
Introduction

This book outlines an interactive, collaborative and imaginative way to teach pieces that have been set for an exam syllabus. The whole philosophy of teaching the Simultaneous Learning way is that we are pro-active rather than reactive. We take the ingredients of a piece and explore them in imaginative ways, making connections between them, being creative and enabling students to learn in a really engaging way. Students should be encouraged to continue with these activities in their practice. Not only do they learn to play the piece, but they can then apply their understanding to learn further pieces more quickly. It is a positive and exciting process that supports thorough learning and the potential for greater progress and continuing achievement.

How to use this book

The work on each piece is divided into three periods:

- 1 Preliminary work before you introduce the notation;
- 2 Work when the student is learning the piece from the notation and
- 3 Refining the piece ready for performance.

The amount of time spent on each period will depend on how students respond to the activities and how quickly they absorb the ingredients and concepts. Many instructions (describe, discuss, identify, explore, etc.) are intended to be carried out collaboratively with the student.

One of the important reasons for adopting Simultaneous Learning is to get away from the 'beginning at bar one and correcting mistakes as they are inevitably made' approach. Instead, we identify the ingredients of each piece, discuss and explore them through imaginative and appropriate activities and by making up (improvising) very simple musical ideas. Through experimentation and mixing and matching the ingredients, students will ultimately learn the pieces in a much more secure and musical way, at the same time deepening their general musical understanding.

Getting started

Play the piece yourself and note the ingredients (they are also listed on each worksheet). Think about the music in terms of each individual student's particular needs and abilities. Look at the suggested activities and decide which ones are most appropriate for the student in that particular lesson, and which order you might like to introduce them. There is no set way to do this – you can begin with whichever you think is best. In the Simultaneous Learning way, if each activity is carefully chosen and each subsequent activity is carefully related and/or sequential, then your student should always achieve. Progress will be natural and ongoing. Do remember that in the first lesson on any new piece (and perhaps for several more lessons, too) the book is better closed and out of sight; try to rely more on your ear, memory and imagination.

Once you start these activities many more will become apparent – simply go with what works and your intuition. Begin anywhere appropriate in each piece – only occasionally at bar 1! Don't always

Lullaby (Neugasimov)

All about ... long flowing phrases, a gentle sound and beautiful, *pianissimo* chords at the end

Pre-notation activities

Rhythm

- Discuss $\frac{6}{8}$ and look at (or write) some simple tunes in this time signature.
- Choose and clap a suitable pulse in $\frac{6}{8}$: one person claps ♩. ♩. while the other claps quavers. Then swap around.
- Play call-and-response clapping games using two-bar phrases such as:



and



When these are secure try longer four-bar phrases, such as:



Key and scale patterns

- Play the scale and arpeggio of C major from notation and from memory.
- Introduce the left-hand arpeggio pattern in bar 1. Repeat it while improvising a right-hand tune using the notes of the scale.

Aural

- Listen to a performance of *Lullaby*.
- Clap the pulse as you listen to the performance, emphasising the strong beat in the bar.
- Discuss the dynamics in the piece: are the changes sudden or gradual?

Dynamics

- Play a C major scale and arpeggio:
 - *pp*, *p*, *mf*
 - with a *crescendo* and *diminuendo*.
- Improvise a short C major piece in $\frac{6}{8}$ using these dynamic markings, with one hand or hands together.

Articulation

- Make up some melodies in C major using:
 - slurs
 - gently separated notes
 - *tenuto*.
- Play call-and-response games using short phrases from the piece, exploring these articulations.

Title, character and context

- What is a lullaby? Listen to other lullabies.
- Listen to Brahms' *Lullaby*.
- List the main characteristics of a lullaby.

Introducing the notation (opening the book)

Rhythm

- Set up a suitable pulse in $\frac{2}{4}$. Play two bars (hands separately or together), then count and hear the two bars internally. Play the next two bars and so on.
- Find and clap any recurring rhythmic patterns.
- Tap the rhythm from the notation until secure, hands separately at first and then (section by section) hands together.
- Discuss ties and compare the rhythmic patterns in the left hand bars 1–4 with bars 18–21.

Key and scale patterns*

- Discuss the key of the piece and play the scale and arpeggio regularly.
- Find examples of the music passing through D flat major and E flat major. Make up some patterns in these keys that will help to learn the music.
- Explore the scales and arpeggios of keys related to C major: G major and A minor. Discuss their relationship.

Articulation and phrasing

- Explore the opening four bars, identifying the four different articulation markings and making sure they are played differently.
- Identify the one three-bar phrase in the piece.

Special ingredients

- Study all the two- and three-note chords. Practise them with the various dynamic and articulation markings found in the piece, and then with their own particular markings.
- Explore the left-hand melody (bars 18–25). Then choose one of the two-note right-hand chords from the piece and make up a new left-hand melody to go with it.

Dynamics

- Look at the various dynamic levels in the music and notice how they fit the phrases.
- Circle all the dynamics using different colours for the different levels.

Title, character and context

- Discuss the title.
- Think of some descriptive words that illustrate the character of the piece.

* For more help with scales and arpeggios, try the C major Finger Fitness section in *Improve your scales!* Grade 2.