



# ENSEMBLE METHOD BOOK

LEVEL 1-4

TEACHER MANUAL

# GREETINGS GUITAR TEACHERS!

Welcome to GuitarCurriculum.com, a comprehensive resource for classroom guitar ensemble developed by the education team at Austin Classical Guitar. For the past 20 years, ACG has led the way in building and supporting hundreds of classroom guitar programs worldwide. GuitarCurriculum.com is a proven solution for any classroom guitar teacher looking to engage and support diverse groups of music learners.

At GC, our philosophy is simple. We believe in expressive, beautiful music-making from the very first day of instruction. All of the materials and resources at GuitarCurriculum.com are designed to support that simple and critical goal. Through a carefully graded learning sequence, ample fingerings, dynamic indications, and lots of great music, GuitarCurriculum.com will engage your students through individualized group learning and make it easy for you to focus on creating beautiful moments in every class and every concert.

This printed teacher method is a sequenced, graded compilation of repertoire, exercises, and supplementary materials to guide teachers through the first four levels of instruction. There is a printed student method to be used in conjunction. These are just a portion of the resources available at GuitarCurriculum.com and this book is not intended to replace the online offerings. The music and tools provided in this printed method are just the tip of the iceberg. We encourage you to log onto the website frequently to explore the ever-changing and evolving materials including tutorial videos and audio recordings.



Travis Marcum, PhD  
Director of Education  
*Austin Classical Guitar*

*For any questions or additional support, please reach out to [info@guitarcurriculum.com](mailto:info@guitarcurriculum.com).*



GuitarCurriculum.com

# GUITAR ENSEMBLE METHOD BOOK

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# TEACHER MANUAL

## Method Book

This document is designed to provide a thorough understanding of the overall musical and technical goals for the primary levels of advancement upon which the GuitarCurriculum.com sequence is based. It is essential to develop an understanding of these goals and the framework of 9 levels in order to most effectively use the repertoire, sight-reading and supplemental materials supplied at GuitarCurriculum.com.

**This method book is intended for classes moving primarily in a homogenous instructional sequence**, meaning that all students are at approximately the same level of skill and understanding. In this scenario, all students will play the same level part in ensemble repertoire.

As you learn about the GuitarCurriculum.com sequence, keep in mind that some music created for GC is designed to serve classes with varying levels represented. Non-beginner students entering a class should be evaluated through audition and should be assigned a skill level. Mixed level repertoire is available on the website in the music library where you can search specifically the parts with levels represented in your classroom and find music catered to the precise needs of your students. But, again, this method book is intended for beginning classes with students moving together through the level sequence. All skills and knowledge are taught within the context of the repertoire at GC. This allows students to make the immediate association between technique or theory and the artistic outcome. For that reason, there are minimal supplementary exercises and tasks outside of the music we play.

Our overarching goal at GuitarCurriculum.com is to help you create a learning environment where students can express themselves as artists and valued community members, a place where they encounter appropriate technical challenges alongside many opportunities to inspire and to be inspired.

# THE 5 ELEMENTS

## Theory and Assessment

The 5 Elements of engagement for the guitar classroom is a theory developed by Austin Classical Guitar based on decades of teaching, observing and researching students and instructors in the guitar classroom. The following five elements consistently occur in learning environments where students and teachers are engaged, motivated and accomplished. These elements are not only part of any healthy arts education community, but also central to human engagement in all aspects of life. These ideas will help you support your students in flexible, individualized ways that lead to artistic success and strong teacher-student relationships. In short, these are the building blocks for your classroom community.

### **1 - Safety and Trust**

When a student with little or no musical experience signs up to take a guitar class, there is an inherent risk. For many young people in secondary school, the thought of making mistakes or demonstrating a lack of competence publicly is terrifying. Yet, the raw enthusiasm for the instrument is so motivating that the student is willing to take this risk, to trust. In a safe learning environment, guitar students feel free to make mistakes in front of their teacher and peers. The classroom environment is such that mistakes are positive steps towards an end goal. And the student trusts the teacher to help ameliorate gaps in knowledge or performance skill. The student trusts peers to be supportive and not judgmental.

Key Questions: Do the students we are serving trust us to have their best interests in mind, to keep their thoughts, feelings and person safe? Do they believe in our expertise and investment in them personally? Do they feel free and connected?

### **2 - Individual Importance and Personal Responsibility**

In the highest functioning guitar classrooms, students have a clear understanding of their own personal growth as a musician as well as a sense of personal responsibility to the success of the ensemble as a whole. Guitar class is unique in that there are often parallel performance goals for each student involving large ensemble repertoire where the performer is contributing one part to a greater whole as well as solo performance goals. Autonomy and choice play a key role in motivating a student with a sense of individuality and artistry. Personal responsibility to the group helps to build community around common performance goals.

Key Questions: Do the individual students we are serving feel that their role/purpose is important, even crucial to the process? Does the student know why we are doing this? Is the goal important? Do they feel that they can make choices, and impact the process?

### **3 - Small Moments of Adversity and Perseverance**

Highly skilled teachers in any domain have a clear vision of student success and a clear end goal. They tactfully present small challenges to students that illuminate gaps in knowledge or skill but are easily fixed in a short amount of time. These moments happen consistently throughout instruction and, over time, these little victories add up to noticeable progress and growth. Adversity and perseverance are key components of learning at the most fundamental level. These little struggles change the chemistry of our brain. Great teachers understand how to present a small challenge to a student, to allow that student to truly experience the small challenge before intervening with help, and to ultimately ensure that the student overcomes and succeeds.

Key Questions: Do the individuals we work with meet and overcome small obstacles throughout each class? Is there only slight challenge and discomfort or is the experience overwhelming? Do they push through this feeling and continue trying? Are there many small moments of success?

### **4 - Performance**

By far, the most motivating and engaging experience for any student in a music classroom is success through performance. If too much time passes between episodes of unambiguous success, frustration and doubt ensue and motivation is stifled. Healthy guitar classrooms are full of episodes of performance success both large and small. Music classrooms are unique in that there are hundreds of small opportunities for success each day presented in small performance tasks and success can be monitored moment to moment. We are constantly refining small moments of music for better accuracy, expression, togetherness, tone etc... The best teachers leverage these moments to ensure student progress.

Key Questions: Do the students we serve get opportunities big and small to show what they have accomplished each class both as an individual and group? Do they get to play for friends, family and community on a regular basis? Are they treated as artists offering their creative gifts to others?

## 5 – Celebration

Celebration of students' successes is a crucial piece to the learning experience. Celebration helps to solidify skills and knowledge acquired over time. Celebration and acknowledgement of success couples a positive emotional memory with the difficult process of learning a complex skill. Simply put, it's the payoff. In healthy guitar classrooms students and teachers experience many episodes of small and large celebration.

Key Questions: Do students experience small moments of joy and celebration in the classroom every day? Are individual moments of perseverance emphatically acknowledged? Is there time taken to celebrate successful performances and reflect?

### The 5 Elements in Practice

The 5 Elements described above can serve as daily guideposts for structuring rehearsals. These elements can exist on a micro level. Meaning that they can be included in moment-to-moment rehearsal goals. For example, the teacher might acknowledge that we are coming up on a particularly hard passage of a piece and assure students that mistakes are a part of getting this tough excerpt (Element 1). In the first performance of the passage, the director might remind the guitar three part how important they are to the character and expression of this particular moment in the music, that the ensemble is relying on them for executing this (2). The passage selected is appropriate in length and difficulty for the group to encounter some challenge, but they are able to persevere and be successful within 3-5 minutes (3). The group and individuals within the group would have multiple opportunities to perform the passage expressively and accurately (4). The teacher might then invite the choir director into the classroom from next door to listen to the group play with exceptional expression and togetherness, offering many opportunities to celebrate the joyful moment (5).

These Elements can also serve as long-term cornerstones of your program, helping to structure your year. For example, you may want to make sure you are providing ample opportunity throughout the year for Social-Emotional Learning where the students can offer personal stories or narrative around creative songwriting or composition exercises. This might help them know that their personal life experiences are important to the classroom community and these projects might contribute to their feeling of safety and belonging (1). You may plan for a big trip with your group to give a high-profile concert at the end of the year and live-stream this performance for all to applaud (4 and 5). Regardless of short or long-term implementation of the 5 Elements, as teachers, we can always look to these ideas for a way to ground and stabilize our program.



# LEVEL OVERVIEW (1-4)

GuitarCurriculum.com

GC Level	Theory/Fundamental	Technical
<u>1</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Identify parts of the guitar and equipment associated</li> <li>– Identify staff, time signature, lines and spaces</li> <li>– Read open strings on the staff</li> <li>– Read rests and notes half, quarter, eighth</li> <li>– Identify right hand letters/left hand numbers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Sit in proper playing position including right and left hand placement</li> <li>– Play single free stroke with p, i &amp; m and spaces with “fixed fingers”</li> <li>– Play music involving the left hand by rote only</li> </ul>
<u>2</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Read in first position on strings 1,2 &amp; 3</li> <li>– Read accidentals</li> <li>– Read dotted rhythms</li> <li>– Identify key signatures C ,G, and D major</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Play G major scale 1st position</li> <li>– Play ima rasgueados with simple chords (G, G7, Am, Em, E, C, Dm)</li> <li>– Play a 5 note C major scale</li> <li>– Play music involving left hand bass notes by rote</li> <li>– Continue to play all notes with free stroke p, i &amp; m “fixed fingers”</li> </ul>
<u>3</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Read in first position on strings 1,2 &amp; 3</li> <li>– Incorporate accidentals, dotted rhythms all note values</li> <li>– Read sixteenth notes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Alternate i &amp; m</li> <li>– Right Hand string-crossing</li> </ul>
<u>4</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Read on strings 4-6</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Play a two-octave G major scale</li> <li>– Play a one-octave C major scale</li> <li>– Play a finger in chords</li> <li>– Play block chords using pima</li> <li>– Play one-octave D major scale</li> </ul>

Please see [GuitarCurriculum.com](http://GuitarCurriculum.com) for tutorial videos on each new skill/technique and for information on levels 5-9.

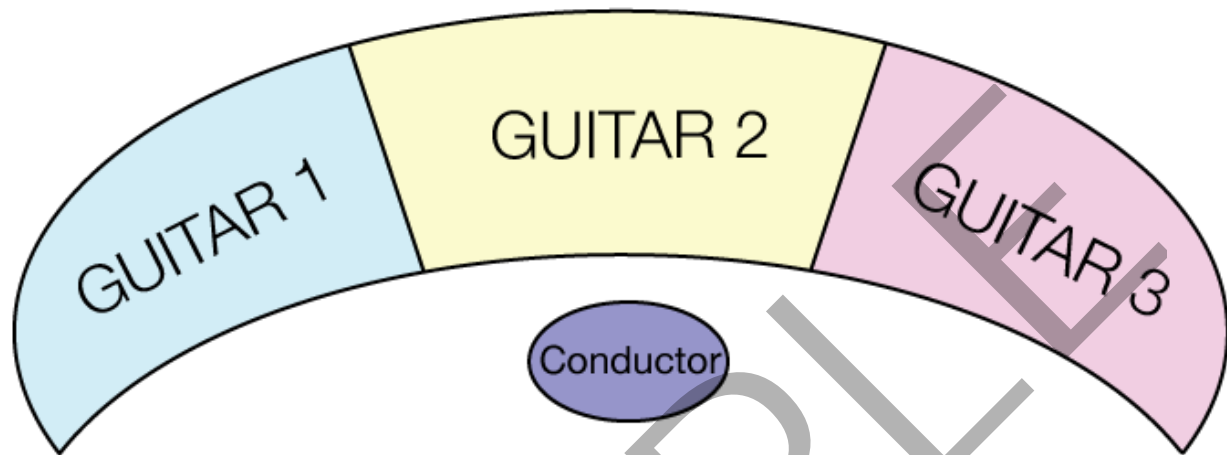
# PERFORMANCE CHECKLIST

## Evaluating Student Performances

Playing Position	Right and Left Hand Technique	Musicality and Expressiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feet flat on footstool and ground</li> <li>- Guitar neck elevated to 45° angle to the floor</li> <li>- Shoulders are relaxed</li> <li>- Face of guitar is straight up and down, not angled back</li> <li>- Right arm meets the guitar just in front of the elbow</li> <li>- Right hand is situated just behind the rosette</li> <li>- Right wrist is straight and arched (not angled or flat)</li> <li>- Left wrist is flat, not concave or convex</li> <li>- Left thumb is vertical, not sideways</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Right hand im &amp; a move inside hand, not up/away</li> <li>- im &amp; a strokes move in with 3 knuckles, including big knuckle</li> <li>- im &amp; a move through strings at an angle, not perpendicular</li> <li>- im &amp; a contact point on string is close to fingertip</li> <li>- Left hand fingers are always placed on the tips and just behind frets</li> <li>- Left hand palm is always parallel to the neck of guitar</li> <li>- Left hand palm does not touch the back of the neck</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Performs all expressive markings on the page</li> <li>- Plays with a consistent, robust tone</li> <li>- Connects melodic lines by timing both hands (legato)</li> <li>- Performs piece without talking, laughing, excessive movement</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><a href="#">Proper Position (Video)</a></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><a href="#">Right Hand Technique</a></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><a href="#">Minor Waltz</a></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><a href="#">Parts of the Guitar</a></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><a href="#">Left Hand Position</a></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><a href="#">Folia Rehearsal</a></p>

# CLASSROOM SETUP

## Guitar Ensemble



This is the arrangement for a piece in three parts, and how the classroom will look for most of the repertoire at all levels of the curriculum. The students are organized just like an orchestra or choir so that each student can see the conductor and vice versa. It is important that the teacher/conductor can see and hear every student in the class individually as they will be constantly evaluating each student's progress while on the podium.

In this arrangement, parts can be moved around to different sections with ease. In the piece linked below, part one is to the left of the conductor. However, part one might be to the right of the conductor in another. It is also important to note that while the teacher/conductor has a designated podium or space, they will move around the classroom freely and often to help individuals or listen from different places.

[Austin Classical Guitar Youth Orchestra – Theme from Alegretto](#)

# REHEARSAL TECHNIQUE

## Management Through Music

Classroom management can be one of the most challenging aspects of teaching guitar ensemble. For most teachers, it takes years to develop all of the skills that help us build positive relationships with students in a stable and productive learning environment. And even then, every year we have new students with unique experiences and needs. Be patient with yourself as you navigate these challenges. Set specific student expectations and communicate them clearly from day one. Effective rehearsal techniques that focus on musical expression can alleviate behavior problems before they begin and lead to a productive, joyful classroom. Below are several suggestions for your day-to-day rehearsal that can help engage students as well as some solutions for dealing with challenges.

### **Musical focus is the key to a happy classroom**

Create a hierarchy of importance in your instruction. Sequencing, pacing, technique, and management are all important parts of teaching guitar effectively, but it is important to communicate to the students that artistry and expression (aka tone, dynamics, style, ensemble, articulation, character) are the priority. Bad technique, unwanted behavior, frustration, poor tone, and lackluster performances are all incongruent with artistry. By communicating your passion for beautiful music and focusing on making it via "the good stuff", your class will be full of happy musicians.

[Student Focus: The Listener](#) – Dr. Bob Duke

### **Start from scratch each day**

Regardless of whether you are teaching a beginning middle school ensemble or an advanced high school ensemble, begin with a basic stroke focusing on beautiful tone and togetherness. This will call attention to the fundamental techniques that will make your ensemble sound fantastic and engage the student with an easy, meaningful task. Create a high standard for student performance based on a clear aural idea of what the music should sound like and always require that they meet it.

### **Choose appropriate repertoire**

Often times, music teachers push their students with each new piece trying take leaps in technique only to find that students are struggling or frustrated. This can lead to behavior problems and an inability to focus on "the good stuff". Choose music that is

easily attainable by every student in your classroom with one or two new elements to attend to. Focus on expression, character, style, ensemble, articulation etc...

Remember, you can always demand more from your students with any piece of music, but it is very hard to push through an unsuccessful, frustrating experience when the piece is too technically challenging.

### **Create an environment of refining**

Create an environment where musical mistakes are viewed as opportunities to fix things and students feel comfortable performing short excerpts individually in front of the class during rehearsal. We fix the ensemble by fixing individual students. Rehearse small sections of music and call attention to all of the little things that can be improved such as crescendo, dynamic contrast, ensemble, and tone. Ask the students to rate these short performances and to articulate issues and solutions. This keeps students listening intently and focused on the quality of their playing. Use specific, unemotional, and frequent negative feedback (statements regarding what needs to be improved) throughout rehearsal. Use emphatic, specific positive feedback only when the students accomplish their goal.

[Refinement](#) – Dr. Bob Duke

### **Listen to individuals and small groups**

Many teachers are hesitant to call on individuals or small groups to perform short sections of music because the experience might upset the student. Communicate to your ensemble that guitar class is a place where we are supposed to make mistakes. Let them know that you will call on individuals to play from time to time and this is simply an opportunity to fix something. **We fix an ensemble by fixing individuals.** This is also a very effective way to keep students engaged. It is important to note that we would not want to call upon an individual that we know would not have a successful performance after the teacher gives feedback and makes a few quick adjustments. Make a point to know every student. Have an up-to-date list of each individual student, their strengths, needs, and instructor's goals for that student. Be tenacious. Do not move on from an individual or group rehearsal frame without truly fixing the problem and performing multiple successful repetitions.

### **Engaging students who are not performing**

Provide the class with a task while listening to individuals or small groups. You can have the other students "shadow play" their part in the left hand alone while other students

play. You can also give the class a listening task such as: "I would like you all to listen to Aaron play measures 1-8 and afterwards, I will ask you to give me one positive statement and one area that needs improving for his performance."

### **Autonomy support and choices**

Each day allow the students to make a few decisions about the music. They can make dynamic or phrasing decisions. An individual can choose her favorite piece to play during the rehearsal. They can re-title a piece of music based on imagery that the music evokes. It is important to guide these choices so that they are not distracting or counterproductive. Making choices about music is a fundamental part of being an artist and something that we want to foster in our students. Decision-making also gives the students a feeling of volition and personal control over the learning process, which can lead to motivation and engagement. In addition to choices, allow students to communicate narrative and story, especially as it might pertain to the musical story being told. Listening and learning about students' lived experiences will bring layers of meaning to the music-making process and help them feel validated and respected.

### **Establish contingencies**

Everyone's teaching style is different and classroom rules vary widely depending on the environment. But it is important that rules be established, articulated, and re-affirmed each period. The student has to be aware of the rules and know exactly what will happen if they are broken. Find a contingency that functions for that student and follow through without anger or emotional attachment. After enacting an appropriate contingency is carried out, shower the student with positive feedback for engaging in productive behaviors. For example, "It's so fantastic how Chelsea is sitting quietly with her strings down while guitar 2 performs".

SAMPLE

A stylized orange with a green leaf on top, rendered in a golden-brown color with a blue outline. The orange is positioned vertically in the center of the page.

SAMPLE  
LEVEL 1



# LEVEL 1

## Overview

Level 1 of GuitarCurriculum.com begins with the very first moments a student picks up the instrument and culminates with the ensemble reading and performing simple ensemble repertoire that includes standard notation of simple rhythms and note identification of the open strings. This is our opportunity to set up students for success so that their right and left hands are moving in healthy and efficient ways. It's also our most important time to build enthusiasm and motivation around immediate successful moments making music. Remember, our goal at GC is for students to experience expressive, beautiful music-making from the very first day of instruction. And it's absolutely possible!

In the beginning, we set students up based on the performance checklist. There are many tutorial videos on the website to help you teach proper playing position, right hand setup, and good p-i-m strokes with robust tone. They will be introduced to stroke using a "fixed-finger" approach. This means students will play multiple notes on the same string using the same right hand finger. This allows for establishing a beautiful stroke and sound before moving on to i-m alternation in Level 3. Use the piece *Blue Magic* and its accompanying Holistic Lesson Plan (HLP) to teach these skills in the context of an expressive engaging piece. *Blue Magic* is an example of a Level 1 rote piece, meaning the students do not see the score. All parts are taught via modeling and repetition. The ostinatos are simple and easy to memorize so that we can focus on good setup and expressivity. The majority of Level 1 will be all about technical execution and expression using easy, rote pieces like *Blue Magic*, *Violet Crown*, *Spy Tune*, or the like.

Towards the end of Level 1, students begin their music literacy journey with *Meditation No. 1*. Here, students learn and practice reading simple rhythm, and open string notes. Students will, for the first time, see the score and read directly from the notation. Use the accompanying HLP to supplement note-learning as well as the opportunities for Social Emotional Learning to further engage the students. Some Level 1 repertoire includes fingered notes, but these are intended to be learned by rote, not identified on the staff. These passages that require fingered notes are typically repetitive and easily acquired. In this method book, we include four Level 1 pieces sequenced in instructional order that span the technical and musical demands of Level 1: *Blue Magic*, *Violet Crown*, *LoFi*, and *Meditation No. 1*. But there are many other options available on GuitarCurriculum.com, visit the website, or see the appendix for sequenced recommendations.

# BLUE MAGIC

## Holistic Lesson Plan

Blue Magic is a beginning level 1 piece often introduced as the first piece of music we learn in the guitar classroom. It is taught completely by rote, meaning that the students will not have music in front of them and notation will not be a part of the process. All ostinatos are introduced through teacher modeling and the parts are layered as the score indicates or as the director chooses.

For students new to the guitar, the first moments of their learning experience are so very important. It is crucial that they are successful and that they are able to focus on the expressive qualities of the music even as they learn new technical skills. For this reason, create a safe learning environment, avoid any unnecessary information like staff, notation, history of the guitar etc. Focus on executing only the skills necessary for Blue Magic and give as much positive feedback as possible to individual students as they begin their guitar journey. For a more detailed sequence for Blue Magic visit: [Blue Magic Sequence Document](#). Our goals are as follows:

### Artistry

- Perform the piece with intense, driving character through execution of round and full tone, big dynamic change through crescendo, legato stroke, and crisp percussion.
- Perform the piece with balance between parts
- Perform *Blue Magic* with precise vertical alignment and rhythmic togetherness among the ensemble.

### Technique

- Sit in proper playing position (see performance checklist)
- Establish and execute P and I strokes with proper right hand set up and with full, round tone rather than a thin “twangy” sound.
- Execute all percussive sounds with crisp precision.

### Literacy

- There are no specific literacy goals for this piece. However, after the group has learned Blue Magic, the director can revisit this score with students to teach concepts like quarter and eighth note rhythm.

### Recommended Broad Sequence:

- 1) Set up in proper playing position and establish P (string 3) and I (string 2) strokes with good tone and legato sound. See tutorial videos [2a](#) (playing position) , [2b](#) (right hand position), [3a](#) (thumb stroke), [3b](#) (I stroke).
- 2) Warm up by having students play thumb and index strokes together with precision in rhythm and at different dynamics.
- 3) Begin teaching *Blue Magic* Guitar 1 part. Set up thumb on string 2 and have students play eighth-note open E string 1 with index softly at around 80bpm. Listen to individuals and make sure position, tone, and togetherness are all good before moving on. If helpful, count 1-&2-&3-&4-& while playing.
- 4) Move on to Guitar 2 part by first setting up left hand position see video [2c](#).
- 5) Teach part 2 melody by modeling 2nd finger on 3rd fret, string 2. It's ok if students want to use a different left hand finger here, but avoid buzzing or excessive squeezing. Continue to 2nd fret and open, counting 1-2-3-4,1-2-3-4,1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8.
- 6) Once Guitar 2 measures 5-8 are sounding good. Split the class into two assigning parts 1 and 2. Begin with guitar 1 and bring in guitar 2. Students should be very excited to hear the parts layered! Focus on soft beginning dynamic and crescendo. Have students switch parts and/or choose the part they would like to play.
- 7) Introduce Guitar 3 by leaving I and M on strings 2 and 1. Move thumb to string 4. Help students count the number of times they play each open string: 1-2-3-4, 1-2-3-4, 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8.
- 8) Perform *Blue Magic* measures 1-12, layering ostinatos, allowing students to choose their part and assigning parts as desired. Focus on crescendo, legato, and tone.
- 9) Finish the piece by introducing and layering percussion parts. These parts can be incorporated any way the teacher and students want. The score provides one option. Be sure that the final drum sound is loud, precise, and together.

**\*Note** - At all points, the director should have guitar in hand playing with students and providing a good model for each part. Once the entire piece is very confident, the director can switch to conducting.

**\*Note** - The director or an advanced student can incorporate full first position chords to add depth to the piece. You can use the following chords with any strumming pattern as an added ostinato (next page):

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "Blue Magic". The score is written in 4/4 time and features a guitar accompaniment. The chords used are Dsus9, A, and E. The melody is written on a single staff with a treble clef. The Dsus9 chord is played in the first measure, the A chord in the second measure, and the E chord in the third measure. The melody consists of a series of eighth notes, with a key signature of one sharp (F#).

### Opportunities for Social Emotional Learning

Beyond the social emotional learning opportunities available in any group music making experience, Blue Magic offers opportunities for students to create their own story around the character of the music they are making. Ask students to listen to the piece and imagine the music playing during a movie. What is happening in the story? Does Blue Magic make them think of a particular memory or a place that they love? Allow the students to rename this piece based on the ideas they share.



# Blue Magic

*Tap bridge with the palm of the right hand making a bass drum sound*

13

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

Gtr. 3

*f*

*f*

*f* ④ ⑤ ⑥ ④

Rake i finger down through all strings while muting strings with left hand

18

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

Gtr. 3

⑤ ⑥

*Tap bridge with the palm of the right hand making a bass drum sound*

*Tap bridge with the palm of the right hand making a bass drum sound*

## LEVEL 1 WARM-UP

### “Four, Four & Four”

Remember our Rehearsal Technique recommendation to start from scratch each day? This daily warm up will help to establish good stroke, intentional sound, and facilitate a calm beginning to each class. Four, Four & Four refers to the number of p, i, and m strokes we play on strings 3, 2, and 1.

This warm-up takes about five minutes. Below is a link for a video of Dr. Travis Marcum, ACG’s Director of Education running through the warm-up. This video can be shown to the class during instruction on a screen or you can use the following description to run your students through it yourself.

1. Students get set up in proper playing position (see checklist) with p on string 3, i on string 2 and m on string 1.
2. Students play thumb (p) stroke all together with good tone.
3. Students play index (i) stroke together with good tone.
4. Students play middle (m) stroke together with good tone.
5. Students play 4 thumb, 4 index, and 4 middle strokes in time with diagonal stroke from the big knuckle.
6. Students play 4 thumb, 4 index, 4 middle, 4 index, 4 thumb, 4 index.... repeating the sequence moving through strings 3-2-1-2-3-2-1-2.
7. The teacher accompanies by playing strummed or arpeggiated chords for each four beat phrase. For example CM7 for when students play string 3, G for string 2, and Em for string 1.
8. Students play repeated 4, 4 & 4 warm up getting louder and softer based on the teacher’s directives.

[Classroom Right Hand Warm Up](#)

# THE VIOLET CROWN

## Score and Sequence

The Violet Crown is a level 1 piece for beginning guitarists. Introduce the four repeating ostinatos by rote. You may decide to share parts and/or scores with students as an introduction to music reading later in level 1. Most frequently, students learn the individual parts as a whole group first. After everyone learns each part, divide them into three sections and play the piece several times, switching parts. You may allow students to choose the part they would like to play making sure there is a balance of parts.

Use the guitar 1 part to reinforce proper left hand set up. Remind students to place the left-hand thumb behind the neck, somewhere between the 1st and 2nd fret, keeping finger 1 curved. Make sure they place the finger directly behind fret 1 on the finger-tip. This allows sounds from the first and second strings to overlap momentarily, making a consistent legato effect.

Ask students to play the ostinatos in individual trios or other small groups, allowing the larger class to offer feedback and answer specific questions. For example:

- Did the performers follow the dynamic plan?
- How could we improve LH set up to make a clear sound?
- How was the balance? Which part was louder/quieter?

### **Classroom Activity**

Discuss the imagery the title brings to mind. You may decide to let students rename the piece to fit imagery they choose.



# The Violet Crown

♩ = 86

Level 1

Travis Marcum

### Ostinato 1 *i p*

Guitar 1

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 3

string ④ fret 3

string ⑤ fret 3

string ⑥ fret 3

Ostinato 2

*mp*

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

Gtr. 3

Ostinato 3

*mf*

*p*

*mp*

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

Gtr. 3

Ostinato 4

*f*

*p*

*f*

*f*

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*

*rit.*

## LoFi

### Score and Sequence

Lo-Fi is an early Level 1 piece intended to be taught entirely by rote. Teacher will model each ostinato and students will duplicate the part with proper position and right-hand technique. Parts can be layered however the group chooses.

Lo-Fi is inspired by the genre of instrumental music by the same name. Students will most likely be aware of the style and even listen to it while they study or read. Lo-Fi is characterized by a beat-driven, calm feeling.

Any percussion part indicated by a square should be played by tapping the left palm flat on the bridge of the guitar. This should create a bass drum sound. Any percussion indication represented by a star should be executed by tapping the side of the right thumb knuckle on the upper bout of the guitar. This will create a snare-like sound. Pay close attention to how the percussion sounds balance with the other sounds of the ensemble, they can easily become too loud without special attention.

#### Classroom Activity

Open up a discussion to learn about your students' musical interests as listeners. You could create a classroom playlist based on the students' feedback and create listening exercises on student selected music. Merging their interest as musical consumers with their new excitement for performing is a powerful connection.

# Lo-Fi

Travis Marcum

$\text{♩} = 88$   
**Smooth**

Guitar 1 Level 1

Guitar 2 Level 1

Guitar 3 Level 1

Percussion

Percussion (easy)

Right hand thumb on upper bout

Left palm on bridge

5

Gtr.

Gtr.

Gtr.

Perc.

Perc. 2

*p*

*p*<sup>0</sup>

3

9

Gtr.

Gtr.

Gtr.

Perc.

Perc. 2

13

Gtr.

Gtr.

Gtr.

Perc.

Perc. 2

17

Gtr.

Gtr.

Gtr.

Perc.

Perc. 2

21

fret 12, string 1  
*slide*

fret 12, string 2  
*slide*

fret 12, string 6  
*slide*

Gtr.

Gtr.

Gtr.

Perc.

Perc. 2

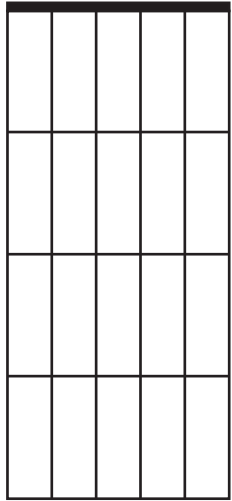
# LEVEL 1 - OPEN NOTES

## Fretboard and Staff Locations

String 1 - Open



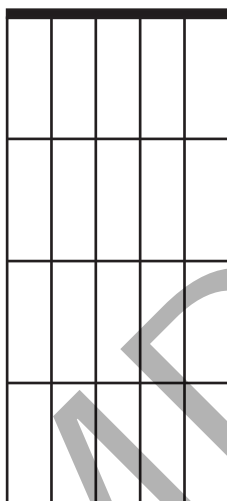
(E)



String 2 - Open



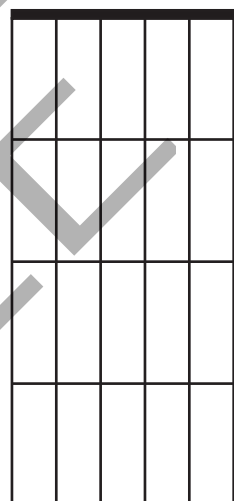
(B)



String 3 - Open



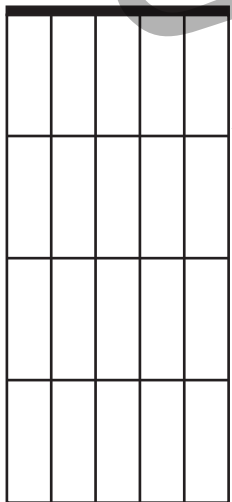
(G)



String 4 - Open



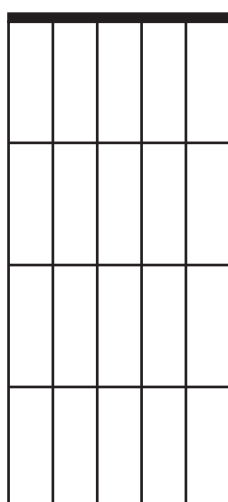
(D)



String 5 - Open



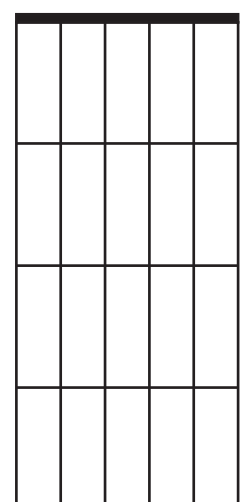
(A)



String 6 - Open



(E)



# MEDITATION NO. 1

## Holistic Lesson Plan

Meditation No. 1 is a level 1 piece intended to mark the beginning of our students' journey into music notation. While our focus is always on expressive music making and performance, Meditation No. 1 also presents important technique and literacy benchmarks. Our overarching goals for Meditation No. 1 are as follows:

### Artistry

- Perform the piece with calm, meditative character through execution of round and full tone, soft dynamic approach, legato stroke, and smooth dynamic changes.
- Perform the piece with balance between and within parts according to the dynamic indications in the score.
- Perform Meditation No. 1 with precise vertical alignment and togetherness among the ensemble.

### Technique

- Sit in proper playing position (see performance checklist).
- Establish and execute P, I, and M strokes with proper right hand set up and with full, round tone rather than a thin “twangy” sound.

### Literacy

- Read and perform note values: quarter, eighth, and whole.
- Read and perform open string notes G, B, and E (strings 3, 2, and 1).

### Recommended Broad Sequence:

- 1) Set up in proper playing position and establish P, I, and M strokes separately with good form and tone ([See Right Hand Video Tutorials 2a-3c here](#)).
- 2) Warm up (see video) [Right Hand Warm Up for the Classroom](#) to be done at the beginning of each class.
- 3) Beginning [Note Reading Video](#) Note Reading Introduction.
- 4) Listen to recording of Meditation No. 1 [here](#).
- 5) Introduce Guitar 1 measures 1-4. Have students say note names E & B in rhythm.
- 6) Have students play mm 1-4 Guitar 1 with correct pitch, rhythm and dynamic.

- 7) Literacy Sequence (below) as needed. To be done each class.
- 8) Perform Guitar 1 measures 1-4 as a class with all dynamics and repeats.
- 9) Perform Guitar 2 measures 1-4 as a class with all dynamics and repeats.
- 10) Split class and perform Guitar 1 & 2 measures 1-4 as a class with all dynamics and repeat.
- 11) Introduce rote bass line. Students should not be reading this beyond note value and open or 3rd finger. They do not need to know that these notes are A and C.
- 12) Split class into 3 parts and perform measures 1-4 as written.
- 13) Continue in same fashion for measures 5-10, then 11 to the end.
- 14) Perform the entire piece with the ensemble split into three parts, with proper technique, conducted by the director or student, and including all artistry goals.

\*Note - Every student should play each part for the first few classes introducing this piece.

After you are confident that all are reading parts 1 and 2, define your permanent part assignments for future performance.

\*Note - Once students are confident with the Literacy Sequence for Medication No. 1, explore Level 1 sight reading [here](#), as is appropriate. Sight reading should happen for a short period every day.

### **Opportunities for Social Emotional Learning**

Beyond the social emotional learning opportunities available in any group music making experience, Medication No. 1 offers SEL experiences centered around the idea of calm and meditation. Take time away from the music to have students share a memory or place that is especially calming for them. Include mindfulness and meditation exercises during class time.

Explore the idea that the guitar itself can be an agent of calm and place where we, as musicians, can go to find solace. Allow students to interact with each other and direct conversation where possible. Take opportunities to include other disciplines like visual arts, movement, poetry/literature, and drama to explore the idea of meditation and calm in our everyday lives.



# Meditation No. 1

## Literacy Sequence

① 3rd String Open - G

② 2nd String Open - B

Guitar

*p* *i*

③ 1st String Open - E

④ Quarter and Eighth Notes on a Single String

*m* Count: 1 2 + 3 4 + 1 2 3 4

⑤

⑥

1 + 2 3 4 1 + 2 + 3 4 1 + 2 3 + 4 1 + 2 + 3 4

⑦ String Crossing - Quarter Notes

⑧

⑨ String Crossing - Quarter and Eighth Notes

⑩ String Crossing - Quarter, Eighth and Whole Notes

⑪

# Meditation

No. 1

Travis Marcum

♩ = 80

Guitar 1  
Level 1

Guitar 2  
Level 1

Guitar 3  
Level 1

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

Gtr. 3

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

Gtr. 3