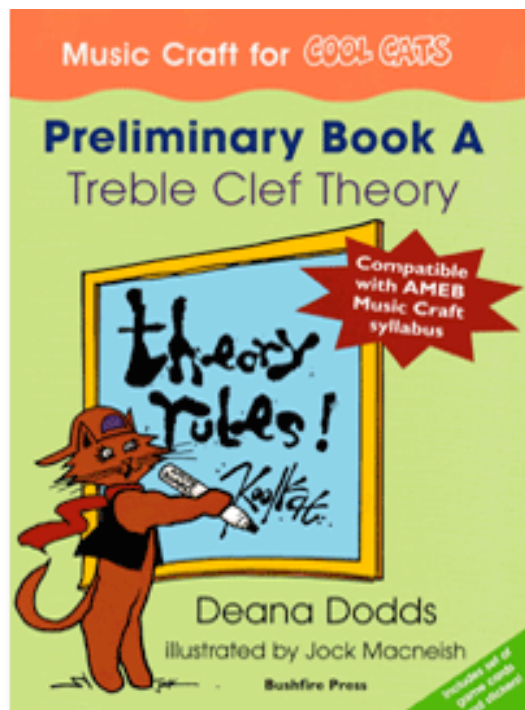


Teacher Notes

Music Craft for Cool Cats Preliminary Book A

from Bushfire Press



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Introduction:

Music Craft for Cool Cats is a series of books designed to follow the **AMEB Music Craft** syllabus. The books aim to appeal to children by presenting content through games and puzzles as well as through routine-style questions.

I believe that the underlying philosophy of the **Music Craft** syllabus is to furnish students with a connection between the aural and the written music. This philosophy means that the discussions about music which are encouraged will generally go beyond the scope of the level of testing for the grade. This will help to lay solid foundations for a deep understanding, rather than teaching for the sole purpose of passing an examination. The aural tasks suggested in this resource go well beyond the testing scope for the grade but are aimed at stretching students' abilities as far as possible within the theoretical teaching for the grade.

The written section of the Preliminary examination covers knowledge from five areas:

1. Rhythm and metre
2. Pitches, scales and keys
3. Triads and intervals
4. Terms
5. Instruments

The aural testing component of the course will be fully explored in **Music Craft for Cool Cats Preliminary Book B**.

The following table outlines the teaching content of this book, highlighting the new material in each unit and showing which topics are revised in each unit.

Unit	Rhythm and metre	Pitches, scales and keys	Triads and intervals	Terms	Instruments
1				■ Terms relating to tempo Terms relating to dynamics	
2	■ English time names American time names			-	
3	■ Time signatures			-	
4	-	■ Letter names for the notes of the treble clef		-	
5	-	■ Sharps and flats		-	
6	-		■ Whole tones and semitones		
7	-	■ Scale degrees	-	-	
8	-		-	-	■ Orchestral instruments
9	-	■ Key signatures	-	-	-
10	-	-	■ Tonic triads in close root position	-	-
11	■ Rest values	-	-	-	-
12	-	-			-
13	-	-	■ Intervals in root position tonic triads	-	-
14	-	-	-	■ Terms relating to articulation	-
15	-	-	-	-	-
■ indicates new material taught in the unit.					
- indicates material revised in the unit.					

Unit One:

All of the foreign terms on the Preliminary syllabus are Italian in origin.

Discuss.

Musical words originally came from the language of the composer and so our musical words come from many languages.

Have the students look on their current music. Can they find any of the words presented? Translate any words that they find. Talk to them about music dictionaries. Look up some of the words from their music in a music dictionary.

Aural.

Play some music for your students (or have them play for each other). Have them guess from the list of tempo words the speed of the piece that they hear. Discuss that these words are not an “exact science” but give us an idea as to the tempo. This could lead into a discussion on the metronome which is the exact science of tempo.

Play some music for your students (or have them play for each other). Have them guess from the list of tempo words the dynamic of the piece that they hear. Discuss that these words are not an “exact science” but give us an idea as to the level of sound. This could lead into a discussion on the fact that, unlike tempo, there is no exact way of telling a performer how loudly to play.

(NB These aural exercises are **not** examinable but help to develop a deeper level of understanding.)

Memorisation.

Children can often require a lot of practice to memorise foreign terms.

Introduce your students to the **green** memory cards at this point.

When first learning something new, co-operative games, rather than competitive games should be used. Work together to pair the correct English cards with their Italian cards.

When this is comfortable, play a game of **Pairs**. This does not put the children under any time pressure.

Show the students the stickers and grid in the back of the book. Each time they practise their memory cards have them write the date and put a sticker on the chart. Remember to check it each week and to praise good work.

The memory cards are a great way to involve parents in the completion of music homework. Challenge your parents to play with their children.

Unit Two:

Discuss.

Following on from discussions in unit one about the origins and development of music, the discussion on parallel nomenclature can now take place. If your students have completed Beginner Book B in this series, they should already be comfortable with the English time names.

Special note needs to be made of the fractional relationships of the American time names. Confusion often occurs with an eighth note being half a beat, so watch out for this one! Remember that depending on the age of your students, you will often be teaching a higher level of fractions than what has been taught at school.

Aural.

Counting games: Set up a beat with the students. Play some music for them. Stop on a note during the course of the piece. Have them tell you how many beats the note is. Then give the English and American names for the note.

(NB These aural exercises are **not** examinable but help to develop a deeper level of understanding.)

Memorisation.

Introduce your students to the **red** memory cards at this point. Use them as the starting point for memorisation, using co-operative games:

- Match the symbols to the words.
- Give the English names and see who can give the American names and vice versa.
- Give a name and see who can find the symbol card.
- Play **Pairs**.

Competitive games could now be introduced for the practise of Italian terms. Examples:

- Snap
- Races to say either Italian or English meanings
- Races to pair off green cards
- Put dynamic cards in order from softest to loudest and vice versa
- Put tempo cards in order from slowest to fastest and vice versa

Unit Three:

Discuss.

Having introduced the fractional names for notes in unit two, it will now make sense that the bottom number of time signature means quarter notes or crotchets. However, time signatures themselves are not fractions, so be wary that a fraction line is not drawn by the students. Counting by crotchet (quarter note) beats and the placement of “ands” for quavers (eighth notes) were introduced in **Music Theory for Cool Cats Beginner Book B**. Complete counting by quaver (eighth note) beats will be introduced in **Preliminary Book B**.

Have the students perform the rhythms.

Talk about the placement of accent on the first beat of each bar. This then provides the purpose for the bar lines. It is the role of the bar line to show where the first beat of the bar is, so that we know where to place the accents.

Aural.

Counting games: Set up a beat with the students. Play some music for them. Have them decide if the music has 2 or 3 beats per bar.

(NB These aural exercises are **not** examinable but help to develop a deeper level of understanding.)

Memorisation.

There is no new memorisation as such for this unit, but revision should be a constant part of the students' class work or homework. Competitive games as well as co-operative work can now be used for both the **green** and **red** cards.

Unit Four:

Discuss.

The letter names for the notes of the treble clef are taught here using a common mnemonic. You will, of course, continue to follow any note reading system that you have introduced to your students in practical lessons. For students who have completed **Music Theory for Cool Cats Beginner Book B**, the only new note on this page is G above the staff. A discussion here about the different clefs used in music and the instruments for which they are used would be appropriate at this stage.

Look at the notes on the staff and point out to your students that they move in alphabetical order and that only 7 letters are used and then repeated. You may wish to introduce the concept of pitch class at this point. There are 12 pitch classes in music. All A's, regardless of octave, are members of the same pitch class. All G sharps are members of the one pitch class etc.

The students can now write C,D,E, F and G at two different pitches. They have only one A and one B.

Have your students note that the staff works like a ladder. The higher the note looks on the staff, the higher its pitch when played or sung.

Aural.

Play two notes for your students. Have them say if the second note is higher or lower than the second. Start with the notes widely spaced and if the students are accurate, move the notes closer together for subsequent examples.

(NB This is one of the aural tests that is required for the examination. It will be explored more fully in **Music Craft for Cool Cats Preliminary Book B**.)

Memorisation.

The students need to be able to name notes quickly and fluently. Many students will be able to do this already as a result of their practical lessons. If they cannot yet name notes, a set of flashcards can be of great benefit in this learning and will provide another opportunity for the parent to become involved in the learning process.

Continue working with competitive games and co-operative work for both the **green** and **red** cards.

Unit Five:

Discuss.

If your students have completed **Beginner Book B** in this series, they will have already been introduced to sharps and flats. You need to stress the importance of the lining up of the accidental with the centre of the note that follows and that the accidental comes before the note.

Following on from discussions in unit four about the twelve pitch classes, this is the ideal time to discuss enharmonic equivalence. C sharp and D flat belong to the same pitch class even though they do not have the same letter name.

Talk about the fact that an accidental keeps working until you reach the next bar line. Find some examples in the students' current repertoire and have them identify whether or not a particular note is affected by an accidental.

Aural.

Name a note, such as G and play it. Follow the G natural by either G sharp or G flat. Have the students name the second note. If this proves to be difficult, have them sing the two notes and to try to feel if the sound is rising or falling.

(NB These aural exercises are **not** examinable but help to develop a deeper level of understanding.)

Memorisation.

There is no new memorisation as such for this unit, but revision should be a constant part of the students' class work or homework. Competitive games as well as co-operative work can now be used for both the **green** and **red** cards. Note-naming practice should continue for any student who is not fluent.

Unit Six:

Discuss.

If your students play a keyboard instrument, it is easy to teach whole tones and semitones through the visualisation of the keyboard, as the notes are set out in order. For those who do not know their way around a keyboard structure, the use of the chromatic scale for their visualisation makes a lot more sense. Depending on the instrument being studied, your student may not yet have played a chromatic scale. It would be good to introduce it at this stage, if possible. You could call out the names of the notes and show fingerings to help the student gain an appreciation of this special scale.

Aural.

Play a chromatic scale on C and have the students sing the letter names to help them learn the order of the notes. You could do a sharp version and then a flat version. We need them to thoroughly know that there is no “black note” between E and F, or between B and C.

As in unit five, name a note, such as G, and play it. Follow the G natural by either G sharp or G flat. Have the students answer in the following form: “A semitone higher, G sharp” or “A semitone lower, G flat”. If this proves to be difficult, have them sing the two notes and to try to feel if the sound is rising or falling.

If this is manageable for your students, continue with the following exercise. This will take many weeks of practice for most students. Each week, take your students as far as they can comfortably go. Remember to be liberal with your praise and keep encouraging them to have a go.

Play two notes that are either a whole tone or a semitone apart. Have the students sing the two notes and identify the sound as either a whole tone or a semitone.

For the highly competent student, name a note, such as F, and play it. Then play another note that is either a semitone or whole tone higher. Answer in the form “A tone higher, G” or “A semitone higher, F sharp”. Repeat the activity, going below the given note. Then mix and match: higher or lower, whole tones or semitones.

(NB These aural exercises are **not** examinable but help to develop a deeper level of understanding.)

Memorisation.

There is no new memorisation as such for this unit, but revision should be a constant part of the students’ class work or homework. Competitive games as well as co-operative work can now be used for both the **green** and **red** cards. Note-naming practice should continue for any student who is not fluent.

Unit Seven:

Discuss.

Most students will be familiar with playing a major scale. Over time it is desirable that they develop an appreciation for each note of the major scale. Eg. The feeling of “home note” that belongs to the tonic.

Aural.

Have your students sing a major scale, using scale degree numbers or moveable-do solfege names.

Given the complexity of the aural tasks for unit six, I would repeat them here and in the weeks to come.

Play a chromatic scale on C and have the students sing the letter names to help them learn the order of the notes. You could do a sharp version and then a flat version. We need them to thoroughly know that there is no “black note” between E and F, or between B and C.

As in unit five, name a note, such as G and play it. Follow the G natural by either G sharp or G flat. Have the students answer in the following form “A semitone higher, G sharp” or “A semitone lower, G flat”. If this proves to be difficult, have them sing the two notes and to try to feel if the sound is rising or falling.

If this is manageable for your students, continue with the following exercise. Play two notes that are either a whole tone or a semitone apart. Have the students sing the two notes and identify the sound as either a whole tone or a semitone.

For the highly competent student, name a note such as F. Then play another note that is either a semitone or whole tone higher. Answer in the form “A tone higher, G” or “A semitone higher, G sharp”. Repeat the activity going lower. Then mix and match: higher or lower, whole tones or semitones.

(NB These aural exercises are **not** examinable but help to develop a deeper level of understanding.)

Memorisation.

There is no new memorisation as such for this unit, but revision should be a constant part of the students’ class work or homework. Competitive games as well as co-operative work can now be used for both the **green** and **red** cards. Note-naming practice should continue for any student who is not fluent.

Unit Eight:

Discuss.

Depending on the interest level and age of your students, this unit can open the door to research on the history of instruments or even the acoustics of music. The students need only a basic appreciation of the instruments for examination purposes.

Aural.

Aural exercises for the recognition of instruments are on the CDs that accompany **Preliminary Book B**.

For now, continue to work on the aural exercises outlined in unit seven. (NB These aural exercises are **not** examinable but help to develop a deeper level of understanding.)

Memorisation.

Introduce your students to the **yellow** memory cards at this point. Use them to assist in the learning of the names of the instruments. Have the students name the instruments pictured and then match the picture cards to the name of the family. Regular practice with the **green** and **red** cards should continue as should note-naming practice for any student who is not yet fluent.

Unit Nine:

Discuss.

Talk about the difference between an accidental and a key signature. Look at some of the students' music and have them decide if a particular note has been affected by an accidental, by the key signature, or has not been affected at all. Highlight the fact that an accidental affects **ONLY** the line or space on which it is placed, whereas a key signature affects an entire pitch class (excluding enharmonic equivalents).

Aural.

If your students have been successful with the aural from units six, seven and eight, try the following:

Play a major scale, two successive notes at a time. Have them identify whole tone and semitone to reinforce the pattern of notes and whole tones that was taught in unit eight.

If the aural is challenging, continue work on the exercises outlined in unit seven.

(NB These aural exercises are **not** examinable but help to develop a deeper level of understanding.)

Memorisation.

Introduce your students to the **blue** memory cards at this point. Continue with ongoing practice of all of the memorisation work.

Unit Ten:

Discuss.

The tonic triad is so called because it is a triad built on the tonic. The word tonic was introduced in unit seven, so the new word to introduce is triad. If we use triad to mean that the chord has three **letter names**, this should avoid confusion later when we use four-note “spellings” of tonic triads.

Aural.

Have the students sing tonic triads. Use either scale degrees or moveable-do solfège. Using a three-note triad, they will be able to sing them in the three keys required: C, F, G majors.

(NB These aural exercises are **not** examinable but help to develop a deeper level of understanding.)

Memorisation.

Continue with ongoing practice of all of the memorisation work.

Unit Eleven:

Discuss.

Point out to students that the rests are given their names dependent on how many beats are used. Eg. Minim and minim rest have the same number of beats.

The whole bar rest (also called a semibreve rest) is of great interest to most children. As it uses all of the beats in a bar, it serves as two-beat rest in 2/4 time. This means that it is impossible to use a minim rest in 2/4.

Aural.

Revisit the aural activities outlined in unit seven. Remember to give a lot of praise as most young students will find this difficult.

(NB These aural exercises are **not** examinable but help to develop a deeper level of understanding.)

Memorisation.

Introduce your students to the **orange** memory cards at this point. Use them as the starting point for memorisation, using co-operative games.

- Match the symbols to the words.
- Give the English names and see who can give the American names and vice versa.
- Give a name and see who can find the symbol card.
- Play **Pairs**.

Unit Twelve:

Discuss.

There is no new learning in this unit. Take the opportunity to talk about the finer details of counting. Notice the use of the single quaver (eighth note) accompanied by a quaver rest (eighth rest.). Have students perform the rhythms. Remind students of the purpose of the bar lines, to show where the accents fall.

Aural.

Continue with the aural activities outlined in unit seven. Remember to give a lot of praise as most young students will find this difficult. (NB These aural exercises are **not** examinable but help to develop a deeper level of understanding.)

Memorisation.

Continue with ongoing practice of all of the memorisation work.

Unit Thirteen:

Discuss.

This is the students' first look at intervals. Interval teaching for this grade is restricted to the intervals that occur within tonic triads. So, at this point we have only to consider thirds and fifths. The examination requires that students name intervals by number only at this stage.

Look at the intervals given and have students notice that 3rds and 5ths are both odd numbers and the notes sit line-line or space-space.

Notice that each triad contains two thirds: one formed by the root and the 3rd and one formed by the 3rd and the 5th. Using the chromatic scale on page 11, count the number of semitones in each of these thirds. Notice that the third from the bottom of the triad (root-3rd) is four semitones in size. Notice that the third from the top of the triad (3rd-5th) is only three semitones in size. For interest sake only, name the smaller third a minor third and the larger one a major third.

Aural.

Play 3rds and 5ths and have students sing and name the interval by number only.

For the highly competent student, play major and minor 3rds and have them distinguish the quality of third.

(NB These aural exercises are **not** examinable but help to develop a deeper level of understanding.)

Memorisation.

Continue with ongoing practice of all of the memorisation work.

Unit Fourteen:

Discuss.

The last of the Italian terms are introduced in this unit. They are related to articulation.

Examine some of the students' music and look for examples of staccato and legato playing. Talk about how it adds much interest to the music.

Aural.

Play a phrase of music. Have the students identify if it is legato or staccato.

Play an excerpt that switches between articulations. Have the students say where the music changed. For young students this can be done with body movements. Eg. Be a kangaroo for the staccato music, be a soaring bird for the legato music.

(NB These aural exercises are **not** examinable but help to develop a deeper level of understanding.)

Memorisation.

Add the final two **purple** memory cards to the deck! Play a game using the **green** and **purple** cards to begin. Continue with ongoing practice of all of the memorisation work.

Unit Fifteen:

Discuss.

There is no new teaching in unit fifteen. Take the opportunity to notice anywhere that the students struggle and repeat some of the activities from the relevant unit.

Memorisation.

Continue with ongoing practice of all of the memorisation work.

Your students should now be ready to progress to **Music Craft for Cool Cats Preliminary Book B**, which concentrates on preparation for the examination.