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High School Guitar: Building a Successful Four-Year Program

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HIGH SCHOOL GUITAR:
BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL FOUR-YEAR PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

High School Guitar: Building a Successful Four-Year Program is an instructional text written for teachers who wish to develop or extend a guitar program at the high school level. It includes anecdotal experiences and teaching practices from the successful guitar program built at Mt. Hope High School in Bristol, RI over the past twenty years. Information about starting a guitar program is provided, and class content and curriculum development for each of the four years of high school guitar instruction are discussed. In addition, ideas about developing and maintaining a classical guitar performance ensemble at the high school level are included.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction and Purpose

High school guitar classes and guitar education are growing trends in public schools throughout the country. Many high schools now offer guitar studies in addition to traditional band, orchestra and choral programs. Many states, including Rhode Island, have added All-State Guitar Ensemble to their All-State music programs (Hoeflicker, 2013). The National Association for Music Education (NAfME) and the NAfME Council on Guitar Education have trained hundreds of music educators each year in Teaching Guitar Workshops (TGW), as numerous guitar education programs have emerged (Horowitz, 2008). Class guitar method material is readily available to the music educator. A plethora of guitar method books have been published to aid the music educator in developing curriculum (Berg, 2011), and guitar teachers must weed through scores of online resources to find those useful to classroom instruction (GuitarEduNet, 2015).

The purpose of this project is to fill an existing void in the literature about teaching high school guitar by providing a guide for music educators who wish to begin a high school guitar program or to enhance a current program. One of the goals of this project is to heighten awareness of the similarities between a four-year guitar program and four-year band, orchestra, or choral program.

Existing Material

Two pieces of existing literature for high school class guitar curriculum that are not method books are *Teaching Classroom Guitar* by Steve Eckels and *H.O.T. (Hands-on Training) Teachers Manual* by Nancy Lee Marsters. I will briefly review

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each book and discuss the similarities and differences between these two texts and the one I will write.

Marsters, founder of Class Guitar Resources has published a series of method books and instructional manuals for teaching classroom guitar. The series consists of three method books: *Explore It! Guitar & Styles (1997)*, *First-Year Guitar (1997)*, *Second-Year Guitar (1997)* accompanied by *H.O.T. (Hands-on Training) Teachers Manuals*. The teacher's manuals include daily lesson plans, reproducible tests and exams, guidance on guitar technique and classroom management, and information on equipment for the guitar classroom. The manuals provide sequence for instruction for middle school guitar class, and for two years of high school guitar instruction.

One goal of each manual is to support current band or choral directors who find themselves teaching guitar. Proper classical guitar technique and sequential skill development are stressed throughout. In the *First-Year Guitar* manual, an introductory section provides helpful information about setting up a guitar classroom, grading and testing procedures, and curriculum guidelines. The unit teaching plans include ten sequential units for instruction. Among my favorite lessons in the unit plans are excellent suggestions for teaching and assessing basic chord progressions, several methods for assessment for a whole class, and a lesson on trio playing that combines skill development from the first three units.

Marsters' books also contain excellent suggestions for supplementary materials and materials for duplication. The materials for duplication include helpful reproducible chapter test and quizzes, worksheets, and assessment rubrics that accompany each unit.

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Another notable book that discusses how to build a strong guitar program is *Teaching Classroom Guitar* by Steve Eckels (2009). *Teaching Classroom Guitar* is a reference manual that includes an outline for daily guitar class instruction. It also includes ideas for class guitar planning and assessment. In the preface, Eckels emphasizes that this text is not a method book, but rather a book of techniques and strategies to reinforce the information in a chosen method. He makes several recommendations of method books and publishers.

Teaching Classroom Guitar is set up by lessons. Each lesson provides exercises, objectives, and processes to obtain a specific skill. The skill development and technique sections of the book are excellent. These sections include comprehensive approaches for teaching technique such as right and left hand development and finger picking styles, as well as skill development in note reading, chord playing, and improvisation. Each lesson provides examples and tips for successful classroom procedures.

Supplementary material includes helpful tables and charts such as popular song guides, practice guides, and reproducible manuscript and tab paper, as well as guitar chord charts and lesson plan and assessment pages. Eckels also offers sound advice for the new classroom guitar teacher regarding effective planning and student engagement.

These two existing texts have similarities and differences. They both provide the music educator with daily plans and they both offer excellent advice regarding classical guitar technique. Eckels' book also provides actual lessons (such as those found in method books) that incorporate his ideas. Marsters' manuals are meant to

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accompany her method books. Both books aid the music educator in teaching classroom guitar lessons, but neither discusses the development of a four-year program that includes a performance ensemble. Neither text compares a four-year high school guitar program to a four-year high school band, orchestra or choral program that includes sections on scheduling, four-year curriculum scope and sequence, performance festivals and tours, fundraising and parent organizations, as well as involvement in state solo and ensemble and all-state festivals. The void in the existing literature, therefore, is reflected in the inadequate or non-existing material for a guitar teacher seeking advice about the development of a comprehensive, four-year high school guitar program.

This text, *High School Guitar: Building a Four-Year Program*, will establish a new line of thinking that includes a four-year plan. Rather than providing one method, many different methods and materials will be discussed. Rather than providing daily sequence of lessons, an overview of each of the four years of high school guitar instruction will be fully investigated. In addition to curriculum guidelines, anecdotal experiences and tested teaching practices will be explored.

A brief description of my plan

For the past twenty years I have taught guitar at Mt. Hope High School in Bristol, RI. I began with one single guitar class, which quickly developed into a four-year guitar program. Currently, and for the past fifteen years, over 125 students participate in guitar classes at Mt. Hope each year. Through the trials and tribulations of developing this program, I've learned a lot. I look forward to sharing some of what I've learned with new and existing high school class guitar teachers.

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One of the most successful outcomes of the program at Mt. Hope is the award-winning Mt. Hope High School Guitar Ensemble. I have been fortunate to be the director of this group for the past fifteen years. The Mt. Hope High School Guitar Ensemble has performed and won awards at festivals in Virginia, Florida, and New York, and in 2013 they performed at the Massachusetts Music Educators Conference in Boston, MA. In addition to directing the Mt. Hope High School Guitar Ensemble at the Massachusetts Music Educators Conference, I was invited to present two sessions at the conference: *Teaching Classroom Guitar* and *Building a Four-Year Guitar Program at the High School Level*. It was during the preparation for those sessions that I began to develop the material and the ideas for writing this guide.

My plan to write this guide also extends from the work I've done with Teaching Guitar Workshops (TGW,) a national teacher-training program sponsored by NAFME, The Guitar and Accessories Marketing Association (GAMA), and The National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM). In addition to participating in the workshops for two years, I was selected as an intern to teach a summer session of the workshops. I also worked closely with one of the co-founders of TGW, Nancy Marsters, to publish a series of assessment rubrics that accompany her guitar method books. In addition, through my work with TGW, I was recently nominated to serve on the NAFME Guitar Council.

In 2001, I was honored to be selected Mt. Hope High School's Teacher of the Year, and even more delighted when I was chosen for the Bristol-Warren Regional School District Teacher of the Year. I became one of three semifinalists for the 2001 Rhode Island Teacher of the Year. I believe in many ways I was awarded these great

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honors due to of the development of the guitar program at Mt. Hope High School. In my application for the Rhode Island Teacher of the Year, I wrote about my guitar students. I am passionate about opening up the world and benefits of music education to students who otherwise would not have this opportunity.

During my tenure at Mt. Hope High School, I have had the privilege of being a cooperating teacher for eighteen student teachers from Rhode Island College, The University of Rhode Island, and Salve Regina University. In compiling information to help these up-and-coming music educators, and with their input, we have created curriculum guides, lesson plans, assessment rubrics, parental correspondences, project guidelines, course syllabi, and repertoire lists, just to name a few. My intent is to share this information with future educators throughout the guide.

Additionally, during my course work at Rhode Island College in pursuit of a Masters degree in Music Education, I was very fortunate to work with Eric Christensen, director of guitar studies. In my research with Mr. Christensen, I developed a list of the “top twenty” compositions and arrangements for guitar ensemble that will appear in this guide and I discovered many new resources for high school guitar ensemble repertoire that I will also share.

Finally, my work as a high school choral director for the past thirty years has helped me tremendously in building a successful guitar program. I believe organizational tasks, motivational approaches, and curriculum development ideas for high school band or choral programs are the same tasks, approaches and ideas one would use to develop a strong, thriving four-year guitar program. Therefore, I also

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intend to share ideas I have learned as a choral director that directly relate to developing a four-year high school guitar program.

Professional Biography and The Mt. Hope High School Guitar Program

The single factor that influenced me most to become a teacher is the joy and confidence I gained as a child and young adult while participating in music education. From a very young age, I knew that I would like to help others experience what I had experienced. My former music teachers and my parents, who were both wonderful educators, had a great deal of influence on my life's choices. Teachers with high standards who constantly went above and beyond the call of duty for their students have inspired me. As a spirited and enthusiastic elementary teacher, my mother instilled in me a life-long love of sharing and learning. As a teacher and department head of industrial arts and ultimately an assistant superintendent, my father provided me with an example of integrity and a work ethic in which you can accomplish anything with effort and a positive attitude. I was taught to have confidence in myself, to get involved, to embrace life and learning with passion, and most importantly, I was given the gift of music.

Another factor, perhaps not so much of why I became a teacher, but why I've continued to teach, particularly at the high school level, is my admiration and fondness of high school-aged people. In music, I am quite often fortunate to teach students for four consecutive years. I have come to appreciate the amazing transition of growth and maturing in young people during those years. High school students hold a unique blend of eagerness, vulnerability, sense of humor, and emotional and

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intellectual growth that fascinates and intrigues me daily. I am fortunate to have a job I love.

My greatest contributions and accomplishments in education are sharing those same aspects of teaching which most influenced me; to instill confidence and enthusiasm in young people, to hold myself and my students to the highest standards, to provide my students with opportunity for leadership and integrity and to make learning enjoyable.

Over the past thirty years, I have been a choral director at New Bedford High School in Massachusetts, the Dwight School in New York City, and the Lincoln School in Providence Rhode Island. I came to Mt. Hope High School as a choral director in 1995. The choruses I direct at Mt. Hope have been recognized and commended for their excellence throughout our communities and have achieved ratings of excellent and superior at state and national festivals. Yet, one of my greatest contributions at Mt. Hope High School has been the development and implementation of a classical guitar program. The success of the program is such that each year we have over one hundred students enrolled in three levels of guitar classes, including two classical guitar ensembles. Our guitar program has helped us reach a percentage of the students who wouldn't otherwise get involved in a traditional band/choral music program. In some instances, students at-risk may find a reason to come to school and stay in school because of guitar class. Through guitar classes, we reach many students of many different levels and styles of learning in a single class.

Throughout this book I make suggestions for several excellent guitar texts for reference. It is, however, a desire for dependable material about teaching guitar class

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and developing a strong high school guitar program that inspired me create this book. Music educators have an endless supply of “how to” books for choral and band high school programs. I hope this book will provide information to teachers who wish to begin or maintain high school guitar programs, and that it will serve as a guide to help guitar education flourish.

Philosophy of Music Education

My personal belief is that as teachers our jobs go far beyond a daily regimen of spewing out subject matter. Our jobs are to inspire young people to think for themselves, to encourage a desire for life-long learning, and to provide our students with the skills and knowledge necessary to obtain their personal goals and be their personal best. An outstanding teacher must have the ability, skill, and knowledge to explain and demonstrate subject matter thoroughly and in several ways. Even more importantly, they must have the patience to watch, observe, and assess students’ efforts and allow students to learn by doing. At the same time we must instill values and insure that *all* students are given an opportunity to learn.

I am fortunate to teach a subject which I strongly believe fosters the values that are most important to education. Music education encourages self-discipline, self-confidence, independence, imagination, and critical thinking. Through music, we help our students learn creativity, leadership, teamwork, and responsibility. In a fast-paced world, where everything seems instant, disposable and at your fingertips, it is difficult to instill a sense of assiduousness in our students. Many are too willing to give up on anything that does not come easy or in an instant. Through the discipline of music, students learn that hard work does pay off. They develop perseverance,

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determination, cooperation, and the ability to organize time. In addition, as music educators, we are teaching a skill that will be with our students throughout their entire lives.

As performers, and in preparation for each performance, our students are building self-confidence. Each student who performs is gaining an experience of personal reward. The expression on the face of a student as we leave the stage, bursting with pride and excitement, is in itself one of the greatest rewards of teaching music. They are experiencing that powerful feeling of accomplishment, of being part of a whole entity, the result of their efforts.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the many guitar students I have taught over the years that helped me become a better teacher and to the student teachers from Rhode Island College, University of Rhode Island, and Salve Regina University who kept my guitar teaching authentic. Thank you to my advisors, Dr. Robert Franzblau and Eric Christensen for their guidance throughout this project. Thank you to my colleague, Mt. Hope High School band director Christopher Lambert, who took over many of the first and second level guitar classes at Mt. Hope High School to further develop our program. Thank you to Nancy Marsters, who through the national Teaching Guitar Workshops, helped and inspired me to me build our guitar program. Last but not least, thank you to my colleague, mentor and long-time friend Robert Arsenault who after twenty years of teaching together continues to inspire me daily to do what is right for kids.

Chapter Two: Why Guitar?

Introduction

Chapter two includes the influence of the guitar, supplementing a teacher's schedule, programs being the relatively inexpensive, and how the guitar promotes creativity and encourages singing.

The Influence of the Guitar

Teaching guitar at the high school level is a very rewarding experience for many reasons. One reason is the instrument itself. It is not necessary to convince students that the guitar is cool; they already know that. Many students enter the classroom already confident that they want to learn to play guitar. The instrument itself has created that great influence. The students recognize the versatility of the instrument, and no matter what their musical taste or background, chances are the guitar has had some influence on them in some way. Each student can name several famous guitarists, most have several favorite guitar songs, and almost immediately each student has a song they want to learn.

The second reason the guitar is influential is that beginning guitar students are rewarded almost immediately. Unlike many other instruments, within a short time, students are able to produce a gratifying sound that instantly rewards and entertains. This is not to say that serious study and practice are not necessary to become a skilled guitarist, of course that is true. However, beginners are turned on to the sound of the instrument almost immediately. There is very little a guitar teacher has to do to convince the student to want to learn the instrument. What we do instead is nurture that intrinsic desire.

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The third reason is the guitar is also the primary instrument in numerous genres of music, and has been since the Baroque era. Some of the many genres of today's music in which guitar is prominent include pop, rock, classical, flamenco, jazz, blues, reggae, bluegrass, and folk, just to name a few. Through these many styles, guitar and learning guitar has become increasingly popular over the Internet. A good deal of resource is available to help students practice their skill and expand their repertoire in all genres.

The final reason is in addition to the numerous styles of music that can be played on guitar, there are also many different styles of the instrument itself. Any style of guitar is accessible through class guitar instruction. Whether it's electric, acoustic, six-string, twelve-string, steel string, nylon string, or even bass guitar, the basic lessons will apply. Another factor in the versatility of guitar is it can be played alone, as a solo instrument, with others in duets and trios, as a member of a rock band, or as a member of a classical guitar ensemble. No other instrument has that flexibility. The guitar is a tool to help learn musicianship skills such as reading notation, accompaniment, and listening to music, and the guitar is often thought of as a social status symbol. High school students love to walk around carrying a guitar case! Last but not least, the guitar is portable. Many times the function of a guitar is compared to that of a piano. It is possible to play melodically and harmonically, or both. But it's not so easy to take your piano to a campfire.

Guitar Classes Supplement A Music Teacher's Schedule

Music educators have long known that building and maintaining a strong music program means job security. When hundreds of students are signing up for

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guitar class each year, the administration is far less likely to consider cutting that successful program during budget cuts. Developing a four-year program at the high school level not only creates job security for the music educator; it gives guitar students an opportunity to develop great skill and provides the same opportunities as a four-year band or choral program. The high school guitar program offers opportunity to many other students. Music educators with part time positions are able to supplement their programs by adding guitar. In my current position, I was hired as a 3/5th choral director and became full time after developing the guitar program.

Guitar Attracts New Students and Help Students at Risk

A typical high school band and choral program attracts approximately 10-15% of the student population. It also attracts a certain type of student (Teaching Guitar Workshops, n.d.). These days, band geeks are proud of that title. It is not true of all band, choral and orchestra participants, but sometimes these students are from families who have invested financially in and offered a great deal of support to their child's education. The high school guitar program reaches out to other populations of students as well. *Any* student can take Guitar One regardless of their elementary and middle school music training. Students do not need to provide their own instrument. This is not to say that all guitar students are disadvantaged and all band students are privileged or vice-versa, but it is important to note that a high school guitar program opens up opportunity for music education to a group of student who otherwise may not have had this opportunity.

For students who love guitar and may struggle in other areas, academically or socially, guitar class may just be the reason they come to school every day. The

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opportunity for self-expression and the development of skill gives each student something to be very proud of. In addition, students with an opportunity to participate in after school activities through the guitar program, may have better school attendance. When students feel as though they belong to a group, they want to be there. Students at risk of dropping out of school may not because of guitar class. Guitar Ensemble membership also gives students a sense of belonging and purpose. Feeling connected with a group keeps them involved and motivated, and in some cases, it keeps them coming to school.

Guitar Programs Are Relatively Inexpensive

Beginning guitars are relatively inexpensive, and building a guitar program is relatively inexpensive compared to the cost of starting a band or an orchestra. The costs and ideas of setting up a guitar program at the high school level are discussed in chapter four; however, one reason to consider teaching guitar to begin with is this: it's easy on the budget. This is particularly relevant when proposing a guitar program to the administration or school board. Proportionately, many more students will benefit from the cost of a guitar program compared to other music programs.

Guitar Promotes Creativity and Encourages Singing

Creativity is often mentioned as one of the essential "21st century skills" needed by students to compete in a global economy (A Guitar in Every Classroom, 2015). As music educators, we encourage creativity on a daily basis. Music education helps students build confidence and helps students learn to be creative. Guitar is one of the easiest tools to teach creativity I've encountered in over thirty years. For example, as outlined in the Guitar One course content, teaching a unit in blues

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improvisation is an immediate and straightforward process that gets all students to create their own musical ideas. The versatility of the guitar also promotes creativity. There is always an extension to a class guitar lesson for more advanced students to go further in creative ways. One example is for an advanced student to perform a Root, 5-strum pattern while less advanced students are learning basis chord progressions. Another example might be experienced students using complex rhythmic patterns while beginners keep a steady beat. Many of these opportunities for creativity will be discussed in the class content chapters.

Guitar classes can also encourage singing. I met a classical guitarist once who was very offended when people called her a singer because she carried a guitar case. She often replied, "I'm not a singer, I'm a guitarist." I got her point, but I always thought the opposite point was more important to guitar education. Over the years in the classroom I have observed that learning guitar does promote singing. Always welcome (and never force) guitar students to sing, and inevitably most end up singing somewhere along the line. Recently I brought a chorus and a guitar ensemble to perform at an assisted living facility for a Christmas concert. At the end of the two performances we had a sing-along with the residents. Much to my delight, the guitarists all joined in. Many of them even came up to the front of the performance area to help lead the audience in song. Many times on a "bail-out" lesson for a late Friday afternoon session I put chords and popular songs up on the projection screen. Predictably, most end up singing along.

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Chapter Three: The Four-Year Program Overview

Introduction

Chapter three includes an overview of the four-year high school guitar program, including how to schedule four years of high school guitar and descriptions of each class.

Scheduling Four Years of Guitar Class

The best way to build a strong guitar program at the high school level is to create a program that student will want to participate in for four years. In most high schools students who sign up for band, orchestra, or chorus do so for four years, and the same should be true for guitar. A four-year high school guitar program ideally begins with a full year Guitar One class, followed by a full year Guitar Two class. Third and fourth year students perform in a classical guitar ensemble or advanced guitar ensemble. By developing a program in which students grow musically and socially each year, guitar class becomes their first choice of course selection.

Guitar One and Guitar Two may be offered as full year classes or as semester classes. The current program at Mt. Hope High School consists of three Guitar One semester classes that feed into two Guitar Two classes. From a curriculum standpoint, I prefer full year Guitar One classes. There is a lot of material to cover in a first-year guitar class and to have the luxury of time is very helpful. However, from a scheduling standpoint, the semester (or half-time) Guitar One classes provide an opportunity for more students to try guitar. Also, it works well to have several sections of the Guitar One feeding into the Guitar Two classes. At Mt. Hope High School, Guitar Two is offered as either a full year or a semester class. The semester

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class is offered for the more advanced students who cannot schedule the full year class. This option works well providing the student receives permission from the instructor to forgo the full year class. Flexibility in course offerings allows many more students to participate in the guitar program.

At the successful completion of Guitar Two, students are eligible to take Guitar Ensemble and also have the opportunity to audition for Advanced Guitar Ensemble. The Ensembles may be offered as separate classes or as a combined class, depending on enrollment from year to year. Advanced Guitar Ensemble students study more advanced literature and perform in the community more frequently than Guitar Ensemble. During the years when the two classes have met simultaneously, the groups are combined for the majority of the time. Advanced Ensemble students are encouraged to perform at a higher skill level of both solo and ensemble literature and are occasionally allowed to work on their own. In addition, Advanced Ensemble students are offered more opportunity to perform and encouraged to create their own performance opportunities. For example, one student recently scheduled a performance at an assisted living facility where her mother works. Another student arranged a performance for the Advanced Guitar Ensemble as part of a class project in a history class. More suggestions for performance venues for both ensembles are discussed in the Guitar Ensemble class content section.

Course Descriptions

The following Course descriptions of guitar classes are taken from the Mt. Hope High School Program of Studies booklet. Mt. Hope High School is currently using a Proficiency Based Graduation Requirement (PBGR) system. As part of this

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system, each student is required to complete Arts Proficiency. These courses enable the completion of that requirement.

Guitar One ♦ .5 credits ♦ Grades 9-12

Guitar One is designed to offer students the opportunity to learn beginning guitar method. Students will develop technical skill in chord playing, note reading, and scales, enabling them to perform a varied repertoire of beginning guitar literature. Students who continue with Guitar Two will have multiple opportunities to complete the Arts Proficiency.

Guitar Two ♦ 1 credit ♦ Grades 10-12

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Guitar One

In Guitar Two, students will develop skills of position studies, primary and secondary chords, fingering-picking technique, and scales. Students will study, rehearse, and perform intermediate guitar solo and ensemble literature with correct technique and expression. Students will have multiple opportunities to complete the Arts Proficiency. This is a full year course, which may be taken for one semester with permission of the instructor.

Guitar Two Semester ♦ .5 credit ♦ Grades 10-12

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Guitar One

For students unable to schedule full year Guitar II, with permission of the instructor.

Guitar Ensemble ♦ 1 credit ♦ Grades 9-12

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Guitar One and Guitar Two

The Guitar Ensemble is open to students who have successfully

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completed Guitar One and Guitar Two. Students will study, rehearse, and perform intermediate to advanced guitar solo and ensemble literature with correct technique and expression. Students will participate in class and community recitals and performances throughout the year. Students will have multiple opportunities to complete the Arts Proficiency.

Advanced Guitar Ensemble ♦ 1 credit ♦ Grades 9-12

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Guitar One and Guitar Two and audition

The Advanced Guitar Ensemble is open by audition to students who have successfully completed Guitar One and Guitar Two. Students will study, rehearse, and perform advanced guitar solo and ensemble literature with correct technique and expression. Students will participate in numerous class and community recitals and performances throughout the year. Students will have multiple opportunities to complete the Arts Proficiency.

Chapter Four: Getting Started

Introduction

Chapter four includes information about who should teach guitar, how to obtain guitars, purchasing accessories, text suggestions and why classical guitars are recommended.

Who Should Teach Guitar?

There are many suggestions throughout this chapter about beginning a guitar class, including the equipment you will need and procedures you may take for a successful class. But first of all, is teaching guitar right for you? High school class guitar is in many ways like band, orchestra, and chorus; therefore qualified music educators should teach class guitar. Music educators must be given credit for their knowledge and ability to teach many instruments. If guitar is not your major instrument, there are several steps you can take when developing a guitar program. Take some lessons, practice, and try to enroll in the GAMA/NAfME Teaching Guitar Workshops described below. Most music educators, when teaching an instrument that may not be their primary instrument, follow the old adage “first do no harm.” Invite experts into your classroom and learn technique along with your students. Ask local colleges to send you their music education majors who play guitar as student teachers. They have a lot to learn from you, but you may also learn from them. Whether you are developing skill as a guitarist, or already play guitar, as long as you have the desire to teach and do so properly, teaching guitar is for you. Exposing hundreds of students to the guitar each year, and giving them an opportunity to enjoy a skill that

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will last a lifetime, is more important than whether or not you can perform an Etude by Fernando Sor (although that would be a great goal!)

National Teaching Guitar Workshops

For teachers just beginning a guitar program, and for those who wish to extend a current program, I recommend the national Teaching Guitar Workshops (TGW). The success of the Mt. Hope High School guitar program is credited in part to my participation in the workshops, which are offered and sponsored by the National Association for Music Education (NAfME), the Guitar and Accessories Marketing Association (GAMA), and the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM). Teaching Guitar Workshops offer training each year at locations across the country to music educators interested in beginning or expanding school guitar programs. Since its inception in 1995, over 3000 music educators have participated in the workshops. GAMA has reported that over 1.28 million students have learned guitar in school because of TGW. Their objective is to help music teachers start or enhance classroom guitar programs. The workshops are extremely informative and provide an abundance of resources for beginning guitar teachers.

How to Obtain Guitars

For guitar programs just getting off the ground, the most obvious and immediate need is guitars. At Mt. Hope High School, we began with one Guitar One class and a few school-owned guitars. Several students brought in their own guitars, we advertised for guitar donations in the local paper (and received a few very nice instruments), a district-wide e-mail post brought in several loaners and donations from staff, and I also brought in a few guitar of my own. After that first year, I

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learned the hard way not to bring in personal equipment I cared about, but it did help get the program off the ground! During those first years, we had every type and quality of guitar imaginable, some with strings so high off the fingerboard they were barely playable. But by the second year, when enough students enrolled to create a second section of guitar, we had a fairly decent instrument in the hands of each student. After several successful years and growth into three full classes, we were able to put guitars in the budget. We now have a set of twenty-six guitars shared by five guitar classes. Each year, we buy three new guitars and choose three older guitars to send to the middle school feeder program.

This brings to mind a scheduling issue that may develop as a guitar program grows. The second year in existence, we had fifteen students sign up for Guitar Two, and about thirty students sign up for Guitar One. There were not enough kids to run a Guitar Two class and too many for only one Guitar One class. We took the list of those who signed up for the Guitar One and contacted guidance counselors, teachers, parents and the students themselves. We found several students who could either read music or had had some prior training. We moved those students to Guitar Two and were able to run all three classes. Teaching Guitar Two that year was challenging. A lot of review was necessary and at the same time the student who took the previous level deserved to move on. Throughout the class content sections there are many suggestions for allowing more advanced students to work ahead. Again, the flexibility in scheduling is what made the program grow.

Once we began to purchase guitars, we immediately saw the need to protect our investment. Teaching about the care of the equipment is crucial. Teenagers are

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not always graceful, to say the least. Accidents happen, guitars get dropped, banged, scratched and dented way too easily. Addressing the care of the instrument ahead of time decreases the damage. Included in the Guitar One class content is discussion about how to treat an instrument. One tactic I learned at the Teaching Guitar Workshops was to name each guitar after a famous guitarist. Students take ownership of the guitar they play and become attached to them. (See Appendix W for a sample of our classroom guitar usage chart.) Every year students come back to guitar class requesting the guitar they played the year before.

Once I began to purchase many guitars, I tried several brands. The guitar I recommend the most for the value is the Yamaha CG classical series. For the guitar ensembles, I have found this to be the best instrument in our price range for consistency in tone. It is also crucial to purchase sturdy, hard cases with strong buckles for each instrument. During our many bus trips to performances, and even when walking from one classroom to the next, the protection offered by a sturdy case is invaluable. Our price range for guitars is approximately \$250, plus approximately \$100 per case. I recommend the TKL Classical Guitar Hard Shell Cases.

So Many Accessories

In addition to guitars you will need music stands, chairs for good posture, footstools, tuners, strings, textbooks and a place to store everything. Here are some recommendations. Equipment inventory should include a set of standard \$10 collapsible classical footstools. I have learned to reserve our footstools for concerts, after having to replace them from wear and tear in the classroom. Instead, my students use woodblocks of various heights that have been supplied by the Tech Ed

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department. Some years, the guitarists have made a project of painting them different colors and designs. We take two foot-long 2x4s nailed together for our shorter stools, and three foot-long 2x4s for the taller stools. Another dimension we've used is a foot-long piece of fence post, which creates a third level option. There is a large Rubbermaid bin in the corner of the classroom to store the footstools (or footstands.) We try to discourage basketball shots with wooden footstools when it's time to put the equipment away.

Guitar tuners are helpful in the second and third level classes. Teaching tuning by ear is an important step in the beginning level classes. I have used several types of tuners, mostly a standard Korg guitar and bass tuner as well as Snark clip-on tuners (which the students prefer.) Keeping track of tuners over the years has been an issue. They disappear quite easily. It's a good idea to get in the habit of labeling and numbering them to help keep track. Once I had a student, having graduated three years prior, return a tuner to me that his mother found in a jacket pocket. Typically, you should have approximately ten tuners in the classroom and a case or container in the front of the classroom, which houses the tuners. By putting a student in each class in charge of distributing and collecting tuners, there is a better chance they won't disappear. In the age of smart phones, tuners have become less of an issue. Many students have a tuning app on their phones that we allow them to use in class during tuning.

I replace the strings on each guitar at the beginning of the year and before festivals. Several times throughout the course of the year strings will need to be replaced as they break. (The A-5 and D-4 string are replaced most frequently because

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they are wound. E-5 does not break as frequently because of its thickness.) The upper three strings E1, B2 and G3 we replace before a concert or festival. Many years prior to the start of the school year, the Advance Guitar Ensemble members and I will get together a week before school starts and replace strings. It's become a bit of a rite of passage and a good chance to meet with the student leaders to start planning our year.

It is important to have a space to store guitars, preferably in their cases. If possible, store guitar away from heat and windows. We were very lucky to have our custodians build us a locking, wooden rack for our guitars. The guitars are stored alphabetically by name for easy access as the students enter and leave the room.

Another very important tool for beginning guitar classes is a projector and screen. We have a very large screen at the front of the classroom on which we project textbooks, worksheets and handouts using either a computer with scanned items or a device such as an Elmo. The Elmo is a high definition document camera and projection system that is rapidly replacing the old overhead projector. The use of the Elmo projector or scanned pages from the textbooks is discussed further in the Guitar One class content. Teaching students to read notes is more effective when all of their eyes are following the notes on the screen at the front of the classroom. Also, with no music stand in front of beginning guitarists, the teacher is able to see the students' hands to insure they are playing the correct notes or chords.

Text Suggestions

For Guitar One class, I recommend *H.O.T. Hands-On –Training First Year Guitar* by Nancy Lee Marsters, published by Class Guitar Resources. This is one of the many textbooks I was introduced to at the Teaching Guitar Workshops. The text

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includes a very well organized teacher guide and rubrics for assessment, which I helped to create. I also recommend *Essential Elements for Guitar, Book 1* by Will Schmid and Bob Morris, Hal Leonard Publications. Essential Elements has an easy to follow note reading unit with songs students enjoy.

Two great texts for Guitar Two are *Enjoy Playing the Guitar*, Books 1 and 2 by Debbie Cracknell, Oxford University Press and *Second Year Guitar H.O.T. (Hands-On -Training)* by Leo Welch and Nancy Lee Marsters, published by Class Guitar Resources. Some Guitar Ensemble resources include *Guitar Ensembles, Intermediate level* by Nancy Marsters, Leo Welch, and Romana Hartmetz published by Class Guitar Resources, *Playing Guitars Together* by Debbie Cracknell published by Oxford University Press, *Christopher Parkening Guitar Method, Vo. 1* published by Hal Leonard, *Music for 3 or 4 Guitars* ed. Paul Gerrits, published by Les Editions Doberman-Yppan and *Fredrick Noad Guitar Anthology: The Renaissance Guitar and The Classical Guitar* published by Hal Leonard, and *Sight Reading for the Classical Guitar, Level I-III* by Robert Benedict, Alfred Music Publishing.

Why Teach Classical?

There are many reasons to teach classical guitar technique to high school students. First of all, a four-year program that culminates in two years of a classical guitar ensemble enables the maximum number of students to participate. Additionally, a classical guitar program gives students a foundation on which they can build. Those wishing to play rock, blues, or metal will have strong skills that transfer to those genres. Classically trained musicians develop discipline and mastery of technique with the potential of building complex virtuosity. Exposing students to

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excellent literature will only expand their horizons and give them something to appreciate that they may not have learned otherwise.

One of the greatest rewards of teaching a four-year guitar program is hearing a student perform a level five or level six (college level) study by Fernando Sor at the spring recital, knowing that student first picked up a guitar four years prior in Guitar One class. Not all students achieve this level, but if even one student leaves your program and goes on to study guitar at the college level, it's worthwhile.

I often tell our students a story about a student teacher we had who went to a local community college. He wanted to be a guitar major. He walked into his audition and very brilliantly played a song by Ozzy Osbourne. The college music professor told him he had great talent, but he should go home and learn a song by Mozart and come back. He did. He went on to a four-year college, earned a degree in music education and has been teaching music in our district for the past ten years.

In addition to some of the philosophical reasons behind teaching classical guitar, there are also several practical reasons. A very basic reason to use classical guitars is that nylon strings are easier on beginners' fingers. Secondly, it's easier for the classroom teacher to see the students' fingers to make corrections when they are learning chords and notes if they are holding the guitar correctly in classical position. One analogy that I give my students each year, as to why we use this technique in class, is imagine you were paying good money to take piano lessons. You may learn some popular songs or some Broadway tunes, but you would expect that piano teacher to teach the works of the Masters. It is the same with classical guitar. I make it a point to tell the students we are not dictating genre, but rather teaching technique.

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What you learn to play on a classical guitar in Guitar One class may be applied to an acoustic guitar or an electric guitar.

Through my experience in teaching classical technique in guitar class, I have also learned that the “other stuff” happens anyway. Although our lessons and curriculum are classically based, we occasionally bring in guest artists to do a rock or blues lesson on an electric guitar. In addition, we have sharing sessions during which students bring their own instruments and teach or demonstrate a song from other genres. Our school hosts a “battle of the bands” each year during which local “garage bands” get to strut their stuff. We also have a great jazz band and jazz combo in which several of our guitarists have an opportunity to play. All other genres exist and get lots of attention, but by teaching classical guitar, I am instilling a life-long skill and an appreciate for an art form they may not have learned otherwise.

Finally, several states have incorporated All State guitar through their state music education affiliations. Rhode Island’s first-ever All State Guitar concert was held in 2014, and several of our students participated. I will discuss the All State Guitar further in the Guitar Ensemble class content section, but participation in state Solo and Ensemble and All State festivals is certainly one more reason to develop a classical guitar program.

Chapter Five: Guitar One Class Content

Introduction

Chapter Five, Guitar One Class Content includes information about class expectations, care of the instrument, first position notation, technique, and chords, as well as playing bass, trios, barre chords, playing the blues, and, the Guitar One final exam.

Class Expectations, Setting the Tone

Guitar One is the first step of the four-year guitar program. Many, but not all of the students are freshmen. Those student are the most important to nurture, teach and mold into future Guitar Ensemble members. During the first year of guitar class, it is important to create an atmosphere in which hard work is fun and rewarding, and an atmosphere in which all students feel welcome. During those first few weeks a mutual respect is created over the one thing you and all class members have in common, a love for music and the guitar. For many students, guitar class will be the class they look forward to the most – and the class they are the happiest to attend each day. Nurture that feeling. As music educators, we provide a home away from home for many kids, a safe, happy place where they will thrive. Most importantly, we teach them a life-long skill that helps them gain self-respect and self-confidence. From day one, expect a lot and you'll get a lot.

A few Guitar One students will come with the misconceived notion that Guitar class is an “easy A,” and they won't really have to work very hard. Dispel these notions right away. Sometime during the first few classes, I make it a point to

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explain that hard work and practice are crucial to their success in Guitar class. I read aloud a “Letter to the Students” as written by Marsters (1997:1).

To the student:

This is an introductory course designed to help you learn many of the different styles and techniques of guitar playing. Each unit includes many playing activities and written exercises, which are essential to the playing section. The written portions are not busy work. Please make a strong effort to understand all parts of all units, written and played, as they build upon each other. What you learn in each unit will be useful later on in the course.

Your progress and guitar playing is almost totally dependent upon you. Although most people think that music educators are hired to teach students to sing or play Inst instruments, what we really do is teach students how to train themselves. In the final analysis the real musician the real music educator is you. YOU absorb the instruction, YOU systematically apply it to practice patterns, and YOU discipline your fingers. No one else can accomplish progress for you. It’s been my experience that the best players at the end of each year are not necessarily those who are the smartest or those who have been blessed with the best physical coordination. The finest players, year after year, have been those who really worked at it, those who were committed to playing well. With a positive attitude and a firm end goal in mind, the students created self-discipline for practice, which rewarded them, ultimately, with fine playing skills. I hope that each of you is one of these discipline people and that this book will help you reach playing goals you have set for yourself.

During the first week of class, review the class syllabus or course curriculum with the students. Doing so gives students have a clear vision of what your expectations are and what they will learn. Include a few classroom rules in the course syllabus and set the tone for expected behavior during the first week of class. Rather than a list of many rules to follow, keep it simple. A few basis classroom rules, enforced daily help keep an orderly classroom atmosphere. Our Guitar One syllabus, which appears in the appendix, includes the following:

Classroom Policy

- be on time for each class
- be attentive and courteous

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- treat guitars with care and respect, and put guitars away properly
- do not use anyone else's guitar without permission
- gum, candy, food, and beverage are not allowed in class
- good school attendance is crucial to succeed

Another important part of setting the tone is to get to know your students as soon as possible. Set up a seating chart by which you will learn each student's name and refer to each student by name as soon as possible. Greet each class at the door with a smile and tell them to have a great day as they leave. Take a moment to speak with a student who may be having a bad day.

Sometime during the first week of Guitar One, I take the time to go around the room and have students say a little something about themselves. What grade are you in? What kind of music do you like? What musical background do you have? What did you do over the summer? I have to be patient during this exercise each year, because I am anxious to get to the music, but it helps tremendously in getting to know the students and helping them to feel welcome. Set the tone in Guitar One class and already they'll want to sign up for Guitar Two.

Care of the Instrument

The very first lesson, day one of guitar class, is how to treat a guitar. Begin with a review of how to handle the guitar before you put an instrument in their hands. Start by demonstrating how to take the guitar out of the case. This should include where to put the case out of the way so that nobody will trip on it. Also, demonstrate how the student should carry the guitar back to their seat carefully, not bumping it into another guitar. The more detail you give in this lesson the better! Discuss where to put the guitar down if you need to walk away for a moment. Guitars should not be

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leaned against a chair or placed on a chair. If you do have to walk away from the guitar the best place to put it is in the case. It is also helpful to point out that when a guitar is put in a case, the buckles need to be buckled.

Once you've explained good, safe care of guitar, assign guitars or have the students choose their guitar a few students at a time. Quite often, especially in mixed classes, I'll let the seniors choose their guitar first, then the juniors, followed by sophomore or freshmen class members. It is important though, on that first day class, to minimize the chaos that can take place when everyone is getting a guitar.

By the time attendance is taken, guitars are assigned and distributed, and the overall class is briefly introduced (including a quick philosophy about teaching classical guitar), there is little time for playing on the first day of class, but I always make sure we do. Usually I teach two mini chords (C and G7 on strings one, two and three) and get the class playing chords to "Skip to My Lou," or "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands." There are always a few students who already know how to play the full chord, but the point is to make music that very first lesson. I allow five full minutes on the first day of class to properly put the instruments away.

First Position Notation

Guitar One class begins with reading first position notation. Some music educators debate whether it's better to begin with chords or first position notation. There are several texts that begin by teaching chords and songs so that students may enjoy how they sound right away. Other series begin with the notes on the first string. I find this method useful because teaching notation is an essential part of the skill building they will do to progress on to Guitar Two. Begin with simple melodic

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lines and notes on the first string and use a soundtrack or piano or guitar accompaniment to help motivate the students.

Classical technique, reviewed in the upcoming technique section, is crucial at the beginning stages of first position notation. Holding the guitar correctly and developing proper left and right hand technique are the two of the first concerns. Encourage students to keep the left thumb behind the neck of the guitar and to keep the left fingers curved and on their fingertips. Explain PIMA right hand fingering where “P” represents the thumb, “I” represent the index finger, “M” represents the middle finger and “A” represents the ring finger. Begin teaching rest stroke by alternating the i and m fingers and coming to a rest on the adjacent string after each stroke. Alternatively, you may begin by allowing students to use a pick, but the sooner they begin to develop rest stroke, the better.

One very helpful way to teach first position notation is to have all the students memorize the first position scale by rote before reading notes. This process is explained very well in *H. O. T. Hands-on Training: First-Year Guitar* by Marsters (1977). Have all of the students play the first position scale starting on string six through string one, by memory, saying and playing the names of the notes as they go. By following this process before teaching actual notation it ensures that students are able to play the notes *physically* with correct technique before they concentrate *mentally* on reading notation. This also encourages proper left hand technique.

During the first few lessons combine teaching a few basic chords as well as notes on the first string and notes on the second string. One exercise that is very useful during this unit is to have half of the class play the chords while the other half

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of the class plays the melody, then switch parts. Also, have students work in small groups with some students playing chords while other students play the melody on notes. These exercises reiterate rhythm as well as chord strumming and simple notation. Some students are able to play full six-string chords, while other are better off using three-string “mini-chords.” I review both and give students the option. This is an opportunity for those with some previous experience to shine.

Review the open strings first and clarify the letter names and numbers of each string. I usually name a little game of this by calling out a string by letter or number while the class plays each open string for four beats. Discuss the terms “high” and “low.” If you say, “play the low string,” you may be referring to string six, lowest in pitch. However, many students will think you are talking about string one, physically lowest to the floor. A favorite guitar instructor once told me “little string, little number.” I repeat those words every year. It helps clarify the numbers of the strings.

String Number 1 – E
String Number 2 – B
String Number 3 – G
String Number 4 – D
String Number 5 – A
String Number 6 – E

Have students memorize the names and numbers of each string. It’s fun to have them make up a sentence to memorize the order of the strings. I recommend a sentence that begins with String 1, rather than string 6. An example is: Every Body Gets Donuts At Easter. (The student who made up this sentence in class, offered “Every Body Gets Drunk At Easter”... we quickly changed that to “donuts!”)

Depending on which guitar method you use, notation may be taught beginning on string six and working to string one, or vice versa. I have taught

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notation both ways. Beginning on string six has benefits; the notes are more difficult to read because of the leger lines, so in essence the more difficult work is over with faster. Also, high school age boys enjoy the sounds of the lower strings and if they sing the notes, they like the sound of their voices in that range. For the more studious types, this method is great. They learn the notes faster. However, this is not the best approach for a whole Guitar One class with varying degrees of learners. Notes on the first string are the easiest to read. By beginning with notes on string one and string two, students who do not already read notation learn how. By incorporating chord playing, and supplementing method books with extra tunes on the first two strings, interest levels are kept and beginners succeed. Discourage students from writing the letter names of the note in the text; this prolongs the process of learning to read. Use supplementary exercises to reiterate the notes on each string before moving to the next string. Most texts and method books move away from the first two strings too quickly. It is imperative that all students are proficient in reading the first two strings before moving on to string three, four, five and eventually six. Some methods, such as *Enjoy Playing the Guitar, Book 1* by Debbie Cracknell teach only open strings on strings four, five and six to start. In doing so, the students become very comfortable reading the top three strings and the open bass strings notes before moving on.

During the first few weeks of Guitar One, rather than passing out method books, project the pages of the text on a large screen in the front of the classroom. This may be done by scanning and projecting the pages of a current method book or by projecting the pages using an Elmo overhead projector. The Elmo has become an indispensable tool in all of our music classes! We project rhythm sheets for all

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ensembles to practice counting rhythm. The students are able to watch the instructor write in counting in real time. Any scores that need marking (e.g., phrasing in a vocal score or accidentals in a band score) are done accurately as students see the markings on the screen. The Elmo also makes it very easy to share a song sheet with guitar chords for guitar classes, or lyrics for a vocal warm up. For the Guitar One notation unit, projecting the notes on a screen enables the student to learn notation twice as fast as a traditional method of each student with a book on their stand. By using a pointer on the screen, or in the book on the Elmo, it ensures that students are following the notes correctly. When students read from a method book on a stand, you cannot be sure if their eyes are on the correct line of notation. Also, when students play with proper classical technique, discussed in the next section, they sit up straight and watch the screen, not their fingers. Immediately they get used to keeping their eyes on the music. Reviewing difficult passages or areas where mistakes are made is instantaneous. Instead of, "Let's begin in the third measure of the second line, beat four..." the instructor simply points and says, "Let's begin here." Eventually, textbooks may be assigned to each student for home practice and group work, but during whole class instruction time, the books remain closed. This method also ensures that students are not writing in the letter names or finger numbers of each note, therefore they learn to read notation more quickly.

Teach Technique Every Day

I was fortunate to attend one the very first national Teaching Guitar Workshops in 1996 under the instruction of Nancy Marsters. In addition to creating her own guitar program in Tallahassee, Florida, Nancy founded Class Guitar

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Resources, and published an excellent series of texts and tools for class guitar instruction. I had the privilege of working with Nancy to develop a series of assessment rubrics for Class Guitar Resources. Yet, the recommendations I make in this book are from tried and true practices using her texts in the guitar classroom.

Among the many ideas and approaches to teaching classroom guitar I learned from Nancy Marsters, the concepts of teaching technique are the most vivid, most long-lasting, and most important to the success of our program. At the time, I didn't take seriously when she said repeatedly in the Teaching Guitar Workshop; "You will teach technique every day." Now I know just how true this is.

As music teachers, we often find ourselves instructing students in areas outside of our areas of expertise. I was an undergraduate vocal major who also played cello and folk guitar, but one of my first teaching positions included teaching fifth grade beginner flute lessons (in a locker room!). When I began a classical guitar program at the high school level, I learned whatever I could about proper guitar technique.

There are several benefits of using classical technique in Guitar One class. As mentioned earlier, nylon strings are easier on beginners' fingers. While students sit in classical position, the instructor can easily see the left hand fingers and quickly assess accuracy. After years of re-teaching good technique in the upper level classes, I realized how much time is saved by doing it correctly in the first place. By insisting Guitar One students use proper classical technique, students who proceed to Guitar Two and Guitar Ensemble have already developed proper left hand technique and are well on their way to developing proper right hand technique. In addition, upper level

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classes need less review and are prepared to begin left hand position studies.

A good disciplinary tool for music classes that I discovered years ago at a choral workshop is the use of “focus levels.” For example, in chorus I use three focus levels. In focus level 1, the students sit and relax and listen to the instructor. The “focus” is on instruction. In focus level 2, the students sit up straight with proper posture for singing while seated. In focus level 3, students stand with proper singing posture. The instructor simply shows one finger for the first focus level, two fingers for the second and three fingers for the third. We practice the focus levels at the beginning of the year and use them all year long. During those chaotic moments when it’s time to bring the attention of the class front and center, the instructor or student leader goes to the podium, or the front of the classroom, raises the appropriate number of fingers and within seconds the class or ensemble is ready to begin working again. (No yelling, banging on the piano, shhhhhh or repeating, “May I have your attention” eight times!)

During guitar classes I use two focus levels. In focus level 1, the guitar students hold the guitar still and sit back and relax while they listen to instruction. Focus level 2 is sitting in proper classical position, which once again is reiterated daily. Remind the students; sometimes the most difficult part of guitar class is learning now to *not* play the guitar! Rest position for guitarists is also helpful. In rest position, everyone turns the guitar over on his or her lap. It is helpful to point out that, although the guitar is used as a percussion instrument in many styles, rest position or focus level one is not the time for drumming. Once the word drumming or percussion is mentioned, everyone wants to try it once. This is a good opportunity for some call

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and response rhythm patterns by drumming lightly on the guitar before continuing on to the technique lesson.

On the second day of Guitar One class, students get the guitars they were assigned the previous day (leaving the cases on the floor in the front of the classroom), get a footstool, and go to their previously assigned seats with a guitar and a footstool. Another useful bit of information at this point is also to consider where students keep their belongings in the classroom. To avoid distraction and more things to trip over, require the students to keep their backpacks, books, bags, coats and other belongings on a table or shelf by the entrance to the classroom, or away from the area where guitars are played.

At this point, after a brief explanation of why we teach classical guitar, I take time to introduce classical technique using four contact points. First, have students sit up straight, towards the edge of the chair and use either a footstool or a woodblock to elevate left foot. Once the students are sitting up straight with the left foot elevated, instruct them to put the waist of the guitar over their left knee. Secondly, the base of the guitar rests on the inside of the right knee. The third contact point is to lean the guitar gently against your chest and the fourth contact point is to cross the forearm of the right arm, halfway between the wrist and the elbow, over the outer edge of the guitar. One important thing to point out with the four contact points is that neither the right hand nor the left hand support the guitar; it is entirely supported by the legs, the body, and the right forearm. The right hand and left hand are free to do the work that they need to do without holding the guitar.

A few considerations in teaching technique on the first day: As a female

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instructor, I always wear slacks during this lesson, but I point out the alternative classical position for ladies wearing a dress or a skirt. The left leg crosses the right leg, the guitar rests on the left knee and no footstool is used. (One year, a young man wore a kilt to class! So, I often take a moment to let the gentlemen know they too may use alternative position to accommodate clothing.) Project an illustration of both proper classical technique and the alternative position on the screen in the front of the classroom. If time allows, I often take a moment to show a You Tube video of a classical guitarist or ensemble at this point as well, or have older students from an advanced class demonstrate.

For young high school students, the two most common problems in learning classical technique are the left thumb and the right forearm crossing the guitar. To help develop proper left hand technique, suggest placing the left thumb gently behind the neck of the guitar. Repeat this instruction hundreds of times during the first few weeks! Another description that helps students develop proper left hand technique is to make the shape of a “C” in the left hand, or pantomime holding a grapefruit or softball, with rounded fingers and put the left hand in place on the guitar, keeping the shape. The right forearm issues are often caused by the slant of the guitar. I have student tilt the guitar back and forth on the left knee until the head of the guitar is at eye level. This is also a good opportunity to review the parts of the guitar.

Classical Position Checklist

It’s important to review technique several times during the first few weeks of Guitar One. Provide students with a checklist, which will later be used as part of their assessment (see Figure 1).

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Figure 1. Classical Position Checklist.

Classical Position Checklist for Guitar

Holding the Guitar

- Sit up tall at the front edge of your chair
- Place your left foot on a foot stand
- Place your right foot flat on the floor
- Place waist of the guitar on your left knee
- Rest base of the guitar on your right leg
- Rest back of the guitar against your chest
- Keep shoulders relaxed

Left Hand Technique

- Thumb rests lightly on back of the guitar
- Do not bend thumb at knuckle
- Thumb rests on its pad
- Touch strings with the fingertip, close to the fingernail
- Curve fingers
- Keep space between your fingers
- Keep fingertips close to the fret

Right Hand Technique

- Right forearm gently rests on the guitar between the wrist and elbow
- Right wrist is aligned with arm
- Right wrist is gently arched
- Fingers are over the sound hole

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Work In Fifth Position For Left Hand Development

One way to ensure proper left hand technique is to have students play exercises in fifth position. Reading fifth position notation is more difficult than reading in first position, but exercises may be done by rote. Teach a short melody or a call and response pattern in fifth position. The exercises may be as simple as fingers 1, 2, 3 4, 4, 3, 2, 1 in various rhythmic patterns on string 1, fret 5. Repeat the exercise in seventh position or third position, or on other strings. When students are playing in the upper positions they automatically use their fingertips and automatically put the left thumb behind guitar. Once this is established, ask them to keep the left hand shaped the same way as they slide back to first position. These physical exercises are a great way to incorporate proper left hand technique in the first few weeks of guitar class.

Common Chords

The second unit of the Guitar One class is common chords. The chord unit may be presented before or after the basic notation unit, or they may be incorporated together. Some methods begin teaching the D – A7 – G chord progression because of the ease of moving between D and A7. Other methods begin with three string chords such as C and G7 using a simple down-stroke strum pattern of four or eight beats. Have students use their right thumb, the back of the right hand nails or a pick to strum chords. Encourage students who are able to play full chords to do so. Display chord charts on the screen of both the mini chords and the full chords and allow students the option to play either.

During the chord-playing unit there are many opportunities to differentiate

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lessons so that both advanced students and students who struggle may continue to play with the whole class. For some students, it is best to continue with three string chords until they are proficient. On the other hand, students who are already pretty good at chords may be instructed to use a variety of strum or finger style patterns to further develop their skill.

Playing and repeating a lot of songs is the best way to get students proficient in playing chords. Many series offer sound tracks with which the class may play along. *Essential Elements for Guitar, Book 1* by Morris and Schmid (2012) has a good approach to the chord-strumming unit. There are several fun and recognizable songs that students enjoy with sound tracks to play along. Supplement the chord-strumming unit with additional song sheets and recordings. There is an endless resource online of songs and chords.

H.O.T. Hands-On Training: First-Year Guitar by Marsters (1997) offers another approach to learning chord strumming by key. Chord progressions in various keys are presented in a I, IV, V7, I pattern. This enables students to learn switching from one chord to another more quickly within a given key. Diagrams show common fingers and guide fingers switching from chord to chord. This is very helpful in getting all students to switch chords faster. It also reiterates the theory of chord progressions and keys.

Another helpful technique for proficient chord changing taught at the Teaching Guitar Workshops is to have students play one chord slowly for 8 beats with 4 beats rest before switching to a second chord. Switch back and forth several times. Next, repeat the exercise with two beats of rest between each chord and

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ultimately remove the rests from the exercise. Also try this exercise by having students look away from their fingers as they change to the next chord. For example, have students place their fingers in the first chord, look at the ceiling, and while they are looking at the ceiling, switch to the next chord. (I always take this opportunity to point out the lovely green pipes on our ceiling.) This exercise may also be done without strumming. Simply place the fingers on the chord, look away and place the fingers on the next chord. Then look to see if the fingers are placed correctly. These techniques help to ensure that students learn to switch on the beat. Trying it without strumming also quiets things down for a bit and creates more focus.

At the end of the chord unit, assess each student individually by having them play chords randomly by memory. Establish a slow, steady beat and have students strum each chord eight times. Around the 5th or 6th beat call out the next random chord and encourage students to switch on the downbeat of the next measure. This process may be rehearsed with the entire class before students play individually.

Simple Bass Line

Once students have learned simple notation on the first three strings and the basic chords, we teach a short unit in playing bass. A simple root/five pattern based on chords may be taught by rote. While half the class plays four beats of a C chord the other half plays root and five on beats one and three. *H.O.T. Hands-On Training: First-Year Guitar* by Marsters (1997) has a good unit in playing simple bass patterns. Once the students are able to show proficiency in creating a simple bass line for a song with chords, they are placed in a trio with two other students for the trio unit. This usually takes place around the third or fourth week of class. The bass unit and the

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trio unit allow for an opportunity to use electric instruments. We have an electric guitar and bass, both with small amplifiers at the front of the classroom. These two instruments get quite a bit of use. While encouraging classical technique, it is certainly fun for the students to break away on occasion and try electric instruments as well. During the bass unit, the first student to accomplish the patterns gets to come up and try it on the electric bass. This also allows for an opportunity for students with some experience to shine.

Guitar One Trios: Melody, Chords and Bass

Mt. Hope High School currently uses a proficiency-based graduation requirement system in which students demonstrate proficiency in various subjects by uploading artifacts to a digital portfolio. Students in music classes are required demonstrate proficiency in three categories: performing music, creating music, and responding to music. Throughout their four years of guitar study, students have multiple opportunities to gain and improve upon their level of proficiency in music. The Guitar One trio unit is the first such opportunity to demonstrate proficiency in performance. At the end of the unit, trios are performed for the class, recorded, and uploaded to the portfolio.

Each trio chooses and performs three songs. Each student plays melody on a song of his or her choice, and bass or chords on the other two songs (see Figure 2). Songs may be chosen from the text or from supplementary songbooks. For this unit, the simpler the song, the better. Songs must have notation (using strings 1-4) and chords from the basic chords taught in the chord unit. Avoid having students bring in their own tunes; they are usually too difficult at this stage. The main challenge of the

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trio is always rhythm. Once each student conquers his or her own part, the real work comes in putting it together with the group.

Figure 2. Trio unit chart.

	Song # 1	Song # 2	Song # 3
Student # 1	Melody	Bass	Chords
Student # 2	Chords	Melody	Bass
Student # 3	Bass	Chords	Melody

Tablature

Somewhere along the line it's a good idea to teach tablature. Several students will already have some experience with reading tab. Tablature has its advantages and disadvantages, but it is an important tool for guitarists. It's best to introduce tab after notation reading is fairly well established, or it could hinder the students' ability to learn notation. Point out that tab is one of the oldest forms of notation from ancient history. There are some great resources online for teaching basic tablature. Choose a familiar tune, with notation and tab, or some simple exercises. Display the tab and notation exercises on the screen. Usually two or three lessons are plenty to get the basic concept of tab across. There are several types of tab. Most sites online use the type of tab that does not notate rhythm, so you need to know how the song goes to be able to read it.

Tuning in Guitar One

Begin Guitar One class with all the guitars tuned by you or an upper level student for the first several weeks. It is also helpful to explain the tuning pegs and ask

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first year students to leave them alone for the first several weeks. I generally teach tuning somewhere around the fifth week of class, and even then I generally do not have the students tune their own guitar on a daily basis until Guitar II. Four or five classes use our guitars each day. Therefore, the older more experienced students keep them in tune. The Yamaha classical guitars hold their tuning very well. One of the first things I point out when teaching tuning is to only turn the tuning peg a small amount. If they find they are turning and turning, they are doing something wrong!

Most beginner methods books have a chart for fifth fret tuning. This is the best, simplest method to use at the beginning. Demonstrate fifth fret tuning and allow students to try it on their own guitar. Next, demonstrate fifth fret tuning on your guitar with one string deliberately made flat. See if students can determine which string is out of tune and whether it is flat or sharp. Discuss the location of each tuning peg in relationship to the string. Also discuss the direction the tuning peg should be turned to raise the pitch or lower the pitch and demonstrate. Allow students to experiment. Have some guessing games about whether a pitch is sharp or flat. Musictheory.net has a great ear training exercise to help students determine pitch. If you have a computer lab available or even a few computers in your classroom, have students do some ear training.

At this point, I generally have each student bring me their guitar and while they look away, I deliberately detune one or two strings about a whole step sharp or flat. I asked them to take their guitar to a location where they can sit by themselves to hear their guitar properly and try to get it back in tune using fifth fret tuning. Always make sure the sixth string is in tune to begin when trying this exercise. I am fortunate

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to have a guitar classroom adjacent to the auditorium and for ten – fifteen minutes, Guitar One students are scattered about the auditorium trying to retune their guitars. This lesson works best if the following class is an upper level guitar class who will put the guitars back in tune. My Guitar Ensemble students always know, and complain when I have taught tuning in Guitar One!

The most accurate way to tune a guitar is with an electronic tuner. In the upper level classes, we tune to a source such as a tuning CD or the piano. Each student then checks his or her guitar with a tuner. Many students enjoy the clip-on Snark SN-5 tuners. They are able to continue tuning throughout the rehearsal session. We also have several Korg GA-1 tuners. Recently, students have begun using their Smartphone with a free tuning app such as GuiTune Lite. All of our tuners are clearly labeled with a permanent marker. We also have a system where one student is in charge of passing out and collecting tuners during each class (Guitar II and Guitar Ensemble.) Still, over the years several tuners have gone missing.

It generally takes an entire class period of Guitar One to teach tuning and you will continue to teach it daily for a while. Our school rotation class schedule is such that each class has a balloon period (1½ hours) each week. I use the extra time for the first tuning lesson.

Barre Chords

The barre chord unit is a crucial part of the Guitar I curriculum. Through barre chords, students learn the fret board and are able to access many chords unavailable to them in the basic chord unit. For beginners, tone quality of barre chords doesn't count. Knowing where to locate a chord and what shape the chords is matters most at

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first. Anyone who has become proficient at barre chords will attest to the fact that it takes a lot of time to develop a decent sound.

Many methods teach basic barre chord structure. My favorite is the barre chord unit in *H.O.T. Hands-On Training: First-Year Guitar* by Marsters (1997). It provides a simple, basic explanation of barre chords and has a reasonable assessment for beginners. If barre chords are not taught during Guitar One, they can be covered at the beginning of Guitar Two. The year we switched from full year to semester Guitar One classes, I waited and covered them at the beginning of Guitar Two.

Playing the Blues

To gain proficiency in music at Mt. Hope High School through our PBGR (proficiency based graduation requirement) system, students must develop skill in three categories:

PBGR M1 - Reading and Performing Music

PBGR M2 - Creating Music

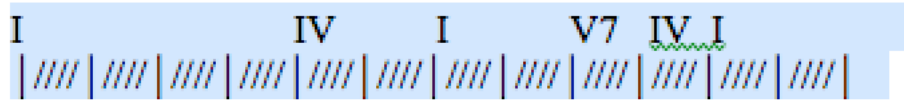
PBGR M3 - Responding to Music

Blues improvisation is used to develop skill in PBGR M2 - Create Music. We teach this lesson in Guitar One and repeat it in Guitar Two and Guitar Ensemble. Each year the soloing skills and the accompaniment style get better. The students look forward to this unit every year.

Begin with a basic 12 bar blues pattern. The key of A works very well. Write a basic 12 bar blues pattern on the board or display it on the screen. Ask students to begin by strumming with a simple four beat quarter note rhythm on each chord. Once the pattern is realized, add a basic down/up blues strum pattern.

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Figure 3. Twelve bar blues pattern.



The key of A works well because students may also do a shuffle pattern using the 4th and 5th strings to shuffle on the A Chord (open string 5, frets 2, 4 and 5 on string 4,) and repeat the pattern on strings 3 and 4 for the D chord, as well as strings 5 and 6 for the E7 chord. When we repeat the pattern, as we do over and over in the 12 bar blues, the 12th bar changes to a V7 chord as a turn around into the next 12 bars. Turn around using 4 beats of triplets. You may also play the chord progression on the piano or have students play along with an accompaniment CD.

Once the 12 bar blues pattern is established, we begin the process of learning to improvise. Students who do particularly well reading notation, like most classically trained musicians, seem to have more difficulty improvising. Teaching it step by step with guidelines helps get those students through the apprehension of making up their own music. First, teach a pentatonic scale in fifth position. Once students are able to play the scale fairly proficiently, have them play it in rounds. Also have one half of the class play the ascending scale while the others play the descending scale. The beauty of this scale is that students may play any notes from the scale at the same time and it works. They are already improvising simply by playing the scale in various patterns.

Once student are comfortable and familiar with the pentatonic scale in fifth position, begin the process of improvisation with some simple call and response. Use

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one string to start. Play a four beat pattern using two notes from the scale and have students imitate. Vary the rhythms and patterns using a call and response method. Next, ask the students to either repeat exactly what you play, or change it (answer it) with his or her own response. Repeat this exercise using more notes and eventually many notes and patterns from the pentatonic scale. Also repeat this process with longer phrases (four measures, for example.) After a few days of this exercise go around the room giving each individual student “call” and asking for a “response.” This gradual process gets kids improvising before they even realize they are improvising! For students who hesitate, remind them that their response could simply be to repeat exactly what you played in the “call.” I always offer the opportunity for the response to be one whole note, first string, fifth fret. I demonstrate the whole note. At least one student usually uses the whole on their turn to which I respond “a whole note, excellent!” After a few turns, they generally try something else.

The next step is to have half of the class play accompaniment (the 12 bar blues chord pattern and/or the blues shuffle) while the other half takes turns making up a solo. Eventually the solos are 12 bars in length. (By the second or third year, the solos become much longer.) The accompaniment tends to drown out the soloists at first, but that’s okay. It gives beginners a chance to experiment with their own soloing without everyone hearing every note. At this point we also listen to a few samples of great blues guitar solos and watch a few You Tube videos. When we first go around the room sharing ideas I explain that this is the only class where it is not only alright, but encouraged to copy someone else’s work!

First-Year Improvisational Trio

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Once everyone is fairly confident in soloing and accompaniment, this is another great opportunity for group work. The improvisational “trios” can actually be duets, trios, quartets and larger, as long as someone is accompanying and each student has a chance to make up a solo line. We record the improv groups and upload the recordings to the digital portfolio. Some students save examples from their freshman year and compare them to the examples senior year to show growth over time, a component of the digital portfolio requirements. Even if the recordings are not needed for a portfolio, it’s a good idea to record them and play the recordings for the class. The more they get to hear each other play, the better they get at improv. Also, recording the groups gives this project a final goal. At the beginning of the unit several students are worried about making up one measure, let alone twelve. By the end, and certainly by the following year, we usually have to cut back the amount of time each student is allowed to solo.

Final Exam – Bach’s Minuet in G

The final objective of Guitar One is to have each student play a classical piece with good technique. Once again, we record this final project. *Essential Elements for Guitar, Book 1* by Morris and Schmid (2012) has an accessible version of Bach’s *Minuet in G* that works well for this project. It is written as a duet, so students choose to either play the duet or follow the first part for the solo version. Most choose the solo. This piece incorporates $\frac{3}{4}$ meter, eighth note and quarter note rhythms, as well as the F# in the fourth fret on the D string, all which present challenges for some first year guitar students, but which also create an excellent assessment of the work completed in the first year of guitar class.

Chapter Six: Guitar Two Class Content

Introduction

Chapter Six, Guitar Two Class Content includes information about Guitar Two class expectations, right hand technique development, PIMA fingering, rest stroke, chord review, moving up the fret board, duets, music theory and solo literature.

Guitar Two Expectations

When students return for a second year of guitar class, they have certain expectations of what they will learn, and you have expectations of the experience they bring to class. These students are a bit more serious and focused than those who entered the classroom for Guitar One. They already have some commitment to the guitar program and many already anticipate being members of Guitar Ensemble the following year. Throughout Guitar Two class, it is important to continue to hold these students to the high expectation developed in Guitar One as you nurture their desire to continue to play.

Review Notation With Right Hand Technique Development

The second year of guitar class begins with review of notation. Many students will have forgotten the notes they learned in Guitar One class and the review is reassuring. While reviewing first position notation, there is an excellent opportunity to teach proper right-hand technique. The cool thing about the second year class is the students who have returned know what to expect, and they take it seriously. They already know about classical technique and what is expected of them.

As in the first year, technique must be taught and reiterated daily. The very

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first day of Guitar Two class is a review of classical position and the classical technique checklist. One series I like to use at the beginning of the Guitar Two is *Enjoy Playing the Guitar Books One and Two*, by Cracknell (1984). Book One begins with notes on string one with rest stroke. While the main focus of the lesson is learning and developing rest stroke with the right hand, students who struggled with notation during the first year are relearning notes.

PIMA and Rest Stroke

By now, students have been exposed to PIMA right hand fingering in literature and most of them know that the letters stand for the fingers in the right hand. However, this is a great time to review those symbols. Take the time during this first lesson to discuss the origin of PIMA and the Spanish terms for each finger. The questions always comes up about the pinky. ‘Why isn’t there a letter for the pinky? Don’t we use the pinky?’ In some literature, such as flamenco studies, it is labeled “C.” In Spanish music it is called “E,” but we just call it “the pinky.” We don’t use it, except for strumming on the back of the hand, but it can be a potential technique issue in keeping the right hand relaxed. Don’t allow the students to latch the pinky on the guitar; keep it free from tension and following the movement of the “a” finger.

P = Pulgar = Thumb

I = Indice = Index finger

M = Medio = Middle finger

A = Anular = ring finger

One of the most important things you’ll ever do in Guitar Two class is to take time to be certain each student is developing the right hand rest stroke correctly. Spending time to have students become skilled at proper right hand technique now will save hours of re-teaching and undoing poor habits as the year goes on. Explain to

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the students that it is called rest stroke because the finger actually comes to a rest on the next lowest string. Rest stroke is used mostly for playing single melodic lines. We use it because it creates a full, rich sound. The finger approaches the string on a slight angle, striking the string using half nail, half flesh. This is a good opportunity to bring up the subject of nails, which is discussed further in the tone quality section.

Before students try the rest stroke, be sure they are sitting properly and that the angle of the guitar is such that the right arm crosses the guitar half way between the wrist and elbow. This will allow for a slight arch of the right wrist. There is a good illustration of this in *Enjoy Playing the Guitar, Book One* by Cracknell (1984). Allow students to rest their right thumb gently on string six and constantly reiterate the need for relaxation and lack of tension throughout the right hand.

Ask students to “push” downward on string 1 and let their finger come to a rest on string 2. Do this at first with one finger, play a single note and have them repeat a single note. Ask students to listen to the quality of tone produced by the rest stroke. It is equally important for them to hear the sound of the rest stroke, as it is for them to see the motion. Follow this procedure (with one finger) on each of the six strings. Next, alternate *i* and *m* fingers on open string one. Demonstrate the rest stroke for eight beats and ask students to repeat after you.

Here is an excellent opportunity to review rhythm from Guitar 1 class while practicing a basic rest stroke. I divide the class into 4 sections and ask the first section to play whole notes, the next half notes, then quarter notes and eighth notes. After 3 or 4 measures each section switches to the next rhythm, perhaps adding some patterns such as eighth, eighth, quarter. While some students are remembering how many

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beats in each notes and how to count those rhythms, I carefully watch the right hand to be certain everyone is playing rest stroke correctly and take a moment to correct those who are not. Additionally, call and response rhythm patterns provide additional practice for both rhythm and rest stroke.

The first several days of Guitar Two, after review of technique and teaching rest stroke, are spent reading simple melodies on strings 1, 2 and 3. Over the years I've learned that the more time I spend in these early stages of notation review, the better. Follow the same procedure as Guitar One in which songs or pages from text are projected on the screen. Point to each note while it is played. This ensures students are not writing letter names in their music, and that theirs eyes are on the notes, rather than their fingers. The added challenge of alternating *i* and *m* fingers on simple melodies gives us one more reason to take time in these beginning stages. By the end of the first week I assign a song for assessment that each student will play individually for a grade. This one-on-one time is crucial for technique development. More details of assessment strategies for all guitar classes are discussed in Chapter 9.

Review Chords And Barre Chords

The review of notation and learning rest stroke and right hand technique is serious work during the first week of Guitar Two. So, it is helpful to break up the repetitiveness with chord review. There is something very dynamic about a group of second year guitar students strumming chords. They are more confident, they tend to be the better, more experienced players from the Guitar One classes, and they are impressed with the sounds they achieve those first few days in Guitar Two.

Display the chord chart used in Guitar One and briefly review basic chords

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and progressions. It is also helpful to hand out a copy of the chord chart as songs are displayed on the screen. Many students will have forgotten some chord fingerings. Before playing through some fun tunes, take a moment to try a few different strum patterns to various chord progressions. It is quite enjoyable to play along with the students during these chord review sessions. They may also play with sound tracks or piano accompaniment.

During the second or third week of Guitar Two class, teach barre chords. Several Guitar One classes have learned barre chords, and some have not. We always have some Guitar Classes during which we did not ever get to barre chords. Once again, this is an opportunity for review for those who know the procedure and learning for those who do not. Begin by playing an E chord without the 1st finger in the left hand. Also play Em, E7 and Em7 chords without the first finger in the left hand. Memorize these shapes. Secondly, review the notes of String 6 from fret 1 to fret 12 using only the first finger of the left hand. Have students lay the finger flat on its side (roll the finger toward the nut on the bone) but for now, only press down on string six. Once the location and the shapes of barre chords are memorized, it becomes easier to actually form the chords. Play an E chord (without the 1st finger,) barre fret one for an F chord and slide up to fret three for a G chord. Have a student demonstrate these chords; there is most often at least one student who is very good at this.

As in Guitar One class, the important part to assess is knowledge of shapes and locations of barre chords. Sound quality will come with repetition. *H.O.T. Hands-On Training: Second-Year Guitar* by Marsters (1997) has a good chapter for review

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of barre chords.

Free Stroke Arpeggios

For chord and arpeggio playing, and ultimately for solo literature, the student will next need to be taught the free stroke. In free stroke, after striking the string, the finger is lifted slightly and does not touch the adjacent string. The sound of each string is allowed to ring out, sustained. Both rest stroke and free stroke will be reviewed throughout the year and students will continue to develop these techniques daily. As in the instruction for rest stroke, take time to explain and practice free stroke.

For free stroke arpeggios, each finger is “assigned” a string. The *a* finger is placed on string 1, the *m* finger is placed on string 2 and the *i* finger is placed string 3. The thumb, *p* plays the bass notes on strings 4, 5 and 6. Have student rest the thumb on string 5 and practice just the *a* finger on string 1. Keep the finger relaxed and pull gently in toward the palm of the hand. (Make sure the right wrist is arched.) After striking each note, prepare the next note by planting the finger back on the string. Practice slowly and methodically; teaching each finger to return to the string it played. Practice the *a* finger on string 1, the *m* finger on string two and the *i* finger on string 3.

Next play *i, m, a* consecutively on open strings 3, 2 and 1. Repeat this pattern over and over. Eventually add the thumb on open string 5. Let each string ring out. Continue this practice pattern by adding chords in the left hand. Have student determine which bass string to play for each chord.

Several text and resources are useful in teaching and developing free stroke

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and rest stroke. Including *H.O.T. Hands-On Training: Second-Year Guitar* by Marsters (1997), *Enjoy Playing the Guitar, Book One* by Cracknell (1984), *Classic Guitar Technique* by Shearer (1969) and *The Christopher Parkening Guitar Method, Volume 1* (2004).

Duets and Trios Using Rest Stroke (Melody) and Free Stroke (Accompaniment)

Throughout the course of Guitar Two class, small ensemble playing is very useful. This is an opportunity to group students of similar abilities and gives the instructor another opportunity for formative assessment. This is also an excellent opportunity for differentiation. Assign easier songs to the students who may still be struggling with notation, or for students who need more practice developing the right hand. Duets or trios in which the melodic lines are played with rest stroke, while accompanying parts are played using free stroke, is an excellent culminating activity at this point. *Enjoy Playing the Guitar, Book One* by Cracknell (1984) has several such duets and trios. Encourage students to repeat duets and switch parts on the repeat so each student receives equal practice on the right hand techniques.

At this stage, it's a great idea to have each small ensemble perform their trios or duets for the class. The prospect of performance encourages students to stay focused on the task at hand. If the students are given time in class to practice, save 5-10 minutes at the end of class for a share out session. At first, this does not count for a grade, but student will benefit from seeing and hearing each other at this stage. At the end of the small ensemble unit, each group performs the songs they've learned. The rubric for this assessment must include left hand technique, as well as right hand technique. Samples of rubrics with right and left hand technique appear in the

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appendix. It is easy to forget about left hand technique during all the right hand review. This is a time to check and make sure old bad habits are not resurfacing.

The duets and trios are also an opportunity to review the uses of rest stroke and free stroke. Rest stroke is used for melodic and scale passages, free stroke is used for scales and arpeggios. Free stroke will also be used frequently in solo literature. Rest stroke will be used more frequently in ensemble playing for melodic lines.

Scales and Moving Up The Fret Board

Scales and position exercises work well as warm-up exercises and help to build skill. Establish procedures at the beginning of each class to optimize the class time. Clear expectations and a procedure that is followed daily create a positive atmosphere for teaching and learning. These procedures, developed during the Guitar Two class, will be even more crucial in Guitar Ensemble.

At the start of each class, students should be seated with a footstand, music stand, guitar and books within the first 2 minutes of class. One student watches for classmates' attention and plays the tuning CD. Students are expected to tune quietly and accurately; allow a minimal amount of time for tuning. Occasionally, check the tuning – several students will rely on an electronic tuner to check their tuning. Once the guitars are tuned, class begins; conversations and milling about discontinues. Treat this the same way you would treat a band or choir rehearsal. Begin with warm-ups.

Guitar Two warm-ups may be simple chord progressions, short melodic passages, finger exercises, or scales. This is an excellent time to introduce scales and begin to play exercises that move up the fret board. There are dozens of way to teach

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scales, and because of the variety of learning styles encountered in any one class, it's a great idea to use more than one method. The great thing about guitar is that scales may be learned by patterns. Once in a Guitar Ensemble class, after teaching several scales by keys and notation, I put a pattern on the board for a B Major scale. A guitarist commented how much easier that was, because you didn't have to worry about where all the sharps were. Another student, who was also a band student, said, "Hey, that's cheating, but it works!" It is important to learn the notes, but tools such as whole and half step patterns and movable scale patterns are very helpful. Using moveable scale patterns also gets students out of first position and moving up the fret board.

Position Studies

After right hand technique development, the thing that takes the most time and is most important in the second level class is position studies. I recommend the position study chapters in *Enjoy Playing the Guitar, Book Two* by Cracknell (1984) and *H.O.T. Hands-On Training: Second-Year Guitar* by Marsters (1997). The lessons and exercises in *Enjoy Playing the Guitar, Book Two* begin with easy second position tunes. Learning notes in position is incorporated with continued right hand development with arpeggio style duet parts. At the same time, solo exercises add bass notes and occasional harmonic notes so that students continue to develop right hand technique as they learn second position.

Position studies provide an excellent opportunity to revisit left hand technique. Students tend to use better left hand technique in the upper positions because it is easier for students to keep the left thumb resting gently behind the neck

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of the guitar in higher positions. Remind students to keep the thumb behind the 2nd finger, and when the fingers move up the fret board, don't forget to bring the thumb along. It is also useful to remind students to keep their fingertips on the fret board and the left elbow tucked in toward the body a bit as they move up the fret board. After reviewing these many technical details, always reiterate relaxation. Concentrating on where each finger and thumb belongs, while learning new notation in position may cause some students to tense up. At this stage, learning to play with a relaxed, comfortable stance is crucial to technical development.

Incorporate various methods and exercises in teaching position studies because not all students learn the same way. Some students will learn the upper notes on the fret board more easily with charts displaying the notes on each string. *H.O.T. Hands-On Training: Second-Year Guitar* by Marsters (1997) incorporates exercises on all six strings in several positions. There are also many position study exercises available online. Review notes in second position and fifth position, seventh position and tenth position. Also review moving from one position to the next and the purpose of doing so, as well as the differences of tone quality in various positions. A fun warm-up game is to name a note and see in how many different locations students can find the same pitch.

Some students will pick up position studies much quicker than others. (These will be the 1st Guitar players in Guitar Ensemble.) Here is another opportunity for differentiation in class guitar. Have a checklist of exercises or songs in each position. Once students complete the checklist, they are able to move on to solo literature studies. This will give you an opportunity to spend more time on position studies with

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those who need it most.

Music Theory

Incorporate music theory throughout the entire year of Guitar Two. If your high school offers a Music Theory class, recommend that to your guitarists. Also, provide information for on-line music theory sites for students wishing to learn more theory, such as musictheory.net.

The essential theory for Guitar Two includes:

- Review eighth notes and dotted rhythms
- Sixteenth note patterns and compound meter
- Key signatures
- Chords construction
- Intervals

Solo Literature (Level 3 and 4 Listed Solos)

Probably the most exciting time in Guitar Two is when students have developed enough skill to play listed solo literature. Our state Solo and Ensemble music festival uses the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) catalogue of approved literature. By choosing songs for solo literature from the state list, students will have an opportunity to participate in the festival when the time comes. Also, these solos are tried and true pieces that help students continue to develop skill. Try to choose an individual solo for each student, based on that student's level and capabilities. Students enjoy having their "own" song; however, there are many songs that we've used over the years for more than one student because they work well. Some students will request bringing in their own piece, using

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tab, choosing a piece online, or creating their own piece. Occasionally, in the spirit of creativity and individualism, you may choose to honor those requests, but the tried and true listed pieces produce the best results every time! Some recommendations include:

From *Classical Guitar Technique* by Aaron Shearer

Country Dance by Ferdinand Carulli
Allegro by Ferdinand Carulli
Waltz by Ferdinand Carulli
Andantino by Matteo Carcassi
English Dance by Ferdinand Carulli
Andante I by Fernando Sor
Estudio by Dionisio Aguado

From *The Classical Guitar* by Frederick Noad

Andante by Ferdinand Carulli
Duet in G by Ferdinand Carulli

From *The Renaissance Guitar* by Frederick Noad

Spagnoletta – Anonymous
Wilson's Wilde – Anonymous
Alman by Robert Johnson

From *The Christopher Parkening Guitar Method, Vol. 1*

Allegro by Mauro Giuliani
Moderato by Mauro Giuliani
English Dance by Matteo Carcassi
Andante by Fernando Sor
Etude by Ferdinand Carulli

Practice Procedures

In an ideal world, Guitar Two students, or all guitar students for that matter, would spend at least an hour practicing at home every night. Today students divide

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their time between school, work, sports, and other activities. Some students take care of younger siblings and many students do not have the support at home to encourage them to practice on a regular basis. (I once had a student ask me to call his dad to let him know that practicing the guitar was part of his homework, which I was happy to do, but I also let the dad know specifically what he should be practicing!) Giving practice time during class levels the playing field, yet it is still important to encourage regular practice outside of class. Allow students to sign out school guitars to take home for practice. Provide opportunity for students to use guitars in the music area after school. Occasionally give an assignment, which may only be practiced outside of class for a grade. Provide students with practice charts and include practice time on assessment rubrics. Encourage practice outside of class on a regular basis.

Also, do provide practice time during class. When students are given time to practice during class they need to be held accountable for how well they use their time. During the solo literature unit have students play eight or sixteen measures of their solo for the class at the end of the class period. In addition to accountability, this also provides an opportunity for students to give each other some positive feedback.

Another way to encourage positive feedback is by conducting a Master Class with a local college guitar teacher or a professional guitarist. Have two or three students prepare a solo piece to be critiqued in front of the class. Not only does this reiterate proper technique and great playing tips, but also it encourages students to develop their own ability to critique solo playing. Bringing in a guest artist or holding a master class for your students validates what you do every day.

When students share eight or sixteen measures of their solo with the class, you

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have an opportunity to review tempo and left hand technique, as well as proper free stroke or rest stroke technique. In addition, when students hear each other's solos, this gives them a better concept of how they should approach their own piece. Sharing work in progress during the last part of class also helps students to stay focused and result-driven during the duet and trio units.

Tone Quality (Nails)

The solo literature unit is the optimal time to begin to assess tone quality. Add tone quality to the assessment rubrics at this point to ensure that students begin to develop a good, solid strong tone. Discuss tone quality with the students and have them describe what they think good tone quality is and how to obtain it. Review the various timbres obtained by playing at different locations on the guitar. Demonstrate playing closer to the fingerboard (*tasto*) for a softer tone, or closer to the bridge (*ponticello*) to create a harsher tone. Encourage students to always practice with a full tone.

This is also the optimal time to discuss right hand nails. It's not always possible to convince high school students, particularly boys, to grow nails in the right hand. However, particularly for guitar ensemble, do encourage students to grow at least a short nail in the right hand that will enable them to produce a better tone. It helps to have a young, cool college student come in and play for the class. When they see someone like that playing on nails, it helps dissipate any stigma they might have associated with growing their nails. Year after year students who play on nails receive higher evaluation points on tone quality on solo and ensemble assessment rubrics. Also, as students listen to each other play, they begin to hear the difference in tone

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quality with the student who is playing on nails vs. those who don't. This encourages them to also try playing on nails. Reiterate, it only takes a small amount of nail in the right hand to begin to develop tone.

Playing Two And Three-Note Melodies

The solo literature unit may be spread out over several weeks, perhaps even over a quarter term while students continue to learn their pieces and develop skill. The final presentations of solos should be performed in front of the class and recorded. Meanwhile, as they are practicing solos on a daily basis, incorporate other lessons. This is a good opportunity to present two and three note melodies. Supplement this section with exercises and songs from various texts, or on-line materials. Begin in first position adding two notes at a time, and eventually three or four notes at a time. After studying the upper positions, playing back in first position often comes as a relief to the students. As their reading skills increase, they begin to see chords by notation more easily. This is often a “light bulb goes on” moment when they begin to work the left hand fingering and see familiar chord shapes. At this point, they begin to put together two or three note melodies more easily.

Small and Large Ensemble Literature

The remainder of the time in Guitar Two is spent on small and large ensemble playing. Small ensembles may be duets, trios or quartets. Large ensemble is the whole class in sections. Take time to teach large ensemble format as it will be taught the following year in Guitar Ensemble. This is the time to begin to build ensemble skill and procedure. Hold an informal audition to split the class into sections. Ensemble literature is usually in three or four parts. Some pieces may require five or more

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sections, but to begin, split the class into three sections. Those sections will later be sub-divided for songs requiring more parts.

The three large ensemble sections are: Guitar 1, Guitar 2 and Bass. Many of the strongest players, and those who read well in upper positions will be in the Guitar 1 section. Guitar 1 often has the melody. (You may think of this as the soprano section of a choir.) Guitar 2 is like the alto and tenor section, and is often split. This should be the largest section. Guitar 2 may also be playing in upper positions, but not as often as Guitar 1. The Guitar 2 section often plays a counter-melody, or a chordal accompaniment. Students in Guitar 2 should be proficient at chords and arpeggios, and be able to switch from rest stroke to free stroke. Guitar 3, or Bass parts tend to be the easier parts to read; however, it is important to have several strong players in the bass section as well. (We use an acoustic/electric bass that entices many students to that section!)

Begin with fairly simple, accessible ensemble literature and run the rehearsal the same way you would run a rehearsal in band or chorus. Establish rehearsal procedures that include full ensemble rehearsal, sectional rehearsals and section leaders. During full ensemble rehearsals begin with a warm-up and work through two to three pieces. Some excellent songs for beginning ensemble are found in *Playing Guitars Together* by Debbie Cracknell.

In addition to large ensemble playing, small ensembles, such as trios and quartets, provide each student an opportunity to be responsible for his or her own part. It is also an excellent time to work out rhythm issues. During the small ensemble units, provide students an opportunity to share their works-in-progress and have each

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small ensemble perform their pieces for the class.

Guitar Two Classes Perform At Guitar Ensemble Spring Recital

The culminating activity in Guitar Two is a performance with the Guitar Ensemble. At Mt. Hope High School, our combined Guitar Two classes and Guitar Ensemble perform a spring recital. The recital consists of two or three short selections from each Guitar Two class, solos and duets performed by senior members of the Guitar Ensemble, three or four selections by the Guitar Ensemble and a combined number with all the guitarists. (Many students bring in their own guitars for the finale; it's usually an "anything goes" scenario.) The combined number is a great way to get Guitar Two students interested in playing with the Ensemble. In most cases it's younger students performing with older students. The recital encourages Guitar Two students to sign up for Guitar Ensemble the following year. Every year after the spring recital, some students sign up who may not have already requested guitar ensemble on their course selections. The performance is also an excellent opportunity for Guitar Two students to invite families and friends so that students may demonstrate what they've learned throughout the course of the year, and parents see the scope and sequence of the guitar program.

Chapter Seven: Guitar Ensemble Organization

Introduction

Chapter Seven, an overview of Guitar Ensemble, includes information about auditions, scheduling, rehearsal procedure, student leadership, attendance policy, parent organizations, fundraising and travel.

Guitar Ensemble Overview

By the time students reach Guitar Ensemble, they already have a home away from home in the music department through Guitar One and Guitar Two classes. However, with the ensemble, they also have a community, a club – a group to which they belong. During the very first class in the ensemble let students know that this is not just another class, but just by being a member, they have joined an organization. The organization includes concerts and festivals, trips and parents involvement, fundraising and group efforts. It includes community service in the form of performance. It includes a social focus in the forms of parties and celebrations. It includes an opportunity for student leadership through officers and section leaders. Last, but most importantly, it provides an opportunity for students to grow musically, both as a classical guitar soloist and as a member of a classical guitar ensemble.

3rd And 4th Year Guitar Students

The Guitar Ensemble and Advanced Guitar Ensemble are made up of mostly 3rd and 4th year guitar students, therefore mostly juniors and seniors. Occasionally, there will be a sophomore eligible for guitar ensemble because he or she may have skipped either Guitar One or Guitar Two. This happens particularly if a student takes outside lessons, or is a particularly gifted musician. As a guitar program starts to

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grow, numbers may increase to the point of filling two ensemble classes. At this point an Advanced Guitar Ensemble may be offered. Students entering the third year of guitar may audition to be in the Advanced Guitar Ensemble, or elect Guitar Ensemble.

Auditions and Scheduling

Auditions for Guitar Ensemble are not necessary for students who have completed the course requirements for Guitar One and Guitar Two. Auditions are only necessary for student wishing to be considered for the Advanced Ensemble, or students wishing to omit either the first or second level classes. Auditions should include scales and a classical solo. For Advanced Guitar Ensemble the scales should include up to three or four sharps and flats and the solo should be a Level Four audition piece that includes two or three notes played together, and some work in upper positions. If an audition piece is in first position, include some sight-reading exercises in upper positions. A short sight-reading exercise should also be part of the audition process. For students wishing to be in the regular Guitar Ensemble, but are opting out of Guitar Two, the audition should include a Level Three solo, scales and sight-reading.

Guitar Ensemble meets every day as a yearlong class, or the same schedule as a traditional band or chorus. Advanced Guitar Ensemble may run as a separate yearlong class if there are enough students to run two ensembles. However, it is a good idea to keep Advanced Guitar Ensemble as a course selection option even in the years it may not fill, and combine the two ensembles as one class. Running the two

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courses together keeps the option open for a separate class when the numbers increase. This helps the program continue to grow. During those years, the Advanced Ensemble students may work on the own and perform more often than regular Ensemble students.

Rehearsal Procedure, Similar To Chorus and Band

A Guitar Ensemble is just that, an ensemble. The rehearsal procedure is similar to band or chorus. As students enter the classroom they prepare to rehearse. Daily routines of warm-up, sight reading, announcements, and work on specific literature all fit into the big picture of Guitar Ensemble. The majority of the time will be spent in large ensemble rehearsal format. In addition, students will be given an opportunity to play and perform in small ensemble settings such as trios and quartets, as well as continued work on solo literature. In the class content section of Guitar Ensemble, more detailed suggestions are made for the daily rehearsal routine.

Encouraging Student Leadership

Music classes provide excellent opportunity for students to grow as leaders. The years I spent conducting choruses and encouraging student leadership in chorus have carried over to the guitar ensemble. Student leaders are an integral part of any ensemble. Not only is there an opportunity for students to develop leadership skills, but also student leaders can lighten your load as a director (and that's a good thing!)

Students enjoy helping in all aspects of the ensemble. Volunteers may fulfill many tasks; other tasks are left to elected officers. Anything from sorting music, inputting data in the computer, maintaining the appearance of the guitar room, fixing chairs and stands, making posters and programs, organizing outside activities, to

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working with younger students all fit into the category of things kids like to help with. The official or elected leaders also need specific tasks and expectations, including being a liaison between the director and the ensemble. By training students to be strong leaders, they ease the daily tasks for the director and have a very strong influence on younger students. Because of them, younger students are more apt to continue to be part of the guitar program and seek leadership themselves.

Guitar Ensemble Officers include a president, vice president, secretary, and librarian (see Figure 4.) Other ensemble leaders may include a student conductor and section leaders. During the daily lesson plan, the president or student conductor may lead a warm-ups or sight reading exercise and make announcements while the vice president puts the daily schedule on the board. Encourage leadership and teamwork and you will see true leaders emerge before your eyes. A huge benefit to training strong student leaders is the rehearsal continues even if the teacher is absent. I have had substitute teachers seek me out to express their amazement at the accomplishments of how the classes run themselves, thanks to the student leaders. Let the students know that you take what you do very seriously, and that their hard work and efforts will pay off!

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Figure 4. Guitar Ensemble officers job descriptions.

Officers Job Descriptions

President

- Schedule and conduct meetings with officers and director
- Communicate and post rehearsal schedule
- Post/announce important announcements and student highlights
- Oversee rehearsal procedure
- Share organizational responsibilities with the Secretary and Librarian
- Supervise and plan social activities
- Serve as a liaison between the director and the ensemble
- Supervise instrument and sound system movement and set up
- Middle school liaison and recruiting campaign manager (with VP)
- Schedule and assist with extra help rehearsal sessions

Vice President

- Assist in Presidential duties
- Responsible for supervision and upkeep of guitar room, making sure things are where they should be
- Oversee guitar storage
- Create, update and maintain bulletin boards
- Write daily activities on the board and post important announcements
- Update birthday list
- Write letters of thanks, publicity and invitations with Secretary
- Schedule and assist with extra help rehearsal sessions with President

Secretary

- Organize and supervise distribution and collection of written material
- Take attendance in class, at concerts and on trips
- Keep a running list of tardy students with times and dates
- Help with general office work, deliver notes and messages in school
- Write letters of thanks, help with publicity, invitations and programs

Music Librarian

- Be responsible for the numbering, distribution, collection, accounting, organization and storage of Guitar Ensemble music and books

Section Leaders

- Run sectional rehearsals
- Assess members of section for accuracy

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- Share in student conductor responsibilities with other section leaders
- Conduct warm-ups

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Student Contracts

Because Guitar Ensemble is an organization, not just a class, a student contract helps solidify expectations. I include a contract with the course syllabus each year that asks students to strive to be contributing ensemble members. It includes class rules, performance/attendance expectations, and striving to grow as a musician. Using the term *strive* encourages students to do their best without undue consequence. Asking them to sign a contract causes accountability and commitment to the organization. The contract is enlarged and posted on a classroom wall and throughout the course of the school year; I often refer back to it as a reminder to stay on track (see Figure 5.)

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Figure 5. Guitar Ensemble Contract.

Mt. Hope High School Guitar Ensemble Contract

Members:

As a member of Mt. Hope High School Guitar Ensemble, I will strive to:

- 1 learn all my music in a timely manner
- 2 practice my music outside of class
- 3 have my music, binder and a pencil at every rehearsal
- 4 pay attention in class, *refrain from talking* during rehearsal
- 5 refrain from socializing during independent practice time
- 6 be on time for class and performances
- 7 attend all performances and follow the Performance Attendance Policy
- 8 **have above average school attendance**
- 9 show respect to fellow ensemble members and director
- 10 show respect the classroom, materials and instruments

I have read and understand the Guitar Ensemble Information and Contract.

Guitar Ensemble Member Signature: _____

Parents:

Please take a moment to look over the Guitar Ensemble Syllabus and discuss the contract with your Guitar Ensemble member.

I will encourage my son/daughter to practice guitar ensemble assignments at home.

Parent Signature: _____

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Performance Attendance Policy

Every performance ensemble needs a clear policy about attending performances. Some performances are mandatory; some are not, and some count as part of the class grade. For years music educators have debated whether or not performance attendance should be considered as part of the grade. The image of receiving an “A” in band for just showing up at a concert negated the academic work done in music classes. Most students do not want to miss performances; however, there will be those conflicts, usually with jobs outside of school, which could have a negative effect on the overall performance. Requiring performance attendance as a small part of the grade for the ensemble encourages students to make the right decision when conflict arises. Asking student to follow a performance attendance policy teaches responsibility.

The majority of the class grade should be based on learning the music and developing skill as a musician and guitarist. A percentage of the grade could also be based on being a contributing member of the ensemble and attending concerts. However, using a percentage causes a change in the actual grade for those students with good concert attendance as well as for those who need improvement. One way to overcome this problem is to lower the grade for students who do not adhere to the attendance policy by one letter grade. Therefore a student with an unexcused absence from a required concert may receive a B rather than a B+.

In addition to requiring attendance for their grade, students should also be made aware of the teamwork involved in ensemble performances. All components of the performance such as blend and balance, solos, section solos, and dynamics rely on

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all students being present. I use the analogy of the quarterback not showing up for the big game to prove the point. All members of the ensemble are critical to the outcome of the performance.

Our department policy is as follows:

Performance Attendance Policy

All members are required to attend all scheduled rehearsals and performances.

- If you cannot attend a rehearsal or performance, please complete the request for excused absence form.
- Forms must be submitted a week in advance and signed by a parent.
- In the event of illness or if you unexpectedly miss a performance, please complete the request for excused absence form within two days (even if you were absent from school on the day of a performance.)
- Students who fail to follow the performance Attendance Policy will have his/her grade reduced by one letter grade for the quarter.

Parent Organizations, Fundraising and Travel

Just like high school band and chorus organizations, the Guitar Ensemble will benefit greatly from the help of guitar parents. Usually a small group of well-organized, helpful parents benefit the program most. They are able to assist with uniforms, chaperoning events, decorating for concerts, providing refreshments, maintaining a website, videotaping performances, organizing awards banquets, fundraising and more. Whether you build a boosters club, tag on to an existing music booster's organization, or create your own parent association. The help you receive from these parents is indispensable.

Fundraising is one of the most important contributions of a parents group, particularly if you plan to travel with the ensemble. For the past several years the Mt. Hope High School Guitar Ensemble has traveled with the Marching Band and Chorus on annual music tours. Our four-year touring rotation includes trips to New York

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City, Washington, D.C., Boston, MA, and Disney World, Orlando, FL. The trip to Boston is usually an inexpensive day trip the year before Florida; therefore the students have extra time to raise funds for the Florida trip. The trips provide a life-long memory for students who may not have traveled to these places otherwise and help create friendships and unity within the ensembles.

The number one concern of touring with students is safety. It is imperative to set and enforce clear rules. Schedule plenty of activity throughout the course of the trip. The less down time, particularly back at the hotel, the better. Some sample trip information and regulations letters are included in the appendix. A travel agent who has worked with high school performing ensembles is key when it comes planning and executing trip details. Their experience and knowledge of the places to bring large numbers of students pays off. A well-organized trip can be one of the most rewarding experiences you will ever have with your students.

Chapter Eight: Guitar Ensemble Class Content

Introduction

Chapter Eight, Guitar ensemble class content, includes information about setting the tone, daily rehearsals, tuning, warming up the ensemble, sight reading, technique, ensemble literature, performance opportunities and all state guitar.

Setting the Tone

Most Guitar Ensemble students will have been in your class during Guitar One or Guitar Two and they know what to expect. In many ways you have prepared them for this for the past two years. Still, creating an atmosphere of an *ensemble* rather than a *class* is significant. Develop a procedure, with the help of student leaders, of a daily rehearsal plan to maximize the use of time. During the first week of class distribute a syllabus with information about the ensemble that distinguishes it from the previous classes. Provide students and parents with a performance calendar that includes plenty of notice for performance dates. Set up an e-mail list to distribute information such as meeting dates, calendar information and due dates for assessment. One excellent feature for a weekly announcement bulletin is to choose a “student of the week” who may have made a special contribution to the ensemble. Not only does this give special recognition to individual students, but it also gets folks to read the announcements.

Because there are new and returning members to the ensemble each year, begin with some form of icebreaker activity. A social gathering before the start of school is a great idea, and one way to get new officers involved. There are numerous “get to know each other” icebreaker games that may be done either at a social

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gathering or during the first week of class. One example is placing the students in groups of three (with both new and returning students in a group.) Provide each group with a blank, three circle Venn diagram. Each threesome must fill out the diagram by listing things they have in common with each of the other two students, things that are exclusive to only one person, and things all three have in common, then share the results with the class. Take time at the beginning of the year to create an atmosphere where everyone is welcome.

Guitar Ensemble Sections

Auditions for sections ought to be held during the first week of the Guitar Ensemble. As was the case in Guitar Two, students audition for the Guitar 1, Guitar 2 or Guitar 3/Bass. The strongest players and those who read well in position will play Guitar 1. This part often plays the melody. Those who are good at arpeggios and also read well in position will play Guitar 2, and those who read well on the lower strings will play Bass. Guitar Ensemble literature may also be written in four or five parts; at that point, we subdivide each section. Subdivision takes place more often in Guitar 2 or Guitar 3, so it may be wise to place more students in those sections. The beauty of a guitar ensemble, as opposed to band, orchestra, or chorus, is that anyone can technically play any part; however, certain students are better suited for certain sections. The option also exists to rotate or mix sections. In my experience, it is beneficial to the overall ensemble when students develop skill in one section.

The audition piece, to determine who will be in each section, should be a fairly challenging three-part ensemble piece. The Guitar 1 part should have sections which are to be played in either 5th, 7th or 10th position. The Guitar 2 part should

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include some arpeggios. Each student ought to learn two parts for the audition (their top two preferences.) Explain ahead of time that not everyone will get his or her first choice. During the audition, take time to discuss each student's preference and make requests. Each year during the section audition I seek out strong players for each section. Often I have to work a little to convince a strong player to play bass, using such incentives as being section leader and playing the electric/acoustic bass. The audition process may take a few days, but a well-balanced ensemble is the result of careful planning and auditions.

Daily Rehearsal Plan

An effective rehearsal is organized, well thought out and planned in advance. If properly executed, not only will current music selections improve as a result of an effective rehearsal, but student skill will also improve. For this to occur, several things must be in place before the rehearsal even begins.

Guitar class procedure was established in Guitar One and Guitar Two classes; therefore, much of the crucial classroom management issues will already be established. Students are expected to be in their seats with their guitar, footstand, music stand, and binder within one minute of the bell. Reiterate and reinforce this procedure with even more emphasis in Guitar Ensemble. The more detailed and organized daily procedures are, the smoother the rehearsal will run. Students should have a place to leave their belongings when they enter the class, as to not distract from the rehearsal. The only things they bring to the rehearsal area are their guitar (without the case,) a footstand, a music stand and a binder with a pencil.

All Guitar Ensemble music issued by the librarian is kept in a 1-inch black,

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three-ring binder. The binders are also used at performances. Each student is responsible for maintaining his or her binder, and they must bring it to class each day, along with a pencil. Section leaders are required to do a periodic binder checks to insure each member has all his or her music in the correct order, and to be sure they are writing in articulation and positioning markings discussed at rehearsal.

Taking attendance can take a big chunk of time away from the rehearsal. Some directors use a pegboard with a tag with each student's name. They turn their tag as they enter the classroom. Others have a student take attendance. This is also an opportunity for a student leadership. If you have a Guitar Ensemble secretary, daily attendance, checked by the director, may be one task for the secretary.

The daily rehearsal structure, reviewed below, includes tuning, warm-ups, sight-reading, rhythm studies, announcements, and development of literature.

Tuning

Within one minute of the bell everyone is seated and ready to tune. Tuning at this point of the rehearsal provides silence and focus. It is the point at which the rehearsal begins. Once tuning occurs, talking and moving about the classroom stops. Emphasize the importance of tuning accurately, and practice tuning. Take time during the first few weeks of class to assess the accuracy of each student's ability to tune. Some student will obsess over tuning throughout the entire rehearsal; others will tune without a lot of care. Address both issues. Make sure everyone tunes accurately before the rehearsal, but do not allow tuning to continue taking place throughout the entire rehearsal. The obvious exception to this is if a string breaks or slips. Use a tuning CD to get students to focus and listen, then allow them a moment to adjust

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with electronic tuners.

Warm-up, Rhythmic Studies and Sight-Reading

The warm-up period accomplishes several goals. It provides an opportunity for technical review and an opportunity for students to develop musical skill. In addition, the warm-up period helps students focus and prepare for the rehearsal mentally, physically, and musically. During an effective, well-planned rehearsal, the warm-up will include technical issues that are related to the current literature. Once the warm-up procedure is well established, this may also be an excellent time for student-led exercises.

The warm-up period may include scales, rhythmic studies, and sight-reading. Two excellent resources for the warm-up period are *Sight Reading for the Classical Guitar* by Benedict (1985) and *Music Rhythm Worksheets* by Mackey (2013). *Sight Reading for the Classical Guitar* includes daily sight-reading exercises with emphasis on interpretation, phrasing, and form. Through the exercises, students gain considerable knowledge of musical components that appear in most of the ensemble literature. The rhythm studies are also crucial. Recently, we created a department-wide SLO (Student Learning Objective) to increase student's ability properly count and execute rhythm. We collected base line data at the beginning of the year, as required by the Rhode Island Teacher Evaluation System, collected data throughout the year, and set goals for each student to increase the percentage of correct rhythms in a given exercise. The result was rehearsals that ran smoother. The students became more proficient at reading complex rhythms, and it saved rehearsal time in the long run.

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Technique

By the third year of guitar, most students are beginning to have pretty good classical technique. However, just like in the earlier classes, you will continue to discuss and correct technical issues every day. The warm-up period is an excellent time to review technique. It is also an opportunity to have students demonstrate technical skill. They will learn a lot about technique by watching each other play. The assessment rubrics used in Guitar Ensemble (Figure 6) include a more detailed list of proficiency in left hand technique, right hand technique and body and guitar position.

Figure 6. Guitar Ensemble Assessment Rubric

Guitar Ensemble Proficiency

Name _____

Notation

- 5 All notes are accurate and confident
- 4 Most notes are accurate
- 3 A few notes are not accurate
- 2 Unsure of many notes
- 1 Unsure of most notes

Rhythm

- 5 All rhythms played and counted accurately
- 4 Most rhythms played and counted accurately
- 3 Several rhythms not played or counted accurately
- 2 Many rhythms not played or counted accurately
- 1 Not counting correctly or steady beat does not exist

Tone quality

- 5 Player has a lovely, rich, warm, full tone, no buzz or twang
- 4 Sound is warm but needs to be a little richer and fuller, no buzz or twang
- 3 There is occasional buzzing; tone could be a little richer
- 2 Fair tone quality – some buzzing and twanging
- 1 Poor tone quality – lots of buzz and twang

Body and Left Hand Technique

- Left thumb is behind neck and unbent
- Left fingers are curved, fingertips on fret board

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- Only the fingertips are touching the guitar
- Four fingers are assigned to four frets
- Player is sitting up straight on edge of chair
- The guitar neck is held high
- The guitar body is low enough
- Left leg is elevated
- Right leg supports guitar bass
- Shoulders are slightly back and relaxed
- Back is straight
- Right Hand Technique**
- Player is using proper rest stroke with i and m
- Player is alternating i and m fingers
- Player is using free stroke with thumb for bass notes
- Right fingers are curved
- Right thumb is forward of fingers
- Right hand is relaxed
- Right hand is free from tension
- Forearm crosses upper edge of guitar
- Wrist is slightly arched
- Wrist is aligned with arm

Daily Announcements

Between the warm-up period and the rest of the rehearsal is an excellent time to make daily announcements. With fundraising activities, performance dates, “student of the week” announcements, trip information, assessment due dates, birthday wishes, and calendar updates, it’s possible daily announcements to take a huge chunk of time away from the rehearsal. There are several ways to overcome this problem. First, try to post and e-mail announcements regularly. During busy performance seasons, this isn’t always possible, but those are also the times when rehearsal time is most precious. Next, have a student leader make the announcements. As directors, we have a lot to say! The students would much rather play guitar than listen to us talk. By having a student make announcements you will save time and provide yet another opportunity for student leadership. Last but not least, plan

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announcements ahead of time and stick to a limited time frame.

Rehearsing Guitar Ensemble Literature

The remainder (and the majority) of the rehearsal will be spent rehearsing the literature. Choose three selections to work on and set specific goals for each selection. An effective procedure is to begin with a familiar piece. Allow student to play through the piece and stop as little as possible. Before the first piece, identify (or have students identify) at least three areas to concentrate on during the run-through. Secondly, chose a working piece. This piece is one that you choose to solve several musical goals. Again, solicit these goals from the students, yet have specific goals in mind before you being the working piece. Stop to work out problems, or have one section at a time play through difficult sections. Discuss positioning, technique, accuracy of notes and rhythm, as well as dynamics, phrasing, balance, and blend during the working selection.

Last but not least, try to keep an eye on the clock and spend the last five minutes running fun, energetic, and familiar pieces. Of course this is not possible to accomplish every day, but by ending the rehearsal on a positive note, students feel good about themselves and the work they have accomplished, and they look forward to returning tomorrow. A frequent and cheerful moment you have as a teacher is when the entire class moans – “Oh no!” when they hear the bell. They don’t want the rehearsal to end, and neither do you.

Polishing the Music, Striving for Perfection

As the ensemble gains repertoire and confidence and as performances near, the rehearsal will become less focused on learning notes and rhythms, and more

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focused on being expressive. During these rehearsals you will focus more on expression, articulation, and phrasing, as well as the blend and balance of the ensemble. Record the ensemble and ask students to critique themselves. Bring in a guest conductor or guitarist to work with the students, or ask a colleague to listen to and critique the ensemble.

One year, as we prepared to play for *Festivals of Music* in Virginia Beach, I asked the ensemble to play our three selections for our band director as I conducted. I provided festival rubrics for my colleague. After he listened, he worked with the ensemble just as he would have worked with a band preparing for a festival. It brought our songs to life! Even after I thought we had thoroughly prepared the music and were playing very expressively, my colleague found many places to help us with dynamics and phrasing. He heard repeated passages during which we could embellish the dynamics. He suggested a few places where the melody needed to be stronger. He increased a tempo in a section that needed some energy. He skillfully praised the students with the work they had done, yet challenged them to do better. To me, the session was even more educational and a better learning experience than the festival for which we were preparing. Getting ready for a performance is more about the journey we take getting there and what we learn along the way than the actual performance itself. The performance is the reward.

The session taught me to always strive for perfection. Never settle for adequate or good enough. Your students will recognize it when you go above and beyond and expect the best from them.

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Literature

Two of the best recommendations for high school guitar ensemble literature are *Music For 3 and/or 4 Guitars, Volume 1 and Volume 2* selected by Gerrits (1977) and published by Les Editions Dober-Yppan, and the *Guitar Ensembles Series* by Marsters, Welch and Wooderson (1977), published by Class Guitar Resources. Both of these editions offer many pieces of varying levels of difficulty very appropriate to high school ensembles. They may also be used for trio and quartet playing with only one student on each part.

Teaching Guitar Workshops have also provided endless lists of on-line sites and texts for ensemble. If you are unable to attend the workshop, you may still benefit from the material by visiting their website at <http://www.guitaredunet.org>. Glen McCarthy, Chair of the Guitar Council of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) also compiled the following list of recommendations of guitar websites (Figure 6).

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Figure 7. Recommended guitar web sites.

Guitar Web Sites

- * <http://www.guitardownunder.com>
- * <http://www.derek-hasted.co.uk>
- * <http://www.classicalguitarschool.net/en/>
- * <http://www.funkybearmusic.com/>
- * <http://www.forrestguitarembles.co.uk/>
- * <http://www.freeguitaremblesmusic.com/>

* Free Ensemble Music

<http://jerrysnyder.com>

<http://www.guitarfoundation.org>

<http://www.gspguitar.com>

<http://www.productionsdoz.com>

<http://classguitar.com>

<http://www.dobermaneditions.com/>

<http://www.halleonard.com/guitarBass.jsp>

<http://www.fjhmusic.com/guitar.htm>

<http://guitarsessions.com/>

<http://www.delcamp.net/>

<http://www.thomaskoenigs.de/>

<http://www.classicalguitarcanada.ca/>

<http://www.leesollory.co.uk/>

<http://guitaremblesmusic.com/>

<http://suzukiassociation.org/guitar/>

<http://www.melbay.com>

<http://www.clearnote.net>

<http://www.daddario.com>

<http://www.classguitar.com/>

<http://www.alfred.com/>

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In researching Guitar Ensemble music, I came up with the following “Top Twenty” list of the best arrangements and compositions for guitar ensemble. The criteria for creating this list was to include compositions from each time period, original compositions and arrangements, and to include these specific composers. Many pieces on this list may be challenging for high school students, but for Advanced Guitar Ensemble, or a quartet of your best players, here are some suggestions:

Renaissance Period

1. John Dowland – Three Dances Level 4
arranged for four guitars by Gilbert Biberian

Baroque Period

2. Gaspar Sanz (1640-1710) Canarios (arranged for guitar ensemble) Level 2
arranged for guitar trio by Kevin Love
3. Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 Level 3
arranged for guitar ensemble by James F. Smith

Classical Period

4. Luigi Boccherini (1743-1805) Introduction and Fandango Level 3
arranged for four guitars by Jeremy Sparks
5. Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) String Quartet in G, Op. 3 No. 5 Level 2
arranged for four guitars by Karl Wolff
6. Ferdinando Carulli (1770-1841) Quartet Op. 21 Level 2
arranged for four guitar by Heinrich Albert
7. Fernando Sor (1778-1839) Grand Solo Level 4
arranged for ensemble by Sergio Assad
8. Fernando Sor (1778-1839) – Variations on a Theme by Mozart Level 3
arranged for four guitars by Roland Dyens

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Romantic Period

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 9. Isaac Albeniz (1860-1909) Bajo de la Palmera
arranged for guitar trio by Paulo Bellinati | Level 2 |
| 10. Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959) Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5
arranged for four guitars by Tadeu do Amaral | Level 4 |
| 11. Francisco Tarrega (1852-1909) Recuerdos de la Alhambra
arranged for ensemble by Murray Mason | Level 5 |

20th Century

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 12. Antonio Ruiz Pipo (1934-1997) Danza
arranged for ensemble by Derek Hasted | Level 3 |
| 13. Leo Brouwer (1939-present) Cuban Landscape with Rain | Level 2 |
| 14. Leo Brouwer (1939-present) Toccata | Level 2 |
| 15. John Duarte (1919-2004) English Suite No 3 Op 78
for four guitars | Level 4 |
| 16. Paulo Bellinati (1950-present) Baiao de Gude for four guitars | Level 3 |
| 17. Paulo Bellinati (1950-present) A Furiosa for four guitars | Level 5 |
| 18. Roland Dyens (1955- present) Hamsa | Level 2 |
| 19. Celso Machado (1953-present) Folguedo for eight guitars | Level 5 |
| 20. Andrew York (1958-present) Attic | Level 3 |

Guitar Ensemble Performance Opportunities

There are many performance opportunities for guitar ensembles both in and out of school. At our school, the Guitar Ensemble performs at the annual band and chorus holiday concert. In the spring, our jazz groups perform at the band and chorus concert, so the guitar groups have their own spring recital. The spring guitar recital is

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a smaller, more intimate venue. We turn the band room into a small recital hall. This allows for a bit more intimate setting for acoustic guitars. When we do perform in the auditorium, we use condenser microphones spread out among the guitars. This gives the ensemble a boost to be heard throughout the auditorium.

Other performance venues for the Guitar Ensemble include playing at community art studios for art shows or openings. Occasionally the smaller ensembles play at art studios. The small ensemble might be the Advanced Guitar Ensemble, or a small group of volunteers from the regular ensemble. Our ensembles have also performed in local cafés or coffee shops, as well as downtown shops during our annual Downtown Merchants Annual Walkabout and a local barn during a community fundraiser. In addition, the ensembles perform throughout the year at assisted living facilities. Encourage students to create their own performances as well. Quite often a small group will play for another class, freshmen orientation, or a parent's place of business. A Guitar Ensemble performance at a faculty meeting or school committee meeting will help boost the program and help dispel the image some people have of "just playing guitar." Other opportunities for performance include an annual holiday senior citizen dinner, performances for and with other schools and, of course, trips and festivals.

Wherever the ensemble performs, there are several things to take into consideration before the performance. Be sure to check venues ahead of time. Is there enough space for the ensemble, or should a smaller group perform? Are chairs suitable for classical technique? Is a sound system necessary? Develop a checklist of everything you and the ensemble will need prior to performances on the road. One

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year we took a bus ride half way across town only to show up with no music stands! Needless to say, we turned the bus around and the performance began a bit late.

Additional Guitar Ensemble Class Sessions

In addition to regular ensemble rehearsals and performances throughout the year, there are several other activities to do with the ensemble. Those activities include individual assessment, sectional rehearsals, solo and ensemble literature, blues improvisation, a concert critique, and guitar “share day” or “coffee shop.”

Individual assessment is crucial to the continued development of skill and technique. Put aside a few days during which students are given practice time and you will be able to assess playing one-on-one.

Sectional rehearsals are an excellent activity after a song is introduced to the ensemble. The ability to hold sectional rehearsals depends on space. We were fortunate to be able to have one section on stage, one in the band room, and one in the guitar/chorus room during the ensemble rehearsal period. Again, if students are given time to rehearse in small groups, accountability is a must. The director must rotate from section to section to insure students are on task. Occasionally, one student may be removed from the sectional rehearsal if they are disrupting the group. Approach the sectional as a privilege. If a student abuses that privilege, it is taken away from them. At the end of the sectional rehearsal, or at the beginning of class the following day, have students demonstrate their accomplishments from the rehearsal. Also, before the sectional, set goals with the assistance of the section leader.

Solo and (small) Ensemble literature may also be taught throughout the course of the year. After the third week of class, I assign each student a listed solo, usually

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one level higher than the solo they played in Guitar Two class. Students are required to work on their solos outside of class and periodically time is given during class to practice solos. As was done in Guitar Two, students share the first section of their solos with the class for oral critique. Final solo performances are usually done in late April or early May, and students are given the option to perform their solos at the state solo and ensemble festival or the spring recital.

This same procedure is used for small ensemble playing such duets, trios, and quartets. Between large ensemble performances, this activity is helpful for individual skill development. Each student is responsible for his or her own part in small ensemble. The small ensemble groups, particularly those with the highest success rate, are also given an opportunity to perform at community performances, recital or festivals.

Each year, we put aside a couple of weeks for the blues improvisational unit. The students very much look forward to this unit. After doing blues improvisation in Guitar One and Guitar Two, they have a solid basis on which to approach this unit. The ensemble breaks up into groups of three, four or five (or larger) and practice in circles to play the 12-bar blues. Many look forward to sitting on the floor and doing away with classical technique for a bit. Each student is given 12 bars or more during which to improvise. Amazing accomplishments come from this activity each year. Suddenly groups are switching keys, soloing beyond the fifth fret, adding creative bass lines and shuffle patterns, adding hammers and pull-offs, slides and bends. Real creativity takes place, and most often, students learn these tricks and techniques from each other. During Guitar One, it takes a lot of convincing

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to have the groups share their ideas and presentations with the class. In Guitar Ensemble, they can't wait to perform for each other.

Also each year after the holiday concert, our students write a concert critique after watching a video of their performance. This activity allows Mt. Hope High School music students an opportunity to gain proficiency in our PBGR (Proficiency Based Graduation Requirement) M3-Responding to Music, which is also a national standard. A list of musical terms is reviewed and given as criteria to write the critique.

An excellent activity for the last few weeks of school (after performances obligations are met) is an oral presentation such as "Guitar Share Day" (see Figure 8). Students enjoy sharing music they have learned outside of class, and offering an option of an oral presentation about a famous guitarist gives everyone an obtainable goal. Below is a sample handout for Guitar Share Day. A similar activity to enjoy throughout the year as time allows is a Friday afternoon "Coffee Shop." Students divide into small groups to experiment with some popular songs. The presentation of the coffee shop activity may be left as optional. When a group has a song to share, they will! Several actual bands have come from these activities over the years.

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Figure 8. Guitar Ensemble Share Day Handout.

GUITAR SHARE DAY

Choose one of the following:

1. Teach a Song
2. Do a Presentation
3. Perform a Song
4. Bring in a Guest Artist

TEACH A SONG

Using tab, notation, or chords - teach the class a song in any genre.
Be prepared to present the song (by playing it or showing a video)
Either hand out the song or put the song up on the screen via Elmo or computer projection

Evaluation is based on presentation skills (speaking clearly and at an even pace)

Materials (hand out or projection)

How well the class responds to your teaching

PRESENT

Do a 10-15 minute presentation on a famous guitarist or a guitar style.
Use a PowerPoint presentation, a video or a handout

Evaluation is based on

Presentation skills

Materials

Class response to subject matter

PERFORM

Perform a song for the class - any genre

Evaluation is based on Performance rubric

GUEST

Bring in a guest artist to either teach a lesson or perform for the class.
(If you choose this option, you will have extended time.)

Evaluation is based on your presentation skills as you introduce the guest to the class. (Include background information.)

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All State Guitar

All State Guitar Ensemble is becoming a national trend in music education. The Rhode Island Music Education Association recently added Guitar Ensemble to the All State program. After teaching chorus for many years and knowing the significance of an All State Choral program, I am thrilled to have this same opportunity for guitar students. Not only does All State Guitar validate what you teach in class every day, but it also gives students an opportunity to work with a professional guitarist and conductor. It gives them an opportunity to play more challenging and a wider variety of guitar literature. Additionally, students have an opportunity to work with some of the finest guitar students in the state and it build life-long memories of music making.

Auditioning for All State gives students a rigorous goal for which to strive and helps to build music skills. Auditions may include a guitar solo or parts from an ensemble piece. The audition may also include sight-reading and scales. The process of the audition itself, regardless of whether or not students are accepted into All State, is a valuable experience to help students gain skill and confidence.

Chapter Nine: Assessment

Introduction

Chapter nine includes information about the importance of assessment, proficiencies, spot checks, solo progress grades and sumative assessment.

The Importance of Assessment

Assessment is an essential part of instruction because it determines whether or not our goals have been met. An analysis of students' performance on individual tasks will help you determine areas of both successes and weaknesses. As educators we hear it often, yet assessment truly does drive instruction. Additionally, by giving students clear guidelines of assessment goals and detailed feedback on their performance, they have a better chance of learning and understanding the task.

Assessments may be formative or summative. These two assessment terms have been tossed around a lot in education and their meanings have at times been distorted. Simply put, formative assessment will help you determine the next steps within a unit of study, and formative assessment will help you determine if overall goals have been met at the end of a unit or program.

A variety of assessment methods will help maintain student interest and provide an opportunity for different types of learners to succeed. The following assessments are practices in guitar class that have helped both educators and students reach their assessment goals.

Proficiencies

One-on-one time with each student is invaluable in guitar class, but it can be quite a challenge to keep the rest of the class on task and behaving well as we meet

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with each individual student. One method, which is outlined in the teacher's guide to *H.O.T. Hands-on Training First Year Guitar* by Nancy Lee Marsters, is called proficiencies. During proficiencies, or playing tests, students come to the front of the class to play a selection for the teacher. Two stations are set up where students come to demonstrate the task. While one student is being tested, another student fills the seat of the second station. The teacher's chair is between the two stations, facing the rest of the class. This enables the teacher to keep an eye on the rest of the class who are practicing for their test. Each student has one minute to perform, as the teacher completes the rubric. This procedure provides that valuable one-on-one time with each student and is an excellent opportunity to correct individual technique issues. It is helpful during this assessment to provide students with additional material to work on once their assessment is complete. It is also helpful to determine the order in which students will come up for their test before the procedure begins.

Spot Checks

Another very useful formative assessment is to conduct a whole-class section spot check. With a checklist and roster on a clipboard, have whole class play an exercise or tune three or four times. Evaluate one section at a time, checking off a few items for each student. It is best during spot check assessments to keep the criteria to a minimum. For example, you may check off note accuracy and left hand technique for one assessment, then rhythmic accuracy and right hand technique another time. Provide the students of a copy of the rubric or checklist before the assessment. If students know ahead of time what is expected of them, they will prepare more diligently. Spot checks are not as precise as one-on-one evaluations, but they save

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time, provide student accountability, and help you gauge the next steps of your teaching.

Sectional Spot Checks

During the Guitar Two and Guitar Ensemble full ensemble units, a sectional rehearsal provides both an opportunity for individual learning and individual formative assessment. It also provides opportunity for student leadership. As sections rehearse their individual line of an ensemble piece, use a rubric or checklist to evaluate the progress of each section. In addition to note accuracy and technique, sectionals are the optimal time to learn and assess rhythm. A sectional assessment could simply include each member of the section tapping and counting difficult rhythmic passages.

Solo - Progress Grade

As each student begins to learn his or her semester solo in Guitar Ensemble and Guitar Two class, a solo progress grade helps to ensure progress. In addition to asking each student to play the first eight or sixteen measures for the class, have students come up to the front of the classroom individually to play the first half of their solo using a solo progress rubric. Be certain to announce the deadline for solo progress grades and give class time prior to the assessment for individual practice. This formative assessment will help the teacher determine which technical issues need to be reviewed.

The individual semester solos are perhaps the most important assessment in regards to individual skill development as a classical player. Here, each student is playing a complete piece on his or her own. These pieces may also serve as an

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audition piece for college or All State and may be performed individually at recitals.

This solo may also be one or two summative assessments at the end of the course.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessments in all levels of guitar class center on a combination of individual and ensemble playing performance. The final individual assessment is performing and recording a semester solo. As was discussed in the class content chapter, Guitar One class might culminate in each student performing the same piece, such as Bach's Minuet in G. In the upper level classes, students will benefit from being assigned a song specific to their level and ability. In the upper levels, a class recital, where each student performs his or her final piece for the class, is also an excellent individual summative assessment.

Recording the solos adds formality and finality to each assessment as well. If students are required to add work to a digital portfolio, they often enjoy adding a recording of themselves performing on guitar. In addition, during the recording process, students often take the degree of the performance piece to a higher level. Recordings may also be made while a student performs for the class. Several samples of assessment rubrics are provided in the appendix.

Concerts and recitals are summative assessments for ensemble playing. One way to assess ensemble playing is to have students watch and critique a video of their own performance. Another example of summative ensemble assessment is a performance at a festival during which a judge's evaluation becomes the assessment. Each of these summative assessment practices helps you determine the effectiveness of the program and set overall goals for future ensembles and performances.

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Appendix A **Classical Position Checklist for Guitar One**

Holding the Guitar

- Sit up tall at the front edge of your chair
- Place your left foot on a foot stand
- Place your right foot flat on the floor
- Place waist of the guitar on your left knee
- Rest base of the guitar on your right leg
- Rest back of the guitar gently against your chest
- Keep shoulders relaxed

Left Hand Technique

- Thumb rests lightly on back of the guitar
- Do not bend thumb at knuckle
- Thumb rests on its pad
- Touch strings with the fingertip, close to the fingernail
- Curve fingers
- Keep space between your fingers
- Keep fingertips close to the fret

Right Hand Technique

- Right forearm gently rests on the guitar between the wrist and elbow
- Right wrist is aligned with arm
- Right wrist is gently arched
- Fingers are over the sound hole

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Appendix B Guitar One Syllabus

Welcome to Guitar Class. Please read the syllabus and course information and return the Student/Parent Information Form and Contract tomorrow.
Thank you. I look forward to a great semester together!

National Standards of Music Education

- Singing alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
- Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
- Improvising melodies, variations and accompaniments
- Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines
- Reading and notating music
- Listening to, analyzing, and describing music
- Evaluating music and performers
- Understanding relationships between music, other arts, and other disciplines
- Understanding music in relation to history and culture

Mt. Hope High School Music PBGRs (Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements)

PBGR 11.0M: Read and Perform Music

PBGR 11.1M: Create Music

PBGR 11.2M: Respond to Music

Curriculum Unit Outline

- I 14 Basic Chords
Structure and Technique
Tuning
Strumming Rhythms
Blues Forms
- II First Position Melody
Notation
Bass Playing
Trios
- III Scales
Key Signatures
Arpeggios
- IV Tablature
Barre Chords
- V Playing in Upper Positions
PIMA Fingerstyle

Instruments

Each student will be assigned a classroom guitar to use at school. Students are also required to practice outside of class, so it is helpful to have a guitar at home. If you do not own a guitar, here are three suggestions:

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1. Ask around! You'd be surprised how many people have a guitar sitting around waiting to be played. Each year many students borrow a guitar from a friend, relative or teacher until they are able to purchase their own.
2. The Mt. Hope Performing Arts Department offers a lease-to-own program. A deposit of approximately \$50 is required to receive an acoustic Yamaha. There are 12 monthly payments of approximately \$25. Contracts and letters with exact costs are available from Mrs. Boyle.
3. If you do not have a guitar at home, you may occasionally sign a guitar out to take home, but you should also make arrangements to practice in the classroom during study or after school. More than one student uses each classroom guitar so they need to be in the classroom every day.

Homework and Assignments

Homework every day for guitar class is *practice*. There will also be occasional worksheets for homework. Weekly assignments will be listed every Monday in weekly Newsletter.

Newsletters

The Mt. Hope Choral and Guitar Newsletter is sent home via e-mail every Monday, or if you prefer, hard copies are available in the music room. The newsletter includes our music department performance calendar information, assignments, music tips, quotes, music web site resources, and a weekly "Student of the Week."

Textbooks

The textbooks are provided and must be brought to class everyday. All books must be returned at the end of the semester. We will also use many supplementary guitar books available in the classroom. Please do not leave textbooks in guitar cases. Also, please have a pencil in every class.

Grades

Each unit will include skills proficiencies (playing exams.) Several units include written worksheets and exams. Grades are calculated as follows:

Proficiencies (playing exams) and recitals	50%
Time usage/Organization	25%
Written exams and homework	25%

Class Conduct

- be on time for each class
- be attentive and courteous
- treat guitars and equipment with care and respect
- do not use anyone else's guitar without permission
- gum, candy, food, and beverage are not allowed in class
- good school attendance is crucial to succeed

HIGH SCHOOL GUITAR

Appendix C **Guitar Two Course Information**

Dear Guitar II Students,

Welcome back to Guitar class. The following is information about Guitar II and our goals for the year. The biggest change from the first level guitar class is that we will meet everyday, all year which will enable you more playing time to further develop skills. Please bring this information home to share with your parents and return the information form to me by Wednesday, September 11.

Instruments

A change from last year! All students will be assigned an acoustic guitar to use during class. Please do not bring personal guitars to school unless requested for a specific class. As you know, you will have to practice outside of class and I strongly recommend that you have your own guitar for home practice. If you do not own a guitar, here are a few suggestions:

4. Ask around! You'd be surprised how many people have a guitar sitting around waiting to be played. Each year many students borrow a guitar from a friend, relative or teacher until they are ready and able to purchase their own.
5. Our lease-to-own program through the local music store is still available. A deposit of approximately \$50 is required to receive an acoustic Yamaha or Oscar Schmidt guitar. There are 12 monthly payments of approximately \$25. Please let me know right away if you are interested in the lease program.
6. If you do not have a guitar at home, you may occasionally sign a guitar out to take home, but you should also make arrangements to practice in the classroom during study or after school. More than one student uses each classroom guitar so they need to be in the classroom everyday.

Newsletters

Every Monday you will receive **Guitar News**, our weekly classroom newsletter. The newsletter contains assignments for each guitar class (Guitar I, Guitar II and Guitar Ensemble) as well as important dates, performance information, playing tips, web site suggestions and a "student of the week." Please bring the newsletter home each week to share with your parents. You may receive the newsletter each week by e-mail.

Newsletters are also posted on the Mt. Hope HS website.

Homework

Homework every day for guitar class is **practice**. Guitar II will require more dedicated practice time! There will also be occasional theory worksheets for homework. Assignments are listed in the Guitar News weekly newsletter and posted in the classroom.

Textbooks

H.O.T. (Hands-On Training) Second Year Guitar by Nancy Lee Marsters

Enjoy Playing the Guitar, Books 1 & 2 by Debbie Cracknell

Mastering the Guitar 1B by William Bay & Mike Christiansen

HIGH SCHOOL GUITAR

The textbooks are provided and must be brought to class everyday. **All books must be returned as we finish using them.** If you wish to purchase a book to keep, please let me know.

Grades

As with Guitar I there will be skills proficiencies for material taught in class. In addition, there will be a great deal of playing both individually and in an ensemble.

Practice is crucial. Grades are calculated as follows:

PROFICIENCIES AND RECITALS	50%
TIME USAGE	25%
WRITTEN WORK/ EXAMS	25%

Classroom Policy

Our time together is limited and precious so please adhere to the following classroom rules:

- be on time for each class
- be attentive and courteous
- treat guitars with care and respect, and put guitars away properly
- do not use anyone else's guitar without permission
- gum, candy, food, and beverage are not allowed in class
- **good school attendance is crucial to succeed**

Folders and Pencils

Please keep a folder for storing extra material, handouts, returned exams and worksheets. Keep your books and folder in your backpack (not your guitar case.) You must have a pencil in class every day.

Curriculum Overview

Review of Guitar I

Classical Position, First Position Notation, Chords, PIMA Finger style, Rest Stroke and Free Stroke, Key Signature, Major Scales, Sixteenth Note and Dotted Note Rhythms, Tablature, Barre Chords, Duet and Ensemble Playing

Playing in Upper Positions

Second Position, Fifth Position, Seventh Position

Jazz Studies

Moveable Chords, Twelve Bar Blues Forms, Improvisation

Theory

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Appendix D Guitar Ensemble Course Syllabus

Guitar Ensemble is the performance guitar group at Mt. Hope High School. Students are selected based on their musical ability, potential and effort. Students are expected to be:

- **Skillful Learners**-demonstrated by attentiveness and participation in rehearsal, regular individual practice routine (minimum 4 days per week)
- **Responsible**-attend all rehearsals and performances, on time, with necessary supplies and equipment
- **Productive**-use time and resources wisely to develop skills necessary for an excellent performance
-

Primary Academic Expectations

PBGR 7 Reflective Writing
PBGR 12 Problem Solving
PBGR 23 M1 Read and Perform Music
PBGR 23 M2 Create Music
PBGR 23 M3 Respond to Music

Course Objectives By the end of the course the student will:

- Show evidence of performing a varied repertoire of music alone and with others of an appropriate difficulty level with expression and proper technique.
- Show evidence of reading guitar music by describing how elements of music are used with appropriate music vocabulary.
- Demonstrate ability to sight-read a given piece of music at an appropriate level of difficulty with some accuracy and expression.
- Improvise melodic and rhythms variations in a variety of meters and tonalities. Improvise appropriate harmony parts to given melody. Improvise melodies over given chord progression.
- Apply musical criteria when evaluating personal participation in music.
- Maintain proper performance and rehearsal attendance, etiquette and decorum.

Assessment

Common Tasks for Digital Portfolio (40%)

- Quarter 1: Compose a Song
- Quarter 2: The Ultimate Solo, 1st semester
- Quarter 3: New York Times Review
- Quarter 4: The Ultimate Solo, 2nd semester

Classwork (20 %) rehearsal decorum, binder checks, exercises and vocabulary quizzes

Performance Assessment (20%) Small ensemble, large ensemble and solo proficiencies

Performance Attendance (20%) See the Performance Attendance Policy

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Curriculum Outline

Review of Guitar I and Guitar II

- Classical Position, First Position Notation, Basic Chords
- PIMA Fingerstyle, Rest Stroke and Free Stroke
- Sixteenth Note and Dotted Note Rhythms
- Tablature, Barre Chords
- Playing in Upper Positions, Moveable Chords, Twelve Bar Blues Forms
- Improvisation, Major and Minor Scales and Key Signature
- Intervals, Chord Construction
 - Solo and Ensemble Repertoire Requirements
- Solo
 - Each student will perform one approved solo each semester. A video recording of each solo will appear in the student's digital portfolio. Solos will also be performed for the class as part of the semester exam grade. Solos constitute 40% of the semester grade.
- Small Ensemble
 - Each student will participate in a small ensemble working independently to prepare and perform music of diverse styles. In-class time will be set aside for small ensemble repertoire selection and rehearsal. This time is for group work, not the learning of individual parts.
- Large Ensemble
 - Students are responsible for learning and maintaining large ensemble pieces in a timely manner.

Newsletters

Mt. Hope Choral and Guitar News our weekly newsletter is sent home via e-mail every week. Hard copies are also available in the classroom. The newsletter contains assignments, calendar information, trip and fundraising information and "Student of the Week."

Homework

Homework every day for guitar ensemble is *practice*. Dedicated practice time is crucial to the success of the ensemble. We will be working in small and large groups, and on solo literature. Limited classroom time will be available to learn your parts -- this must be done at home! Assignments are listed in the newsletter and posted in the classroom.

Binders, Books and Pencils

Each student is required to have a black binder for sheet music. Binders should be taken home every day for practice and brought back every day for class. All students are required to have a pencil at each rehearsal.

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Classroom Policy

- Be on time for each class
- Be attentive and courteous
- Treat guitars and equipment with care and respect
- Do not use anyone else's guitar without permission
- During Ensemble rehearsal: Pay attention and above all else -- DO NOT TALK once the rehearsal has begun.
- During Individual and small ensemble time: no socializing, stay focused
- Gum, candy, food, and beverage are not allowed in class
- Good school attendance is crucial to succeed

Performance Attendance Policy

All members are required to attend all scheduled rehearsals and performances.

- If you cannot attend a rehearsal or performance, please complete the request for excused absence form.
- Forms must be submitted a week in advance and signed by a parent.
- In the event of illness or if you unexpectedly miss a performance, please complete the request for excused absence form within two days (even if you were absent from school on the day of a performance.)
- Students who fail to follow the performance Attendance Policy will have his/her grade reduced by one letter grade for the quarter.

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Appendix E **Guitar Ensemble Contract**

As a member of Mt. Hope High School Guitar Ensemble, I will strive to:

- learn all my music in a timely manner
- practice my music outside of class
- have my music, binder and a pencil at every rehearsal
- pay attention in class, *refrain from talking* during rehearsal
- refrain from socializing during independent practice time
- be on time for class and performances
- attend all performances and follow the Performance Attendance Policy
- have above average school attendance
- show respect to fellow ensemble members, student leaders and director
- respect the classroom and materials by keeping them neat and clean
- treat guitars with tender, loving care
- never chew gum or have food or beverage at rehearsal

I have read and understand the Guitar Ensemble Information and Contract.

Guitar Ensemble Member Signature: _____

Appendix F
Recital Program

Christmas at Blithewold

December 13, 2006



Mt. Hope High School Guitar Ensemble

<i>Gavotte</i>	<i>J. S. Bach</i>
<i>Jig: Humours of Castle Corner</i>	<i>Traditional Celtic</i>
<i>Boneparte Crossing the Rhine</i>	<i>Traditional British</i>
<i>Isle</i>	
<i>Virginies del Sol</i>	<i>Jorge Bravo de Rueda</i>
<i>Bouree</i>	<i>J.S. Bach</i>

Mt. Hope High School Woodwind Duet

<i>Traditional Carols</i>	<i>arr. Lloyd Conley</i>
<i>Holiday songs</i>	<i>arr. Hal Leonard</i>

Carolyn Hughes, alto sax

George Mathewson, flute

Mt. Hope High School Guitar Ensemble

<i>What child is this?</i>	<i>arr. Debbie Cracknell</i>
<i>Deck The Halls</i>	<i>arr. John Rutter</i>
<i>Trepak from "The Nutcracker"</i>	<i>Tchaikovsky</i>
<i>Two Mid Winter Carols</i>	<i>arr. Hartmetz</i>
<i>Carol of the Bells</i>	<i>Ukrainian Carol</i>



Members of the Mt. Hope High School Guitar Ensemble

<i>Ryan Carlson</i>	<i>Justin Renault</i>
<i>Cameron West</i>	<i>Joel McLaughlin</i>
<i>Michael Moore</i>	<i>Eddy Ferrara</i>
<i>Michael Ramsay</i>	<i>Ray Stevenson</i>
<i>Caitlin Rogers</i>	<i>Jessica Sweeney</i>
<i>Matt Paradis</i>	<i>Beth Zimmerman</i>

HIGH SCHOOL GUITAR

Appendix G Weekly Newsletter



Guitar News

A Weekly Announcement Sheet For Guitar I, Guitar II And Guitar Ensemble

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Farewell to our Student Teacher

All good things must come to an end! Miss Ferreira has been a great student teacher and has enjoyed working with Guitar One and Guitar Ensemble. Thank you all for being attentive students for her – I know she'll remember her experience here for a long time to come. And she certainly will be missed!

Monday Jam Sessions

Monday Jam Sessions will take place today after school. Stop by and play along – or just listen. Late bus passes are available. Monday Jam sessions take place every Monday after school. All guitarists are welcome! Plan to come next Monday as well.

November 22 Guitar Seminar

On Friday, November 22nd from 3:00 – 4:00 PM we will hold a master class work with the Guitar Ensemble. All Guitar I and Guitar II students are asked to attend as well. Refreshments will be served! More information will follow – but please mark your calendars. (Ask now for the time off from work – if need be!)

Upcoming Performance

The Guitar Ensembles will perform at our annual guitar festival at Wheeler School in Providence, called “Night of the Living Guitars!” The performance is Friday, February 3rd at 7:00 PM at Wheeler School in Providence.

Trip Deposit

The final New York deposit of \$150 is due January 18th. (You may offset this cost by participating in the December poinsettia sales fundraiser!) Please mail the deposit directly to the treasurer and place the student's name appears in the memo line of the check. Students attending the New York trip must also return the notarized medical form (available in the guitar room) as soon as possible.

Café La France

Don't forget to stop by Café La France on open mic night – Tuesdays or Fridays!

HIGH SCHOOL GUITAR



STUDENTS OF THE WEEK: Alisha Cole

Alisha is a senior in both guitar and chorus. She also serves as librarian in Chorus. Last week the Guitar I class insisted that Allison be the next “Student of the Week” because she brought in a snack for everyone! I thought it was a good idea because of everything Alisha does to help out in both classes. She is always willing to lend a hand and help other students, and is an exemplary student!

Who will be the next student of the week?

GUITAR ONE ASSIGNMENTS

Monday 10/28	Note and rhythm review packet
Tuesday 10/29	Worksheet 3 due Proficiency – Page 34 Review song packet Review for Test 4: Naming notes, Writing rhythms
Wednesday 10/30	Review song packet
Thursday 10/31	Test 4: Naming notes, Writing rhythms
Friday 11/1	Review song packet (Monday - Song Packet Proficiency: Ode To Joy, Au Claire de La Lune, Blues Bass)

GUITAR TWO ASSIGNMENTS

Monday 10/28	Practice Arpeggios Hot I page 67 (#9) or Page 69 (I or II)
Tuesday 10/29	(extended period) Arpeggio proficiency
Wednesday 10/30	no class
Thursday 10/31	warm up scales and slur patterns Trio assignments
Friday 11/1	warm up scales and slur patterns Work in trios

GUITAR ENSEMBLE ASSIGNMENTS

Monday 10/28	Proficiency: Scales - Key of G, and F Practice Virgenes de Sol, Menuet
Tuesday 10/29	Continue Proficiency
Wednesday 10/30	(extended period) Review songs: Pappy Tracking, Yankee Doodle, Sourwood Mountain, Marine’s Hymn, Virgenes de Sol, Menuet Work on Solos
Thursday 10/31	no class
Friday 11/1	Solo progress evaluation Individual work on Ensemble songs: Champagne Rag, Pizzicato, The Girl I Left Behind Me

HIGH SCHOOL GUITAR

Appendix H **Guitar One Common Task Assignment and Rubric**

PERFORMING ARTS DEPARTMENT GUITAR 1 **END OF COURSE ASSESSMENT “MINUET IN G”**

PBGR(S):

23 M1 Read and Play Music

APPLIED LEARNING STANDARDS:

AL4. Learning and Self-Management

THE TEACHER WILL:

- ◆ Teach unit on note-reading
- ◆ Review proper technique for classical guitar
- ◆ Assess note reading and performance from Hal Leonard Songbook prior to assigning task
- ◆ Review and have students practice Moviemaker recording procedures
- ◆ Review and have students practice uploading to digital portfolio

THE STUDENT WILL:

- ◆ Review PBGRs, GSEs, Content Standards, and Applied Learning Standards for the task.
- ◆ Review school-wide rubric(s), and/or task specific rubric(s).
- ◆ Practice and learn “Minuet in G” using the following practice technique:
 1. Sight-read the first half of the solo
 2. Work on the first 4 measure section
 3. Once mastered, work on the next four measures
 4. Once mastered, combine with the first four measures to play the eight measure section.
 5. Continue through the first half of the piece.
 6. Make improvements to the first half
 7. Record first half using Movie Maker
 8. Upload to your digital portfolio for review
 9. Continue to the first section of the second half.
 10. Continue as above and record and submit the entire piece

“MINUET IN G” PERFORMANCE TASK

Learn and record the first half of “Minuet in G” using Moviemaker.
Pay close attention to proper classical technique, correct rhythm and correct notation.
Upload the recording to the digital portfolio
Review rubric from your performance of first half and make corrections.
Learn and record the entire song. Upload the entire song to the digital portfolio.

HIGH SCHOOL GUITAR

Appendix I

Guitar One “Minuet in G” Assessment Rubric

Notation

- 5 All notes are accurate and confident
- 4 Most notes are accurate
- 3 A few notes are not accurate
- 2 Unsure of many notes
- 1 Unsure of most notes

Rhythm and tempo

- 5 Constant steady beat with appropriate tempo
- 4 Pauses occasionally or tempo is inappropriate
- 3 Several pauses or inappropriate tempo
- 2 The beat is not at all steady
- 1 Not counting correctly or steady beat does not exist

Technique checklist

- Left thumb is behind neck and unbent
- Left fingers are curved, fingertips on fret board
- Player is sitting up straight on edge of chair
- Left leg is elevated
- Shoulders are relaxed, back is erect
- Forearm crosses upper edge of guitar
- Wrist is slightly arched and aligned with arm

HIGH SCHOOL GUITAR

Appendix K

Sample Guitar Two Checklist and Rubric

Guitar 2

Name _____

Checklist and Rubric

Once you have completed the following checklist, proceed to the performance piece:

Autumn Mist

Enjoy Playing the Guitar, Book One

Comments on technique:

- √+ √ √- Drunken Sailor Pg. 2
- √+ √ √- Tricky Rhythm Scale, Pg. 7
- √+ √ √- Tango in thirds Pg. 8

HOT Second Year Guitar

- √+ √ √- HOT Pg. 27, #5, 6 & 7
- √+ √ √- HOT Pg. 25 Scale

Autumn Mist, Page 9

Notation

- 5 All notes are accurate and confident
- 4 Most notes are accurate
- 3 A few notes are not accurate
- 2 Unsure of many notes
- 1 Unsure of most notes

Rhythm

- 5 All rhythms accurate with steady beat
- 4 Pausing or occasional incorrect rhythm
- 3 Several pauses, a few incorrect rhythms
- 2 Having trouble keeping beat
- 1 Steady beat does not exist

Body and Left Hand Technique

- Left thumb is behind neck and unbent
- Left fingers are curved, fingertips on fret board
- Player is sitting up straight on edge of chair
- Left leg is elevated, right leg supports guitar
- Shoulders are relaxed, back is straight

Right Hand Technique

- Player is using proper rest stroke and free stroke
- Right fingers are curved; thumb is forward of fingers
- Right hand is relaxed; free from tension
- Forearm crosses upper edge of guitar
- Wrist is slightly arched and aligned with arm

HIGH SCHOOL GUITAR

Appendix L

Sample Guitar Two Song Rubric

GUITAR II

Name _____

Song with melody and bass notes

Notation

- 5 All notes are accurate and confident
- 4 Most notes are accurate
- 3 A few notes are not accurate
- 2 Unsure of many notes
- 1 Unsure of most notes

Body and Left Hand Technique (1 point per check)

- Left thumb is behind neck and unbent
- Left fingers are curved, fingertips on fret board
- Player is sitting up straight on edge of chair
- Left leg is elevated, right leg supports guitar
- Shoulders are relaxed

Right Hand Technique

- Player is using proper pick rest stroke, bass notes: free stroke
- Right fingers are curved; thumb is forward of fingers
- Right hand is relaxed; free from tension
- Forearm crosses upper edge of guitar
- Wrist is slightly arched and aligned with arm

Rhythm and tempo

- 5 Constant steady beat with appropriate tempo and correct rhythms
- 4 Pauses occasionally or tempo should be slightly faster/slower
- 3 Several pauses or inappropriate tempo, several rhythmic inaccuracies
- 2 Pausing often, several rhythmic inaccuracies
- 1 Steady beat does not exist, many rhythmic inaccuracies

Score: ____ / 20

HIGH SCHOOL GUITAR

Appendix M

Guitar Ensemble Proficiency Rubric

GUITAR PROFICIENCY

Name _____

Notation

- 5 All notes are accurate and confident
- 4 Most notes are accurate
- 3 A few notes are not accurate
- 2 Unsure of many notes
- 1 Unsure of most notes

Rhythm

- 5 All rhythms played and counted accurately
- 4 Most rhythms played and counted accurately
- 3 Several rhythms not played or counted accurately
- 2 Many rhythms not played or counted accurately
- 1 Not counting correctly or steady beat does not exist

Body and Left Hand Technique (one point per check)

- Left thumb is behind neck and unbent
- Left fingers are curved, fingertips on fret board
- Player is sitting up straight on edge of chair
- Left leg is elevated
- Shoulders are relaxed, back is straight

Right Hand Technique

- Player is using proper rest stroke, alternating i,m fingers
- Right fingers are curved; thumb is forward of fingers
- Right hand is relaxed; free from tension
- Forearm crosses upper edge of guitar
- Wrist is slightly arched and aligned with arm

Tone quality

- 5 Player has a lovely, rich, warm, full tone, no buzzing
- 4 No buzz or twang, sound is rich but needs to be a little richer and fuller
- 3 There is occasional buzzing; tone could be a little richer
- 2 Fair tone quality – some buzzing and twanging
- 1 Poor tone quality – lots of buzz and twang

Score: ____/25

HIGH SCHOOL GUITAR

Appendix N

Student Self-Assessment Rubric

Self-Assessment Rubric

Name _____

After performing the song, rate yourself in the following categories.

Self	Teacher	Notation
5	5	I am playing all notes accurately and with confidence
4	4	I am playing notes accurately, I could play with more confidence
3	3	I am playing most notes accurately – I am guessing at a few
2	2	I am unsure of several notes
1	1	I am unsure of many notes
Tone quality		
5	5	I have a lovely, rich, warm, full tone, no buzz or twang
4	4	My sound is warm but could be a little richer and fuller
3	3	There is occasional buzzing, tone could be a little richer
2	2	I have fair tone quality – some buzzing and twanging
1	1	I have poor tone quality – lots of buzz and twang
Rhythm and tempo		
5	5	I play with a constant steady beat and all rhythms are accurate
4	4	I pause occasionally, 1 or 2 rhythms are incorrect
3	3	I have several pauses or several incorrect rhythms
2	2	My beat is not steady, and I am playing several incorrect rhythms
1	1	My beat is not steady, and I am playing many incorrect rhythms
Progress		
5	5	I have made excellent progress – I stay focused and on task for each class
4	4	I have made good progress – occasionally I get off task
3	3	I have made average progress – I am not always on task
2	2	I have not made very good progress – I am often off task probably too
1	1	I have not progressed – I have trouble staying focused on class material
Technique/Body and Hand Position (check all that apply)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I using proper rest stroke
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I am using appropriate p,i,m,a fingering
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My right hand is relaxed; free from tension,
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My right fingers are curved; thumb is forward of fingers
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My right forearm crosses upper edge of guitar,
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My wrist is slightly arched
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My left thumb is behind neck and unbent
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My left fingers are curved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My shoulders are relaxed, back is erect
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My left foot is elevated

HIGH SCHOOL GUITAR

Appendix O

Small Ensemble, Individual and Group Evaluation

Individual Notation

5	5	All notes are accurate and confident
4	4	Most notes are accurate
3	3	A few notes are not accurate
2	2	Unsure of many notes
1	1	Unsure of most notes

Individual Tone quality

5	5	Excellent tone quality, lovely, rich, warm, full tone, no buzzing
4	4	No buzz or twang, sound is rich but needs to be a little richer and fuller
3	3	There is occasional buzzing, tone could be a little richer
2	2	Fair tone quality – some buzzing and twanging
1	1	Poor tone quality – lots of buzz and twang

Individual Technique

5	5	Player always uses and practices in classical position correctly and comfortably
4	4	Player almost always uses and practices in classical position correctly
3	3	Player has at least one technical problem to correct, and doesn't always practice with good technique
2	2	Player is having a few problems with left hand and right hand technique. Needs to practice in classical position.
1	1	Player is having difficulties – uncomfortable with posture and hand positions. Never practices in position!

Individual PIMA

5	5	Right hand relaxed; fingers are curved; thumb is forward, proper rest, free stroke
4	4	Right hand is relaxed, fingers need to be curved more, thumb should be forward
3	3	Some tension, finger/wrist placement or strokes need a little work
2	2	Either finger or thumb placement is incorrect or right hand is tense
1	1	Right hand is too tense to have proper PIMA technique

Group rhythm and tempo

5	5	Constant steady beat with appropriate tempo, all rhythms are accurate
4	4	Pauses occasionally, should be slightly faster/slower, 1 or 2 incorrect rhythms
3	3	Several pauses or inappropriate tempo or several incorrect rhythms
2	2	The beat is not at all steady, ensemble not together often, many incorrect rhythms
1	1	Steady beat does not exist, many incorrect rhythms

Group Blend and Balance

5	5	The group sounds like one instrument, blending beautifully, melody is clear
4	4	Instruments don't always blend, melody needs to stand out more
3	3	One instrument stands out, or someone is not heard very well
2	2	One instrument frequently stands out from the others
1	1	Ensemble does not blend well

HIGH SCHOOL GUITAR

Appendix P Scales and Chords Rubric

Scales, Chords and Barre Chord Rubric

Name _____

Scales: Play a two octave D Major and A Major scale. Play ascending and descending. Use classical position and alternate i,m rest stroke for right hand technique

Scale notation and rhythm

- 5 All notes are accurate and confident, with a constant steady beat
- 4 Most notes are accurate or player pauses occasionally
- 3 A few notes are not accurate or player pauses occasionally
- 2 Unsure of many notes, pausing frequently
- 1 Unsure of most notes

Scale technique

- 5 Proper, confident and relaxed use of alternating i,m rest stroke
- 4 alternating i,m rest stroke, some tension or misplacement of fingers
- 3 Alternating i,m rest stroke need attention
- 2 Incorrect use of rest stroke or right hand is too tense
- 1 Not using rest stroke

Chord Progressions: Play the three assigned chord progressions. Strum with an even, steady beat. Use classical position, changing smoothly from chord to chord with an appropriate tempo.

Chords

- 5 Knows chords extremely well, plays with confidence
- 4 Knows all chords, makes changes fairly smoothly and in rhythm
- 3 Knows chords, changes need to be smoother, pauses occasionally
- 2 Misses some fingerings, changing slowly
- 1 Does not know chords very well, steady beat does not exist

Barre Chord Progressions: Play the three assigned barre chord progressions. Strum with an even, steady beat. Use classical position, changing smoothly from chord to chord with an appropriate tempo.

Barre Chords

- 5 Knows chords extremely well, plays with confidence
- 4 Knows all chords, makes changes smoothly and in rhythm
- 3 Knows chords, changes need to be smoother, beat pauses occasionally
- 2 Misses some fingerings, changing slowly or not keeping a steady tempo
- 1 Does not know chords very well, steady beat does not exist

HIGH SCHOOL GUITAR

Appendix Q Guitar Semester Solo Assessment

Guitar
Solo Evaluation

Name _____

	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Not Proficient
Notation	10-9 All notes are accurate and confident	8-6 A few notes are not accurate	5-3 Unsure of several notes	2-0 Unsure of many notes
Rhythm	10-9 Constant steady beat – All rhythms accurate	8-6 Player pauses occasionally, 1 or 2 rhythmic figures are incorrect	5-3– Having trouble keeping a steady beat – several rhythmic figures are incorrect	2-0 Steady beat does not exist – many rhythmic figures are incorrect
Interpretation and Expression	10-9 Stylistically accurate and musical. Melody is prominent. Variations in dynamics are demonstrated. Phrasing is musical and expressive	8-6 Some passages lack musical effect, style and tempo appropriate most of the time, good use of dynamics, most phrasing is appropriate, melody could be stronger	5-3 Lacks musical effect, style and tempo not accurate dynamics and phrasing are inconsistent, melody does not stand out	2-0 Nonmusical performance. Style and tempi are not maintained. Little attention to dynamics and phrasing
Tone quality	10-9 Rich, warm, full and resonant tone, consistent tone color and quality	8-6 Characteristic tone most of the time, affected by range and volume changes	5-3 Tone could be a little richer, occasional buzzing, inconsistent in various levels	2-0 Thin or unfocused sound, lacking richness –buzzing and twanging

Technique Checklist: (1point per check)

- Player is using proper rest stroke or free stroke,
- Player is using appropriate p,i,m,a fingering
- Right hand is relaxed; free from tension,
- Right fingers are curved; thumb is forward of fingers
- Right forearm crosses upper edge of guitar,
- Wrist is slightly arched
- Left thumb is behind neck and unbent
- Left fingers are curved
- Shoulders are relaxed, back is straight
- Left foot is elevated

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Appendix R

Rehearsal Decorum Student Checklist

GUITAR ENSEMBLE

Student Name _____

Rehearsal and Performance Preparation Checklist

	Always	Often	Sometimes
Learning the Music I feel confident in knowing the music. I learn the notes in my part, practice outside of class.			
I ask to review difficult sections when necessary. I strive to improve my ability to understand music notation.			
Confidence and Musicianship I know my music well enough to play with confidence, excellent tone quality and appropriate volume.			
I perform with appropriate musical expression and tempo, and volume. (I keep with the appropriate tempo and volume of the ensemble.)			
I play and practice with good technique.			
Organization I keep track of my music have a pencil with me. I am prepared for class. I get a music stand and foot stand without being asked. I return forms in a timely manor.			
Decorum and behavior I am courteous to the director, student director, class leaders and fellow members during rehearsals. I pay attention and refrain from talking during rehearsals.			
I exhibit exceptional behavior, providing a model for other students. I listen attentively without a teacher's reminder.			
Reliability and Commitment I am a dependable ensemble member. I have above-average school attendance and (will) show up at all performances.			
I am on time to class and ready to begin the rehearsal without being asked.			

What are your musical goals for the 2nd semester?

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Appendix S
Trip Information and Permission letter

Mt. Hope High Performing Arts Department
Walt Disney World Trip
Orlando, Florida April 14-18

Dear Parent or Guardian,

The Mt. Hope High School music department will perform at the All American Music Festival in Orlando, Florida on April 14-18. The estimated cost of the trip is \$1175 for a quad occupancy for students.

The cost of the trip includes:

- Round-trip air fare
- Four nights accommodation at Walt Disney World
- All busing while in Florida
- 4-day Disney Park-Hopper Admissions pass
- 1-day Universal Studios pass
- Participation in the All American Music Festival
- Performances at Walt Disney
- 4 Breakfasts/5 Lunches/ 5 Dinners
- All Travel arrangements and services
- All Taxes and Gratuities

There will be several fundraisers over throughout the upcoming year to offset the cost of the trip. Some scholarship money is available for students who show interest and effort in fundraising. The tentative payment schedule and meeting dates are as follows:

	<u>STUDENTS</u>	<u>ADULTS</u>
June 16, 2010	\$150.00	\$175.00
August 26, 2010	\$150.00	\$175.00
September 14 2010	\$150.00	\$175.00
October 19 2010	\$200.00	\$200.00
November 16 2010	\$200.00	\$200.00
January 2011 (TBA)	\$200.00	\$200.00
February 2011 (TBA)	\$175.00	\$150.00
Total:	\$1225.00	\$1275.00

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Please return the attached permission slip with your first payment. Forms and payments may be sent to our treasurer: *Student's name must appear on the memo line of check*

Trip deposits are refundable until October 21, 2010. The student cancellation penalties are:

- Nov. 1, 2010 – Nov. 30, 2010 \$200.00 per person
- Dec. 1, 2010 – Dec. 31, 2010 \$500.00 per person
- Jan. 1, 2011 – Jan. 31, 2011 \$750.00 per person
- Feb. 1, 2011 – Apr. 14, 2011 full amount paid penalty

Please keep in mind:

- Excellent attendance for rehearsals and performances throughout the year is required
- Parents and students will be asked to sign a contract regarding rules and regulation before the trip. All school rules apply throughout the duration of the trip.
- All students must adhere to the Mt. Hope High School Academic Eligibility policy for participation in extra-curricular activities

Permission slip

Student name: _____
has my permission to attend the Walt Disney World Trip on April 14-18

Please check the ensemble(s) with which your child will perform:

- ___ Concert Band
- ___ Symphonic Band
- ___ Marching Band
- ___ Guitar Ensemble
- ___ Chorus
- ___ Vocal Ensemble

Names of adults interested in attending the trip:

I have read and understand the Trip Information and Requirements letter

Parent/Garden signature: _____

Please print: Parent name _____
Phone # _____
e-mail: _____

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Appendix T **Trip Packing and Safety letter**

Mt. Hope High School
Marching Band, Symphonic Band, Concert Band
Chorus, Vocal Ensemble, and Guitar Ensemble
Trip to Florida April 14 – April 18

Information

What to bring and what to wear

1. See “The Packing List” for details
2. Pack light. You may only bring one suitcase. An additional small day back is okay for snacks, music and games for plane or bus rides.
3. Plan one comfortable, casual outfit for each day (Thurs., Fri., Sat., and Sun. and Mon.) Wear very comfortable shoes or sneakers.
4. Temperatures will range between 60° and 85°. Shorts are okay for the park, but it could get cool so bring a sweatshirt or light jacket. Dress appropriately. No short-shorts, no overly-revealing clothing.
5. Please be sensible, do not carry large backpacks or purses walking around the parks – travel light – all you’ll really need is you!
6. Uniforms must be packed separately in a secure, firm garment bag with your name clearly labeled. Your complete uniform must be in the bag. The bag will only come off the bus for the festival.
7. Don’t bring much cash. Everything is paid for in advance. The only cash you will need, if you choose, is for a souvenir.
8. You are welcome to bring snacks for the bus rides and the hotel room. Please do not bring peanut or peanut butter snacks. Do not put anything liquid in your carryon. We will be selling snacks and drinks at the hotel and on the busses.

Safety

1. We will review “The Rules” at the mandatory meeting on Monday, April 11th.
2. All school rules apply during the trip. Remember there is absolutely no smoking anywhere at any time. Everyone is expected to be on his or her best behavior throughout the entire trip. We are representing Mt. Hope High School.
3. You must wear your purple lanyard at all time in the parks.
4. Always stay with at least one other person from the group. Never wander off by yourself. Be alert and stay with the group. If you see another Mt. Hope student traveling alone please ask them to join you. If we get separated, or in an emergency, call your chaperone’s cell phone. (These numbers are for trip purposes only, please.)

Hotel

We are staying at the Crowne Plaza Orlando Universal Hotel

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Appendix U Trips Chaperone Information

Mt. Hope High School
Chorus, Vocal Ensemble and Guitar Ensemble
Trip to New York City, April 7, 8 & 9

CHAPERONES

1. Thank you for offering to help on our trip to New York. We truly hope you enjoy the experience.
2. All hands are needed to get out of the school by 7:00 AM Friday morning. Please help students carry luggage and instruments. Garment bags (on a garment rack) and guitars will be the last thing loaded on the bus for easy access when we reach the festival.
3. Please assist students getting off the bus at the festival and the hotel. At the festival, students will carry in garment bags and guitars only (no luggage.) Guitar equipment crates (footstands, music binders and percussion) must also be brought in. One chaperone will be assigned to each group for changing and lining up at the festival. When we arrive at the hotel, we need four people to operate the elevator to keep it coming to the first floor to pick up more students and chaperones.
4. Please volunteer to accompany freshmen through the Metropolitan Museum and while walking through city streets.

ROOM CHAPERONES

1. Room chaperones please check rooms upon arrival. If anything is broken or not working, please report it to housekeeping or the front desk.
2. Once everyone in the room is ready, give them their “dinner envelopes.” Everyone must be back on the bus at 6:00. Please accompany freshmen to dinner.
3. At bedtime, remind students to get water, soda, and ice prior to curfew. Do not allow students out of the room after curfew. If they need something, tell them you will get it for them or they should do without.
4. Bed check – be sure you see each student. Come back shortly if someone is in the bathroom.
5. Tell the students how to get a wake up call.
6. Just before curfew, we need a “presence in the lobby.”
7. In the morning, knock on the door 1/2 hour before we leave for the breakfast award ceremony (or 1/2 hour before breakfast on Sunday.) Cheerfully remind everyone that they need to be on the bus, or at breakfast in 1/2 hour.
8. Check rooms 10 minutes before departures to move them along. (With good humor!)

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Appendix V Trip Itinerary

Mt. Hope high School Chorus and Guitar Ensemble Trip to Williamsburg and Busch Gardens April 11-14

Itinerary

April 10

6:30 a.m. Depart via charter motor coach from Mt. Hope High School for Williamsburg

8:00 p.m. Rest and independent meal stops en route
Anticipated time of arrival in Williamsburg area
Upon arrival check into hotel
Balance of evening: Pool Party

April 11

7:00 a.m. Breakfast buffet at hotel

8:00 a.m. Board coach, Depart for festival

9:00 a.m. Arrive festival performance site.

9:30/10:00 a.m. Proceed to warm up area as instructed

Vocal Ensemble warm up/festival performance

11:00/11:30 a.m. Women's Choir warm up/festival performance

12:30/1:00 p.m. Jazz Choir warm up/festival performance

2:00/2:30 p.m. Guitar Ensemble warm up/festival performance

Provisions for lunch to be made on site

3:00 p.m. After performance, return to hotel to prepare for evening activities

5:30 p.m. Board coach, Depart for restaurant

6:00-7:30 p.m. Dinner

Board coach, depart for Colonial Williamsburg

8:00 – 9:30 p.m. Ghost Tour of Colonial Williamsburg

After tour Return to coach, Return to hotel

April 12

8:30 a.m. Breakfast buffet at hotel

9:30 a.m. Board coach, depart for Busch Gardens

10:00 a.m. Upon arrival, enter and enjoy theme park

11:00 a.m. Awards Ceremony in Royal Palace Theatre

4:00 – 5:00 p.m. Picnic in Black Forest Picnic Area

10:00 p.m. Park closes, Return to coach, Return to hotel

April 13

7:15 a.m. Buffet breakfast at hotel

8:00 a.m. Check out - Chaperones are requested to collect room keys

Load baggage on coaches

After breakfast Board coach, depart for home

Rest and independent meal stops en route

8:30 – 9:30 p.m. Anticipated time of arrival

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Appendix W Classroom Guitar Usage Chart

Guitar Name	Serial#	Guitar 1	Guitar 2	Guit Ens
Andres Segovia	29			
BB King	673			
Bob Dylan	199			
Carlos Santana	530			
Charlie Christian	635			
Chet Atkins	324			
Chuck Berry	542			
Django Reinhardt	596			
Eric Clapton	601			
Fernando Carulli	642			
Fernando Sor	239			
George Harrison	602			
Hector Villa-Lobos	600			
Jimmy Hendrix	327			
Jimmy Page	590			
Joan Baez	610			
John Lee Hooker	560			
John Williams	516			
Julian Bream	156			
Matteo Carcassi	213			
Mauro Giuliani	409			
Merle Travis	19			
Paco DeLucia	169			
Pat Metheny	499			
Ramon Montoya	554			
Stevie Ray Vaughn	614			
Syd Barrett	239			
Wes Montgomery	621			

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Appendix X

Guitar Web Sites

- * <http://www.guitardownunder.com>
- * <http://www.derek-hasted.co.uk>
- * <http://www.classicalguitarschool.net/en/>
- <http://jerrysnyder.com>
- <http://www.guitarfoundation.org>
- <http://www.gspguitar.com>
- <http://www.productionsdoz.com>
- <http://classguitar.com>
- <http://www.dobermaneditions.com/>
- <http://www.halleonard.com/guitarBass.jsp>
- <http://www.fjhmusic.com/guitar.htm>
- <http://guitarsessions.com/>
- <http://www.delcamp.net/>
- <http://www.thomaskoenigs.de/>
- * <http://www.forrestguitarensembles.co.uk/>
- <http://www.classicalguitarcanada.ca/>
- <http://www.leesollory.co.uk/>
- * <http://www.freeguitarensemblemusic.com/>
- <http://guitarensemblemusic.com/>
- <http://suzukiassociation.org/guitar/>
- * <http://www.funkybearmusic.com/>
- <http://www.melbay.com>
- <http://www.clearnote.net>
- <http://www.daddario.com>
- <http://www.classguitar.com/>
- <http://www.alfred.com/>
- * Free Ensemble Music