

the **imPROVise**TM approach

Use your iPad as an easy-play musical instrument, accompanied by 10 music backing tracks and always be in tune!



Carrie Lennard

SPECIAL NEEDS MUSIC CONSULTANT

www.improviseapproach.com



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Book design:

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Welcome!

Hello, I'm Carrie.

I've been a special needs music teacher and consultant for over 30 years, working in London special schools for students with autism spectrum condition, moderate, severe and profound learning difficulties. For 9 years I've worked in special educational publishing (Body & Voice Music, Galaxies, Funfair, Seaside), delivered training and contributed to publications and conferences worldwide.

Creating music resources for my students has always been a passion and for the last 5 years, I have been developing **The Improvise Approach**. It uses the iPad as a musical instrument together with specially composed backing tracks. This makes it accessible to almost everyone. You create great sounding music that's always in tune with the backing tracks. It's designed to support staff and carers, with no previous music skills, to deliver easy music-making opportunities for people with special needs in both solo and group settings.

Have fun!

Carrie



Level 1

Getting started

Download ThumbJam

Setting up ThumbJam

Solo or group playing?

Music tracks menu

Getting started

1: Download ThumbJam

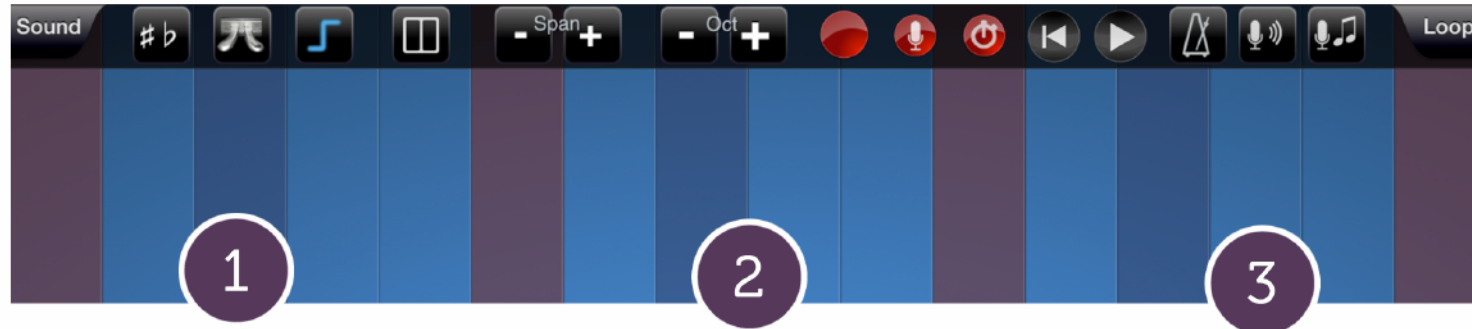
ThumbJam is the featured app in this book. It is available on the App Store for £6.99.



- 1 Download ThumbJam onto this iPad and/or your group's iPads.
- 2 Print off a copy of the next page (Setting up ThumbJam) as an ongoing reference.
- 3 You're now ready to go!



Setting up ThumbJam



Setting the key (top left screen)

- select the “#b” key
- choose “C”
- select “#b” key again to close the menu

Setting the scale (top left screen)

- select “Sound”
- select “Change Scale”
- select “Major Pentatonic”
- select “Done” to clear the menu
(The notes C D E G A will be present on the screen)

Choosing an instrument (top left screen)

- select “Sound” again
- select “Change Instrument”
- choose an instrument
- slide “Keep Current Scale/ Key” (green)
- select “Done” to clear the menu

Follow these steps to set ThumbJam up, ready to play along with the music backing tracks.

Getting started

2: Set up ThumbJam

Solo Play

Using only THIS iPad.

- 1 Open ThumbJam - set it ready to play using the information [on this page](#) - then close it. (ThumbJam continues running in the background).
- 2 Open the music tracks menu page in this book.
- 3 Select your track.
- 4 Choose "with a count-in" (4 beat intro) or "without a count-in" (straight in).
- 5 Press play.
- 6 Double-click home button to bring back the ThumbJam screen.
- 7 Tap on the ThumbJam screen to bring it forward and start playing.

Getting started

2: Set up ThumbJam

Group play

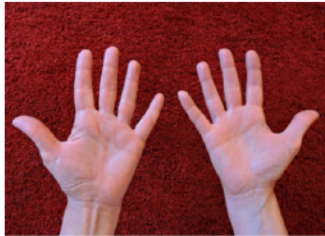
Using THIS iPad to play the music from (and possibly, to project the music pictures to a large screen).

- 1 Open ThumbJam on each of your group iPads (up to 4) - set them ready to play using the information [on this page](#).
- 2 Play the backing music through an external speaker (or connect to a large screen and use the audio from here - Level 4: Connecting your book to the big screen) and loudly enough for the group to hear clearly. The speaker should be set slightly away from the group so the backing music can be heard separately from their own playing.
- 3 Ideally, each person has a good quality portable speaker, connected directly to their iPad with a lead. Do not use the Bluetooth function here as the sound transfer is delayed. With all this in place, everyone should be able to hear themselves, the other players and the backing music as clearly as possible.

Group iPads set up ready.

If possible, share the music pictures to a large screen using a connecting lead or AirPlay (Apple TV Box).

Music Tracks Menu



Hands



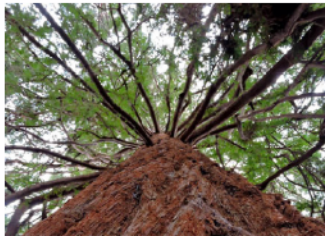
Pink Boots



Jazz Cat



Hats



Big Tree



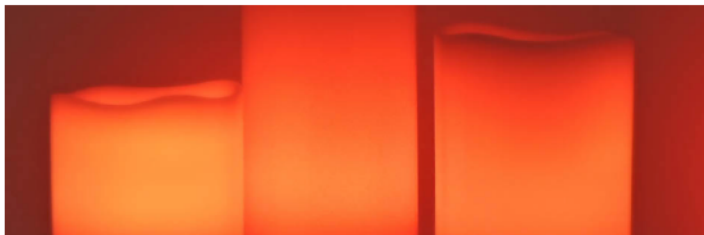
Drums



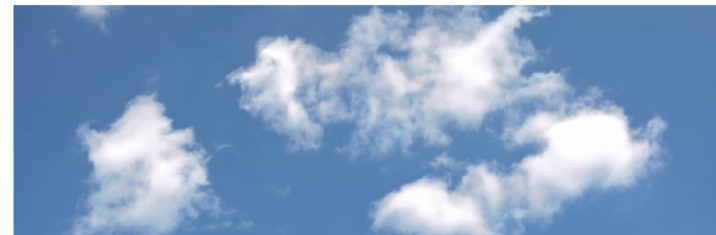
Blue Car



Band



Light



Clouds

Level 2

Download free instruments sounds

Choosing instrument sounds that help develop manipulation and coordination skills

Lists of sustained and unsustained instrument sounds

Giving time and space to explore

Which instrument sounds to choose?

Introducing Improvise™ to your group

Setting up guided access

Download free sounds(1 of 2)

ThumbJam has additional free instrument sounds and rhythm loops.

- 1 Select **Sound**.
- 2 Select **Download Samples**.



Download free sounds(2 of 2)

- 3 Select **Instrument/Loops** and download.
- 4 Select **Done** to clear screen.

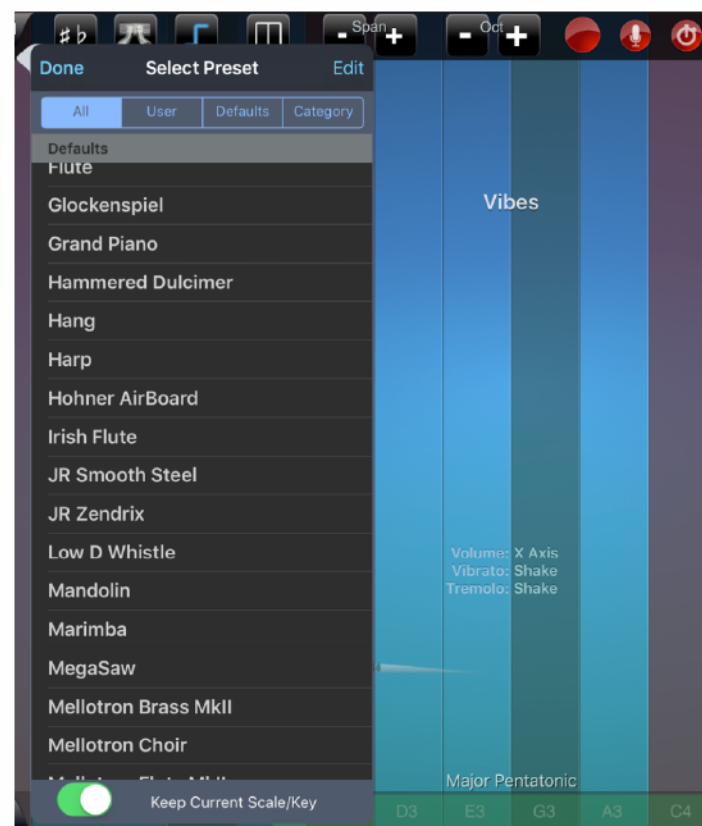


Choosing effective instruments to develop manipulation skills and coordination

Consider the nature of each player's independent finger/hand movement. If the player has difficulty lifting their fingers from the iPad screen, they will unintentionally play sustained notes which they then have difficulty in controlling. Examples of these instruments are FLUTE, CELLO, VIOLIN, etc.

Provide the player with an unsustained instrument sound such as the MARIMBA, GLOCKENSPIEL and HARP. The notes sound once when touching the screen and the player has then to lift their fingers / hand to make another sound.

The complete lists of sustained and unsustained instrument sounds are available on the next two pages.



Complete sounds list

Sustained sounds

- | | | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|----|----------------------|----|----------------------|
| 1 | Bass Bowd | 18 | Pan Pipes | 35 | Tenor Sax |
| 2 | Blues Organ | 19 | Pipe Organ | 36 | The Sawtooth |
| 3 | Blues Organ 2 | 20 | Power Chords | 37 | The Wahtooth |
| 4 | Cajun Accordion | 21 | Round Sine | 38 | Theremin 1 |
| 5 | Cello | 22 | Sackpipa | 39 | Theremin 2 |
| 6 | Concertina | 23 | Scottish Small Pipes | 40 | Triangle Slice |
| 7 | Dirty Organ | 24 | Shakuhachi | 41 | Trombone |
| 8 | Dirty Organ 2 | 25 | Snake Charmer | 42 | Trombone Plunger |
| 9 | Electric Guitar | 26 | Square Clean | 43 | Trumpet |
| 10 | Flute | 27 | Square Phrasing | 44 | Trumpet Harmon Mute |
| 11 | Horner AirBoard | 28 | String Ensemble | 45 | Turkish Ney |
| 12 | JR Smooth Steel | 29 | String Synth Pad | 46 | Uilleann Chanter (D) |
| 13 | JR Zendrix | 30 | String Swirl | 47 | Uilleann Drones (D) |
| 14 | Low D Whistle | 31 | String Swirl 2 | 48 | Uilleann Pipes (D) |
| 15 | Megasaw | 32 | Synth Choir | 49 | Vintage Accordion |
| 16 | Mellotron instruments | 33 | Synth Strings Lead | 50 | Violin |
| 17 | Melodica | 34 | All "TE" instruments | 51 | Viola |

Complete sounds list

Unsustained sounds

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|----|-------------------|
| 1 | Acoustic Guitar | 15 | Harp |
| 2 | All drums, kits and percussion | 16 | Mandolin |
| 3 | Anderson Guitar Clean | 17 | Marimba |
| 4 | Bass Plucked | 18 | Muted Funk Guitar |
| 5 | Bass Slap | 19 | P-Bass |
| 6 | Cittern | 20 | Rhodes |
| 7 | Classical Guitar | 21 | Steel Pan |
| 8 | E Guitar Clean Chorus | 22 | Stingray Bass |
| 9 | Electric Bass | 23 | Tanpura |
| 10 | Electric Clean Guitar | 24 | Ukelele |
| 11 | Glockenspiel | 25 | Upright Piano |
| 12 | Grand Piano | 26 | Vibes |
| 13 | Hammered Dulcimer | 27 | Violin Staccato |
| 14 | Hang | 28 | Wurlitzer EP |

Giving time and space to explore

It's really important to give your students plenty of time, space, encouragement and the right kind of physical support. Do not "play" for them, or repeatedly bring the student's hand to the iPad screen.

Place each student's iPad in the best position for them to access the screen with minimal obstructions and with the least amount of support, using a clamping device if necessary. Initially, guide their hand to the iPad screen but once the student is aware of the position of the iPad under their fingers, stand away and let them be as independent as possible. Give them lots and lots of time. This is so important. It also helps in their communication as well as supporting their physical and neurological development.

Turning off the overhead lights can help some students to focus more easily on the iPad screen.



Instrument sound suggestions for each track

Track name	Instrument sounds
1: Hands	Flute, Cello, Marimba, Round sine, Shakuhachi.
2: Pink Boots	Cajun accordion, Concertina, Hammered dulcimer, Irish flute; string ensemble.
3: Jazz Cat	Vibes, Grand piano, Blues organ 2, Tenor sax, Rhodes.
4: Hats	Dirty organ 2, Hang, JR smooth steel, Blues harmonica, Harp.
5: Big Tree	Cello, Flute, TE bass clarinet, TE euphonium, String swirl.
6: Drums	Dirty organ, Panpipes, Vibes, Round sine, Low D whistle.
7: Blue Car	Trumpet harmon mute, Banjo, Cajun accordion, TE bass trombone, Tenor sax.
8: Band	Vintage accordion, TE bassoon, TE Eb clarinet, Glockenspiel, Banjo.
9: Light	Flute, Tanpura, Harp, Shakuhachi, Concertina.
10: Clouds	Banjo, Cittern, Upright piano, Trumpet harmon mute, TE bass clarinet.

Introducing Improvise™ to your group

- 1 Have each iPad ready (with its own portable speaker).
- 2 Introduce the first session by one person playing at a time. Allow them time and space to discover ThumbJam and to explore some of the sound possibilities. Repeat this for each player so everyone has a clear idea of what the activity is about.
- 3 Then, allow the group to play and explore together - a free-fall jam session!
- 4 Continue doing this for as long as you feel the players are enjoying the experience.
- 5 When you feel members of the group are ready to play along to the music, select one of the backing tracks from this book.
- 6 Have one person playing their iPad and slowly bring the volume of the backing track up so that it can be heard clearly. The player continues their improvisation and is given time and space to assimilate what is happening - ie their "melody" is sounding very good with the backing track and this is a totally new experience. The why's and wherefore's of how this is happening are irrelevant. The most important thing is that the player is getting enjoyment from this experience and is possibly showing awareness of the magical interaction that is happening through their actions of playing and the backing music.
- 7 The next stage is to bring in another player - and another - and another! Use your ears to decide how many people should be playing. You can assume the role of a conductor - start and stop

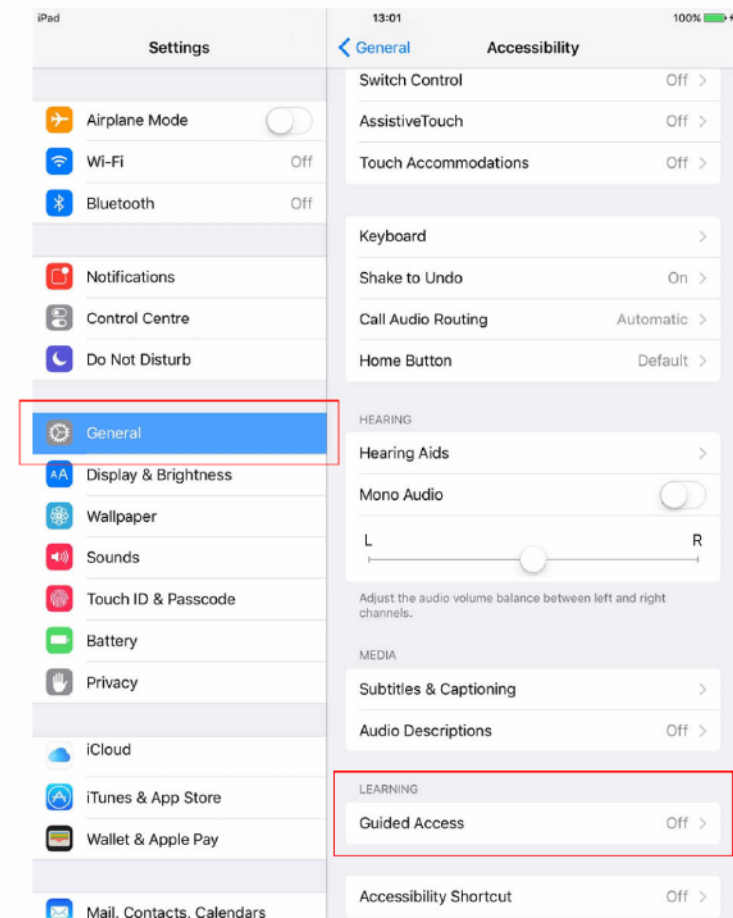
players when this is appropriate. Some players may not understand this action of "stopping", especially when it's taken them quite a while to get going. Again, this depends on your knowledge and sensitive understanding of the needs and abilities of your group players.

Guided access

(1 of 4)

Masking off (drawing round) chosen areas of the screen so that students can stay on task without, unintentionally, triggering other app or iPad functions.

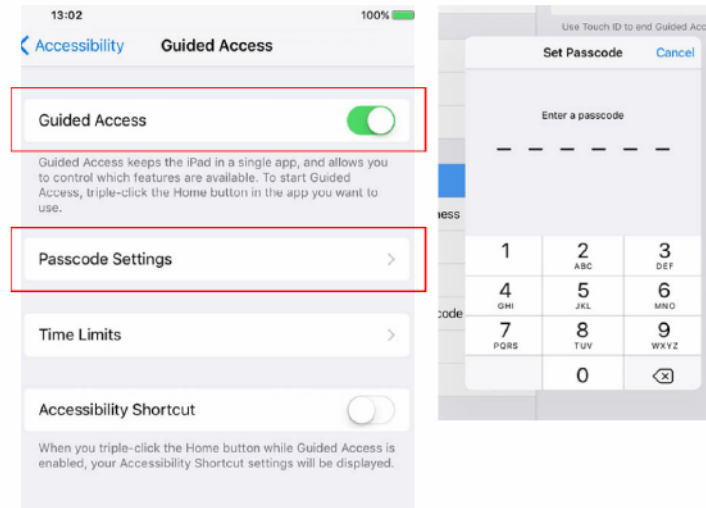
- 1 Go to **Settings**.
- 2 Select **General**.
- 3 Select **Guided Access**.



Guided access

- 1 Switch **Guided Access** on.
- 2 Create a **passcode** to lock Guided Access on and to unlock when returning the iPad to normal use.
- 3 Exit **Settings**.

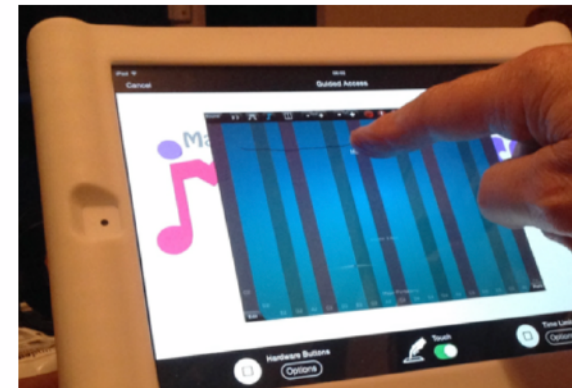
(2 of 4)



Guided access

(3 of 4)

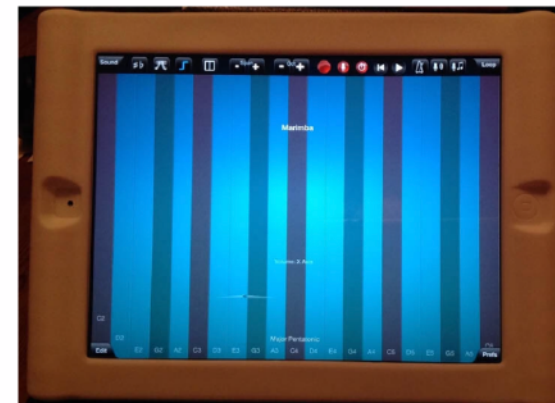
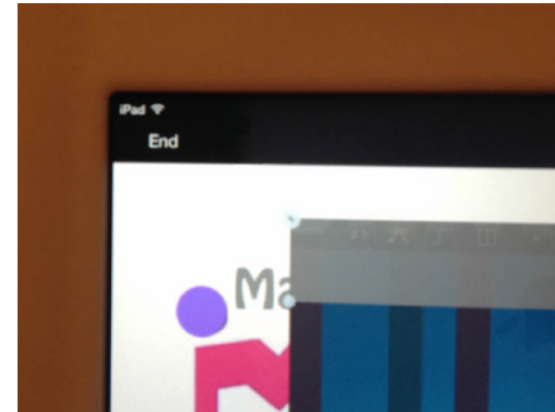
- 1 Open the **ThumbJam** app.
- 2 Press 3 times on the home button and the display shrinks towards the middle of the screen. Draw your finger around the areas you wish to exclude from access.
- 3 Select **Start (Resume)** at the top right corner of your screen. ThumbJam will now fill the screen again with the masked areas showing. Guided Access is on and the masked off areas cannot be accessed.



Guided access

(4 of 4)

- 1 To unlock the screen, press 3 times on the **home button** and the screen will, again shrink towards the middle. You will be asked for your passcode. Type it in and select **End** at the top left corner of the screen. Your iPad screen will return to normal.



Level 3

Choosing and using
tuned percussion

Understanding the major
pentatonic scale

Stages for learning
(for educational use)

Stage 1: Exploring and discovering

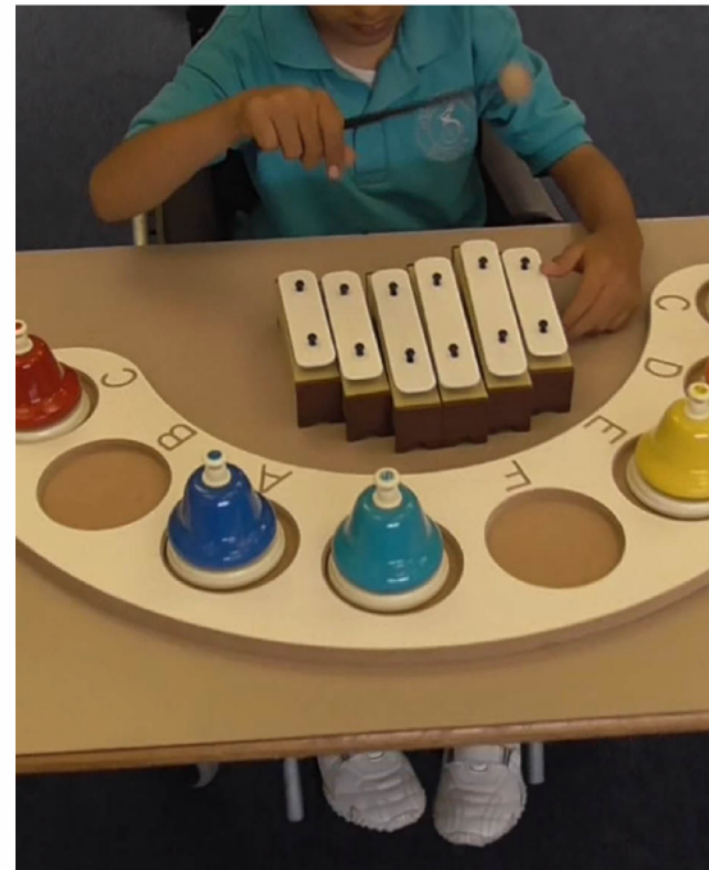
Stage 2: Motifs and textures

Stage 3: Notation and composing

Choosing and using tuned percussion

Most music rooms are equipped with chime bars in various sizes and colours. If not, a good set of chime bars usually costs around £25. If you look online or in specific school catalogues, you will find a range of chime bars, hand bells, xylophones, metallophones and glockenspiels.

- 1 Select the notes **C D E G** and **A**.
- 2 The notes may be large or small. Collect them up and place them into playable groups e.g. **CDEGA** lower range for one player and **CDEGA** higher range for another.
- 3 If you have xylophones (wooden) and metallophones (metal) with removable notes, select the same notes ie. **CDEGA** and remove the **B** and **F** notes.



Understanding the major pentatonic scale

In music, a scale is a set of notes arranged by pitch. You are using a five note scale called the major pentatonic. Basically, you have selected the notes: C, D, E, G and A for you and your students to play around with. By providing sets of these same five notes, arranged from lowest to highest, the IMPROVISE™ approach offers a satisfying number of notes for you to create compositions that have both melody and harmony.

Pentatonic scales are widely used in the traditional music of Asia and India, as well as in Western jazz, blues and traditional European folk music.



Stages for learning (for educational use)

Stage 1: Exploring and discovering

- 1 Introducing ThumbJam.
- 2 Students have many opportunities to explore and establish an awareness and understanding of the activity.
- 3 Music backing tracks are introduced gently behind the student's playing so as not to cause confusion. Each iPad is amplified through its own external speaker which is placed directly in front of the respective student playing.
- 4 Each student's fine motor skills and needs are considered when choosing the 'instrument' - sustained and unsustained sounds.
- 5 Introducing tuned and untuned percussion instruments - chime bars; chime bells; xylophone and metallophone (with removable notes); a variety of different sounding shakers; hand drums.
- 6 Microphone and amp/speaker to capture vocalisations.

Stages for learning (for educational use)

Stage 2: Motifs and textures

- 1 Student's choose music backing tracks - print off music track page and make a choice board.
- 2 Exploring 'long' and 'short' notes, 'fast' and 'slow' - extended into movement activity within the session using hand/arm gestures/ floaty scarves/ ribbon streamers.
- 3 Using selected tracks to practise aspects of (2) - being able to play aspects of (2) to order.
- 4 Creating simple repeated sequences - reinforce, where possible, by vocalising these sequences to help auditory memory and incorporate the use of simple hand pitch gestures.
- 5 Exploring pitch - 'high' and 'low' notes.
- 6 Looking at Texture - how many people playing? - discussion around the qualities of individual sounds.

Stages for learning (for educational use)

Stage 3: Notation and composing

- 1** Continuing work in the major pentatonic scale.
However, for some players, they may want to make choices using the complete major scale of C D E F G A B C. (Set to "Major" in the scale settings)
- 2** Adhering to a structure - players can play whole pieces of music in a specific way, possibly with the help of a simple notation system.
- 3** Opportunities for individual players to begin to arrange group performance - conducting the group and signaling when players start and stop playing within the piece.
- 4** Introducing other accessible music technology so that players have the opportunity to explore and play a new instrument.
- 5** Increased performance opportunities.
- 6** Reviewing opportunities for specific students to move forward onto accredited courses.

Sounds of Intent (Adam Ockelford)

For further information and guidance on special needs music assessment, go to:

www.soundsofintent.org



