increase and decrease your volume. Here's a video that may help as well: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rqfiDsv5oHs>

*March of the Metro Gnome.* Yes, this is our longest song and since that's the case, it's important to start working on this piece (and the others, too) from the beginning to the end. Please count through all empty measures so you get a true sense of the length of the piece. If you make any

mistakes, keep going! It's super common for musicians to stop after making a mistake but we need to work on gaining stamina and to persevere after mistakes. I'd recommend playing along with the recording SMP posted on our website. This is a super common piece for young orchestras so feel free to search online for other groups that have played it! (note: in many recordings/videos, it's hard to hear the cellos that come in at bar 3. You should be able to hear the "wood block" at the beginning, however, which is supposed to mimic the sound of a metronome – get it? *Metro Gnome!*)

### **Advanced Orchestra:**

*March of the Metro Gnome.* It's time to add this combined beg/adv piece back into your weekly work. Yes, it's easy for you advanced players but it also has to be solid! If you're having any problems with this piece, look back on past lesson plans where it's listed under the Beginning Strings' lesson plans for hints, tips, and guidance.

*#192, Simple Gifts.* If you didn't know, this tune is VERY popular and common. There are zillions of arrangements to hear online, if you're interested! You can search by this title or "Shaker Tune." After hearing dozens of versions of this tune, I'm always struck by how many groups make the quarter notes too short. For this week, I'd like you to add a "tenuto" mark over every quarter note. This mark is just a simple line above or below the note head to remind the musician to play those notes for their full value. Since your book teaches staccato but NOT tenuto, here's a video to help you: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxfBzxiyG3c>. If we can all do this, the composition will sound smoother and more musical!

*Dragon Hunter.* When directors choose music for a concert, we often look for pieces that show the audience different moods or textures. This piece is the opposite of Simple Gifts! *Dragon Hunter* features driving rhythms and is aggressive. From 38 to 53 is much more delicate (the audience gets to hear two moods in this one piece!) but returns to the original texture after that. For this week, see if you can convey both moods. Ask someone to listen to you and to see if THEY can hear the difference! Also, it's time to start playing our pieces from the beginning to the end. If you make a mistake, keep going! It's super common for musicians to stop after making a mistake but this is a loooooong piece and we need to increase our stamina to make it through literature like this. Use a metronome or consider playing along with the recording we posted on SMP's website. Be sure to count through empty measures so they're part of your home practice, too.